

VE Day Memories

Julia's recollections

Born and brought up on the very edge of Sheffield in a cul-de-sac off the Manchester Road, the neighbours in twelve houses became very close during the war years, and the celebration of VE Day, which was hastily conceived by that neighbourhood, was a bonfire on the remaining plot of land on the corner. I know there was an effigy of Hitler, which was burned, and I am sure that food was involved. For us children, and there were at least 10 of us under 14 years old, the treat and delight was a bright fire and staying up late, long after our normal bedtimes. I have even more vivid memories of the VJ Day celebrations when there was more time for planning, music and dancing.

John's Recollections

I was 7 at the beginning of the 'War' and can vividly remember being issued with my Gas Mask, the populace were terrified of being gassed, having seen the effects in the First World War, I remember Chamberlain's famous speech, and the Post Office pillar boxes having the tops painted green, so they changed colour if there was Gas about.

Being born and living in a large city, the Blitz has left a lasting impression on my memory with nights spent regularly in the Air Raid Shelter. The glow in the sky that was Coventry is as vivid as it was then

At 11 all youngsters were expected to join some organisation, and I joined the Red Cross and learnt First Aid

What relief when VE Day came, it had been expected, and Large Bonfires had been erected, mainly by the youngsters, on some waste ground, most likely bomb damage. We had a party in the street with lots of singing and dancing, and a large crowd gathering around the Bonfire in the evening. It's hard to imagine today, but during the 'War', there were few men to be seen, the world was run by the women, as the men were away fighting. Everyone seemed to wear a uniform of one colour or another

Streetlighting was switched on, and the church bells were rung. It was as though a great weight had been lifted off us, and we knew that death was no longer something to be expected and feared at any moment

Flags and Buntings were everywhere, with Union flags in most windows. The atmosphere was tinged with sadness for the Loved Ones of those who would never come home, and everyone had or knew someone in that situation

I shall never forget it, the spirit of community and friendship that existed was truly amazing. I would never want this to ever happen again, but I feel we must never forget the sacrifices made so we could live in freedom

We will remember them