

Peace at Last

W W I I & V i c t o r y D a y M e m o r i e s f r o m H a r r o w .

C e l e b r a t i n g t h e 7 5 t h A n n i v e r s a r y



This book comprises the memories of Harrow's residents during World War Two.

Headstone Manor & Museum would like to thank everybody whose memories, documents and photographs are included in this book and in the VE Day in Harrow project.

Peter Bayliss. Michael Pearce. George Beardmore. Peggy Flack. Connie Oldland. Mrs Nan Shaw. Mr Grave. Mrs A Finch. Francis Jowers. Mary Hulse. Heather Moodie. Sylvia Bourdin. Jeffery Austin. Barry Marcus. Betty Alexander. Thelma Inwood. Betty Lewis. Harry Vernon Nodder. Malcolm Hutton. Jim Whitfield. Cynthia Wells. Dorothy Webb. Sydney Pett. Allan Cooban. Stuart Murray. Ron Brooks. Caroline Bell. Linda & Alan Western. Mrs Chalcroft. Brian Rose.

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Headstone Manor & Museum Team

Commissioned by Stacey Anne Bagdi (Collections & Exhibitions Officer/Curator)
and Marianna Michael (Book Curator)

**This book has been commissioned for the 75th Anniversary on VE Day in Harrow project at
Headstone Manor & Museum.**

Caption Key

These abbreviations denote the donors of the images which feature in this book.

DONOR	ABBREVIATION
Harrow Local History Collection & Archive	HLHCA
Harrow Museum Collection	HMC
London Borough of Harrow	LBH
Imperial War Museum Archive Collection	IWM
Headstone Manor & Museum	HMM

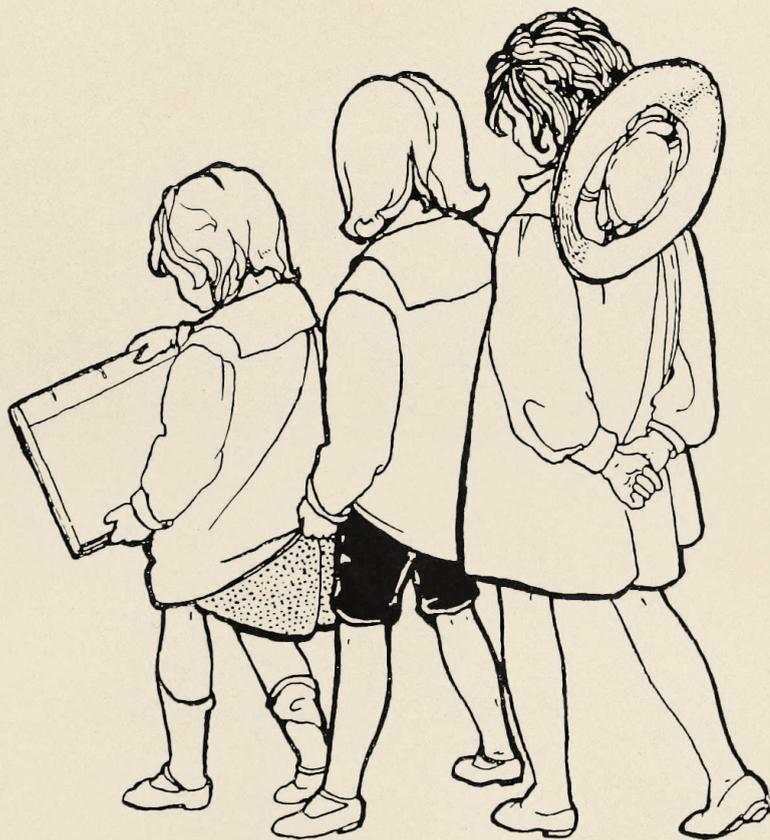
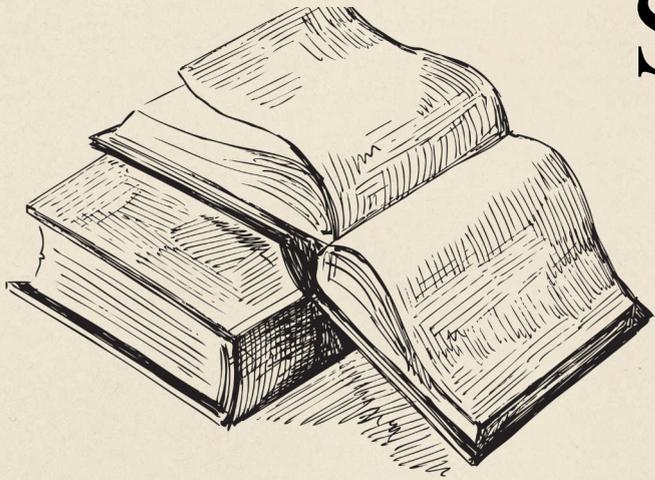


Peace at Last

W W I I & V i c t o r y D a y M e m o r i e s f r o m
H a r r o w .

C e l e b r a t i n g t h e 7 5 t h A n n i v e r s a r y

CHILDHOOD & SCHOOL DAYS





[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]



[5]

[1] ROXBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM, 1948/49 [2] ROXBOURNE HORTICULTURAL TRADING HUT ©MICHAEL PEARCE. [3] MALCOLM HUTTON WITH GRANDMOTHER HARRIET HUTTON. ©MALCOLM HUTTON [4] MALCOLM HUTTON AND COUSIN MARION, 1937. ©MALCOLM HUTTON [5] A BABY PETER BAYLIS ©PETER BAYLIS

"When I was four the war started and I can remember that quite distinctly because it was such a major thing. And so I stood on the settee looking out of the window and watching my neighbour next door walking backwards and forwards across the two houses because he really didn't know what to do. You didn't know if people were going to come out of the sky or not, so he started to protect us... the war didn't finish until I was ten so it took over your infants and juniors schooling."

[...]

"We had a lot of exercise because we ran everywhere. So you ran to school and you ran home again... The only thing I can say was good, was we had freedom."

SYLVIA BOURDIN



SYLVIA BOURDIN (AGE 6) WITH BROTHER DAVID (AGE 2) AND PARENTS ROBERT AND WINIFRED. 1942

©SYLVIA BOURDIN



"I didn't like school dinners. I had to get permission to come home everyday."

[...]

"We still used to play out ... Life went on. Every time the siren went, down the shelters we went."

BETTY ALEXANDER

"We used to play on the bombs sites which were very dangerous of course."

JEFFREY AUSTIN

"...to us kids who roamed the neighbourhood from dawn to dusk, war was not a terrible or frightening thing - it was all we had ever known. A normal everyday experience. In fact we actually liked it because it was one big exciting and noisy adventure."

PETER BAYLIS

"When war was declared in September 1939, my school evacuated to Windsor and it was terrible really ... I do remember being given a gas mask and a label around my neck which said 'Barry Marcus' and if I remember rightly, a bar of chocolate and I think we were given a tin of "bully beef" [1] which as Jewish children we couldn't have eaten because it wasn't Kosher... Off we went to evacuation. My mother came to see us often, if you can imagine, distraught at seeing her two little children."

[...]

"We arrived into Windsor... and they called my brother Stanton off the bus. They didn't call me ... there was no way he was going to leave me and so he refused to get off the bus without me which put the organisers in a bit of a dilemma .. they forced me off and they couldn't force him off so they went into a huddle and agreed they would let us both go. So We went into this tiny house, I remember, the houses had to take us. It wasn't an option. The government said to these people 'you have to take these kids, if you have accommodation, you have to have them'. And so we went into the house we were billeted in and there was only one tiny bed which was going to accommodate Stanton and they didn't have a bed for me. So they had to sort that out so they took a drawer out of a dresser- they had a big wooden dresser and they took a drawer out of the dresser and they put a blanket into the dresser and I slept in the dresser and that's as much as I remember from being evacuated."

BARRY MARCUS



[1] "Bully beef was tinned corned beef with a small amount of gelatin. Officially named "preserved meat", the more common term of "bully beef" was derived from the French boef bouilli (boiled beef).

"We experienced the Doodlebugs and the rockets which took us up to 1944. And they were so awful my mother decided we would be evacuated; by which time she had my brother who was a baby so she was allowed to come with us. So that's when Harrow Council took the last children and we were sent to Anglesey in North Wales and so we were only there for several months of the last part of the war. But while we there, Harrow Council realised some children would be due to take the 11+ exam so they sent examination papers to Wales, but Wales didn't quite understand. The school we went to only had three classes. They let all the children in the age group I was in to take the exam whether you were of the right age or not. I was only 10."

THELMA INWOOD



THELMA INWOOD WITH DAD (PRIVATE WILLIAM HUMPHREY), MUM AND BROTHERS PETER & BRUCE, 1939

©THELMA INWOOD

"They were exciting days for a youngster. On those occasions when I had to commute between Pinner and Consett, the journey was long and varied. First there was the tube to Kings Cross, where monstrous engines roared and steamed, filling the terminal with a cacophony of noise and smells that engraved themselves into the mind."

