

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear.” Psalm 46 vv 1,2*

VICTORY IN EUROPE!

This was the headline in all the newspapers on Tuesday 8th May 1945. Later this month we shall celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE-Day as it came to be known. Over the years we have become accustomed to the scenes of dancing in the street and other celebrations in 1945. Inside this issue you can read the somewhat different experience of Margaret Lelliott, a member of our congregation, who was 7 at the time and living in Shoreham-by-Sea in West Sussex.



My Memories of VE-Day 1945

What do I remember of VE Day celebrations? It's quite hard to recall. I was born in February 1938, so was just 17 months old when the war began. I was 7 when the war in Europe ended – and it is important to remember that VE Day was only the end of the war in Europe. The war against Japan, in the Far East continued for another few months, until August 1945.

So, for the first few years of my life, I only knew war – aircraft flying overhead, bombs dropping, sleeping in shelters, not having enough to eat and a lot of other things that really were awful, but seemed perfectly normal to me. We never understood that there could be any other way of living. We played in the streets and on bombed sites and had a huge amount of freedom.



From a very young age I walked to school alone or with friends, and at dinner-time we walked home for our dinner and back again. Because our night times were interrupted by bombing raids we had little beds in the school hall where we had to sleep during the afternoon. One night in February 1944 a bomb landed on one of the houses opposite to ours, and the lovely lady who lived there was killed. Our house was badly damaged so we had to go to live somewhere else for several months until it was repaired – and still we believed that this was normal, nothing to worry about.

So, when in May 1945 we were told that the war was over, we had no idea at all what that meant. No-one bothered to explain things to children at that time – they seemed to think that we would just know, but how could we? We'd never known peace.

I remember that everyone was very excited and noisy that day and that evening we all walked to a pub (not the local, but one miles away) and spent the evening there. This was very unusual, as my family never went out drinking. The pub was full to bursting and very, very noisy and happy with shouting, singing and dancing. We were there until very late and when we came out, I clearly remember seeing a huge white dog with its owner on the far side of the road, and someone asked whether it was a dog or a polar bear. Not that funny, but everyone roared with laughter – they just wanted to be happy.

The other thing that seemed amazing to me on that walk home, was that there were lights on everywhere. The war had been a time of total darkness at night – no street-lights and blackout curtains up at all the windows of the houses. Now there were lights in the streets, on cars and the curtains were open on houses so that you could see inside – and so many people, inside and out. It was like one big party, where no-one wanted to go to bed.

The next day we realised that actually nothing much had changed, and nor would it for several more years.

Margaret Lelliott

Margaret's husband, Pat, is planning to put on a small display at the back of the Church showing photos of parties and comments from some of the congregation.

Lord God our Father,

We pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name.

Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always.

Amen.

All photos are courtesy of the Imperial War Museums (IWM)

May Services and Events

Sunday 4	08.00	Holy Communion (BCP)
	09.30	Sung Communion
Wednesday 7	10.30	Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room
Thursday 8	14.30	Thursday Club in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 11	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
	11.00	Annual Church Meetings in Church
Monday 12	19.30	Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room
Saturday 17	10.00	Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 18	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
Wednesday 21	20.00	PCC Meeting in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 25	09.30	Sung Communion
Thursday 29	20.00	Ascension Day Sung Communion

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome

Easter Workshop

A craft morning Easter Workshop organised by St Mary's Toddler Group volunteers was a very successful community event. Toddlers and their siblings of all ages came with their parents and grandparents, and enjoyed time together crafting Easter themed activities.



The activities included making Easter baskets with chocolate eggs, icing cakes and biscuits, and decorating Easter bonnets and crowns. There was clay modelling and flower arranging and lots of crafts involving chicks!

A really fun morning with refreshments and hot cross buns was enjoyed by all and was a wonderful way to reach out to the community.