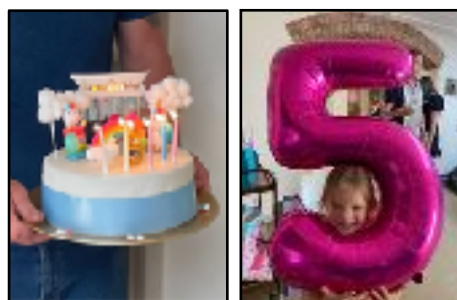




SEPTEMBER UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL

SUMMER WAS PARTY TIME & MORE ABOUT OUR HALL HEROES

Celebrating birthdays and other anniversaries may not be new – in fact we can trace such events back to Egyptian times – but the modern children's birthday party is a relatively recent tradition. It is thought to have originated in Germany, where there is an old belief that children are highly susceptible to being harmed by evil spirits, especially on their birthdays. The *Kinderfest*, (or child's party) emerged to protect them on each annual birthday by putting lighted candles on a cake to ward off those evil spirits – with one candle lit for each year of the child's life plus one extra for the year ahead. Although here in the UK we don't normally add the extra candle



Some of my happiest memories as a young child under 10 years old and growing up in the 1950's, centre around the excitement of birthday parties – either my own or being invited to my friends' birthday celebrations. Simple pleasures – a party tea with candles on an iced cake, squash, sandwiches and Cadbury's chocolate mini rolls, followed by jelly, ice-cream and games like pass the parcel, musical chairs and Kim's (memory) Game. Two hours of high-energy fun, prizes, eating and drinking, lots of chasing about in the garden and much breathless laughter.

Well, fast forward 60 or more years and the tradition of children's birthday parties in our community is very much alive and well – only now they have evolved into major productions as the birthday party 'bar' gets raised ever higher. Which is no bad thing as birthday parties can be treasured memories from your childhood. I know they are for our children who now keep that tradition alive with their own children (our grandchildren).

During the summer months there have been no fewer than 11 birthday parties held at the Hall and, judging by the photo-memories posted on our Facebook Page, all the parents have worked exceptionally hard to make them a huge, enjoyable success. For example, look at the photos above taken at 5-year-old Sofia's party. Her mum, Skye, contacted us to say:

"Sofia had a unicorn princess-themed party, complete with wiggle cars and a princess bouncy castle [see the next photo!] We played pass the parcel and she had a homemade unicorn cake! Thanks so

much for having us, it was a brilliant 5th birthday party. We loved the hall as did so many of the other parents."



Andy (from Andy's Magic – the children's entertainer, that's him in the photo above) was hired by another couple of parents for their son's 6th birthday party in June. After the party he posted the following comments and photo on our Facebook page:

"Toby's party at the Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall today was just amazing! I supplied the One Hour Party Package including games, prizes, magic show and balloon animals for all and loads of fun and laughter. After me the kids had a complete set of Fun-Fair Games including Hook-a-Duck, Limbo Dancing, Ball-in-the-Bucket, Tin Can Alley, Coconut Shy and more!"

Andy tells us he's been a full-time professional entertainer for 31 years and always aims to make each party as memorable as possible with his unique style of colourful, fast-paced, slapstick, comedy magic, fun and entertainment. He certainly had Toby and his friends in fits of laughter and gasping in amazement.

So far this year, there has been a total of 32 children's parties held at the Hall – and every single one has made very special memories for the hundreds of children attending them. You can book your own child's party online now by visiting our website: www.leighandbransfordhall.co.uk

Finally, I'm continuing to introduce all our volunteer trustees, and this month it's the turn of our **Treasurer, Mary Croad**. Believe it or not, Mary originally joined the Board of Trustees as Hall Secretary 38 years ago. She remembers it well since she tells me she was 6 months pregnant at the time! Over the intervening years she also took on the roles of Playgroup Leader and Fundraising Officer before becoming our highly respected Treasurer over 15 years' ago. That means Mary has been working tirelessly, and entirely voluntarily, to keep our Hall thriving for well over a third of its entire existence. Her sheer commitment is simply outstanding – for which we are all so very thankful. Without her skills and her advocacy, it's true to say the Hall would not be in such great shape today. She is yet another of our worthy band of dedicated and remarkable Hall Heroes.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees