

VE DAY, 8TH MAY 1945

A Toddlers View: It was so bright

Having been born in December 1943, my Grandma didn't realise she remembered VE Day until she was much older and she asked her mum about an overwhelming memory she had of lots of lights, some brighter than others, some that looked like 2 eyes and some that were fire. It would appear that she had been taken up to the top of the road they lived on in Harborne on the evening of VE Day and it was all the lights! Having spent the first 18 months of her life with blackouts and war time life suddenly the lights in houses and street lights were on and the 2 eyes coming towards her were buses and cars! As they looked right from the top of their road there was a huge bonfire at the top of Barnes Hill. (marked in yellow)



A Soldier's Day

I spoke to Arthur Kennedy, my grandparents' neighbour who is now 95, about his experience of V.E Day – this is his story:

Arthur, who was 21 at the time, was based in the Midlands with his regiment (Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers). About a week before V.E Day, his battalion were informed they were being relocated to Nottingham, and they were to prepare to be shipped out to the Far East. A day before he was due to leave for the Philippines, Arthur and another NCO were sent to a Tech School close to where they were based in Nottingham and told they were being kept behind in England. As the only 2 remaining NCOs in that regiment, they needed to be kept as instructors, for many other NCOs had to pass a test to uphold their current army rank. This meant Arthur was luckily enough to be at home and with his family on V.E day. He said he couldn't really remember much about the day itself, as it was all blurred together as a mixture of celebration, uncertainty and nerves as there was still a war going on – one that he nearly had to fight in and had already lost many friends and family too.



School Life: Bromsgrove School

“The European war came to an end in May 1945. A special Service of Thanksgiving was held in Chapel early on the morning on May 8th (“V” Day) after which the boys went home for two days holiday to celebrate our victory in Europe.”

Quote from ‘Bromsgrove in Exile’ by D.J.Walters

With the School having been exiled to Llanwrtyd Wells in 1939 by the time VE Day came, part of the School was back in Bromsgrove or came back not long after. This is what I have found out about when buildings were ‘returned’ to School.

August 1944: All buildings with the exception of School House and Lyttleton House to be handed back, with those expected to be back for use of the School by September – as you see below this didn’t quite happen.

September 1944: Orchard House (a master’s residence turned into a boarding house), School, Lyttleton and Cottage Studies

Work was completed so that at the start of term, boarding houses, School and Lyttleton, classrooms of Kyteless, labs and lecture rooms, Art School, Handicraft shop, the School shop, Book and Stationary Store, Routh Hall, the Chapel and the Library.

January 1945: Oakley (occupied by County Medical Department)

August 1945: Gordon House

Autumn 1945: Charford Playing Fields

Before the end of 1945: Elmshurst, Wendron (occupied by Civil Servants), Lupton, Hazledene, the Sanatorium, the Armoury and the Gymnasium.

