

# VE Day

“We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing”

On the 8th May 1945, Britain marked ‘Victory in Europe Day’ with celebrations on the country’s streets, bonfires, the ringing of church bells and services of thanksgiving. VE Day did not mark the end of World War II as Japan did not surrender until August 15, 1945.

The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill addressed the nation: “We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing; but let us not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead.”

The festivities had begun the night before, after the Ministry of Information had issued a short statement saying that May 8 would be a public holiday called VE Day. Communities began hanging out flags and bunting and pooling food, still rationed, for street parties.

St. Paul’s Cathedral, Buckingham Palace and other public buildings were illuminated by floodlights for the first time since September 1939 - important symbolism to a nation that had been in blackout for six long years.



A Home Office circular regarding celebrations stated: “Bonfires will be allowed, but the government trusts that only material with no salvage value will be used.”

The Board of Trade added: “Until the end of May you may buy cotton bunting without coupons, as long as it is red, white or blue, and does not cost more than one shilling and three pence a square yard.”



Herne Rd residents joined in the VE day celebrations. Note the lady with a V for Victory sown on her bloomers! Also how few men can be seen in the photographs.



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