



MAY UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL INSULATING THE ROOF HELPS US TO CAST OUR CLOUDS

May has arrived, the fifth month in our calendar year. Named after the Greek goddess for growth, *Maius*, May is regarded as a month of transition. After the cold winds of March and the spring rains of April have (hopefully) passed, nature suddenly puts on a growing spurt and the world begins to turn much, much greener. No surprise then that the birthstone for May is the green emerald. But did you know that in earlier times May was also known as the “Month of Three Milkings”? The sudden abundance of meadow grass meant that you could milk your cow not twice but three times a day!

May is also a very interesting month in terms of folklore. It was once considered a very bad month in which to marry – “Marry in May and you’ll rue the day”. It’s not clear when or where this saying originated, or indeed why the omens for a May wedding were considered unfavourable, but it’s interesting to note that of all the weddings we host each year, none have recently taken place in May – and the one that had been booked for May this year was subsequently cancelled. It seems the omens are still not good for May weddings in our parish!

But this greenest and most beautiful of months wasn’t just considered a bad time to get married: it appears our ancestors believed that buying a new broom in May was very unlucky – and, apparently, it’s even more unlucky to wash your blankets! Thankfully we replaced our Hall’s modern-day equivalent of the broom – the vacuum cleaner – in late March, so we can all breathe a sigh of relief; and we don’t have any Hall blankets to wash!! It’s also said that those born in May have a greater chance of being more successful in life and experience more in the way of love. Well, I personally wouldn’t know about that, but I do know that 5 local children will have parties at the Hall over the coming month to celebrate their May birthdays.

Another fascinating fact about May is that no matter what the year, no other month will either start or end on the same start and end days as May. This year for example, May 1 falls on a Monday and May 31 on a Wednesday. If you check, none of the other 11 months either start or end on a Monday or on a Wednesday. But there is another potentially confusing country saying that goes: “*Ne’er cast a clout till May be out*”. I knew that ‘clout’ was an Old English term for a piece of clothing, and I assumed that due to the unpredictability

warmer winter clothes until (the month of) ‘*May is out*’ – as in *over*. However, it seems that there *may* be a different interpretation (did you see what I did there??) That same phrase could mean ‘*wait until the hawthorn blossom comes out*’, because Hawthorn, also known as May and can flower at any time between late April and early June. So, which is the correct interpretation? Well, as another old saying goes: “*you pays your money and you takes your choice!*”

And speaking of all things *green* and *casting clouds*, this brings me neatly round to telling you about the next planned ‘green’ upgrade for our heritage building – designed to keep it warmer by minimising heat loss.



During a recent routine check of the building, we noticed that the insulation running between the joists in the roof space of both halls, was quite a bit thinner than the current advice to insulate to a minimum thickness of 270mm. Having invested significant sums of money in an efficient heating system, solar panels and battery storage, it makes absolute sense to maximise their benefits by installing better levels of roof insulation. And so, by the time you read this we hope to have completed this work, meaning that the next time you find yourself in the building you can confidently “*cast your clouds*” safe in the knowledge that you won’t be cold – whatever the month or the state of the blossom outside!!

Finally, coming up this month on Tuesday May 16, is our **Annual General Meeting**. As this is an **open meeting** all parishioners are cordially invited to attend. It starts at 7.30pm in the Small Hall, so why not come along and find out a little more about us? You’ll be most welcome.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees

of the English weather in late spring/early summer, the saying reminds us not to be too hasty in abandoning our