



The announcement that the war had ended in Europe was broadcast to the British people over the radio on 7 May. The BBC interrupted its scheduled programming with a news flash announcing that Victory in Europe Day would be a national holiday, to take place the following day.

Many people didn't wait for the official day of celebration and began the festivities as soon as they heard the news on 7 May. Here are some of our own OPAL community's memories....

Jean told us that her strongest memory was actually on 30th April. It was the day that Hitler died, and her 10th birthday. She remembers after the announcement everyone ran out of their houses and congregated on Delph Bridge on Halton Road in Runcorn. She thinks this must have been in the evening as she was in her pyjamas! From that day on, whenever she was naughty, her mum used to say that it was a bit of Hitler coming out because he had died on her birthday.

Another OPAL member remembers being woken up after she had gone to bed by banging on the doors and windows. She lived on Main Street, Frodsham, and the man announcing the news that the war was over was Mr Hutchinson who owned the garage. Everyone went outside and there was a big bonfire outside the garage.

Les was at Cubs the evening the end of the war was announced and remembers running home to his house in Mossley Hill, Liverpool to the sirens blaring the 'all clear' signal to indicate victory in Europe.

Ruth has a very clear memory of a VE Day party on fields off Hillside Road in Frodsham. The weather was lovely and she bought a 6d raffle ticket which won first prize – a pair of men's braces and sock garters! She ran home and gave them to her father.

Margaret from Malpas remembers VE day at Shocklach school, where they had afternoon tea with sandwiches, fruit and ice cream. She also won first prize – in a running race where she had to thread a needle at the turn before running back. Her prize was an embroidery set which she completed and kept for many years.



Margaret from Kelsall shared wonderful memories of the war years and also provided us with this photo. On the eve of VE Day, Margaret's Mum organised a big party in the village which was held on VE Day at West's Garage. (photograph) Afterwards they partied on Chapel Green. There were fireworks and a girl with lovely ginger hair had it accidentally set on fire!

VE Day was a day of mixed emotions, with some not able to face celebration. In King George VI's radio address that evening, he paid respect to all the lives that were lost in the 6 years of war "Let us remember those who will not come back...let us remember the men in all the services, and the women in all the services, who have laid down their lives. We have come to the end of our tribulation and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing."

Bunty has a lovely memory of VE Day in Penzance. She was a Land Army Girl in Daresbury, and she used her 1 week's holiday a year to visit relatives in Cornwall. She remembers street parties for children in Penzance, and partying with her cousin and American sailors who were docked at Plymouth. One sailor accompanied them back to her Aunt's house and they all had a cup of tea.

Pam recalls that there were street parties all over Overton on Dee, but her family didn't go and join in, preferring to celebrate quietly at home.

Anne remembers cycling towards Stockport Town Hall and when her mum saw the flag, she was so overcome, she cried. Anne had never seen her Mum cry before.

Sheila from Hoole, and Denise who was living in Chester at the time, both remember much excitement among family, neighbours and friends celebrating at Chester Town Hall where everyone was gathered together and very happy.

Maggie's father worked at American Airbases. Maggie and her sister both remember being disturbed by the noise of music and singing and car horns on a usually quiet road up to the airfield. It was the air crews going to town to celebrate. Maggie and her sister went in a van to the market place with the crowds singing and laughing and joining in the hokey cokey and a great long conga.

But it was not the end of the war for everyone. In May 1945, thousands of Allied servicemen were still fighting in the Far East and thousands more were held as prisoners of war in terrible conditions.

Giulio was in India in May 1945, he was based in New Delhi and remembers the insufferable heat before the Monsoon. It would be August before their war ended with Victory in Japan on 15th August.

Ernest was a Royal Navy Apprentice on HMS Drake in Plymouth, and does not have a clear memory of VE Day but does recall all the ships setting sail to support the battle in the Pacific.

In the Spotlight....May Fox, Malpas OPAL Club , shares her special memories of VE Day

On the 8th May 1945 May pedalled into Whitchurch as a 15 year old to Palins the Grocers in Green End where she served in the shop earning half a crown per week. The girls who worked in the Co-op believed that they were a better class of shop girls than those who worked for the likes of the Palins!

On VE morning May remembers that she was dealing with a very difficult lady customer who was getting very angry because she didn't have enough coupons for a tin of peaches! However, Mr Palin came down the stairs and very excitedly said "Lock the till and all go outside and lock the doors as Germany have surrendered and lets celebrate!!" When they got outside the street was full of people cheering, singing and dancing the conga! The two local butchers (who were bitter rivals) were shaking hands and laughing with each other plus the Co-op girls came and embraced May and her fellow assistants and the whole street was having a really great celebration. The Fox and Goose brought out beer for the men and lemonade for the ladies!

Pedalling home that evening May was amazed to see a grand tea party taking place down Wayland Road— again with many happy adults and children! A cake shop had supplied and transported cakes for the party in their van!

May was very grateful to have been part of all this celebrating and found that she was as much excited about the fun, friendship and camaraderie that she had witnessed as she was about the fact that the war had ended! It had all been so wonderful to see and she went home very happy. *[with thanks to David Paton for writing on behalf of May]*

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Think about me, not my age

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