[...]

"I had to cycle eleven miles a day, to and from school, hands purple with cold in the freezing winter months, and often a thorough soaking when it rained. The occasional puncture added to the hazards that I could always expect to occur fairly frequently."

MALCOLM HUTTON



"It was hard. Like thousands of others of families, my father was lucky, he had a good job on the railway. We ate well, and my mother and everything family wise was great until the war broke out. And then our family was smashed to pieces with the bombing. My mother and my elder sister died, and my young sister, she was only three years old."

FRANCIS JOWERS

"I went to Pinner Park School which I remember quite well. There were air raid shelters at the back of the school where there are now allotments and we used do lessons when the alert went off. We'd adjourn to these sort of tunnel like structures and have our lessons and we also had our rather revolting school dinners there as well. And then when the all clear went we came out and went home or went back to class ... I remember school dinners which were incredibly greasy"

HEATHER CONSTANCE LOUISE MOODIE



"The Granada Cinema at the junction of Sheepcote Road and Station Road was the largest and most central cinema in Harrow and its architecture was impressive."

[...]

"At Christmas, Sopers [2] always had Santa's Grotto where parents and children would queue for ages to be seen by Santa and receive a small gift. Despite the War, Christmas was always a wonderful time for family celebration and whilst presents were few, they were very much cherished."

MICHAEL PEARCE

[2] Sopers Ltd. was a department store at Station Road in Harrow, Middlesex. The original store was established in 1888.

WORKING THROUGH WAR





[1]



[2]

DEFENCE . .

—An Appeal to Harrow Women.

Will the Kenton Womenfolk Shew the Way?

Sir—I went down to Admiral Campbell's A.R.P. meeting on Monday to speak to the women about women's voluntary service, but there were so few there that I feel I must try and reach them by all means available and I shall be glad if you can find me space to insert this in the next issue of your "Gazette."

I know it was a hot June evening, but war goes on through hot June evenings when it comes, and if we do not take advantage of this heaven-sent lull to get ready for all eventualities, next June may find us faced with the horror of actual hostilities. Not a war like the last one, which was comfortably over the Channel most of the time, but a war at our very doors.

It is a serious situation and one that needs to be faced with imagination, with energy, and with self-sacrifice. If we did not realise how serious it is, do you think that we would spend these lovely June mornings sitting in a tiny office in Peel Road, waiting for volunteers, when we might be basking in the sun in our own gardens? And the volunteers come in ones and twos when they should be coming in their tens and hundreds!

We still need 850 women, mostly ambulance drivers and attendants, first aiders and nursing auxiliaries. There is also need for evacuation volunteers—women who are prepared to go into London and take parties of women and children out by train and bus from the dangerous areas to the reception areas in time of war and either stay with them there or return to do it again. (There are no evacuation services in this area, which is neutral, but volunteers from this area can be enrolled locally for the London service.)

And there is still scope for the older women, or the women tied by household responsibilities, to do their bit by helping with hospital supplies, a service which is

now fully organised. So there is something for everyone to do.

As I said last night, when the trouble comes we want to be assets, not liabilities. And to do that we must enrol and take our training conscientiously and thoroughly, not studying our convenience, but the nation's need.

Ladies, I appeal to you! In the highest sense, such service is supreme patriotism, for it means that you are getting ready to be of the utmost use to your country in time of need. At the lowest, it is supreme common sense, for **you are giving yourselves that sense of security which only comes through knowledge of how to cope with any situation that may arise**, and you are giving your minds so much to do that you haven't time to worry!

For England's sake—for your own and your children's sake—join up now.

SYDNEY JEWELL,

No. 1 Harrow Representative, W.V.S.
Council Offices, Peel Rd., Wealdstone.

*(If it is at all possible, do not fail to
volunteer—Acting Editor)*

—:o:—

IT'S TERSE, BUT IT'S A.R.P. —IN VERSE.

The Home Office A.R.P. Department has found a poet in its midst. The result is the following, to help the public to remember important air-raid signals:—

“Wavering sound, go to ground.
Steady blast, 'raiders passed.'
If rattles you hear, gas you must fear;
But if handbells your hear, then 'all is clear.'”

The rhyme was issued in connection with Chelsea's big daylight raid experiment on June 19th.

[3]

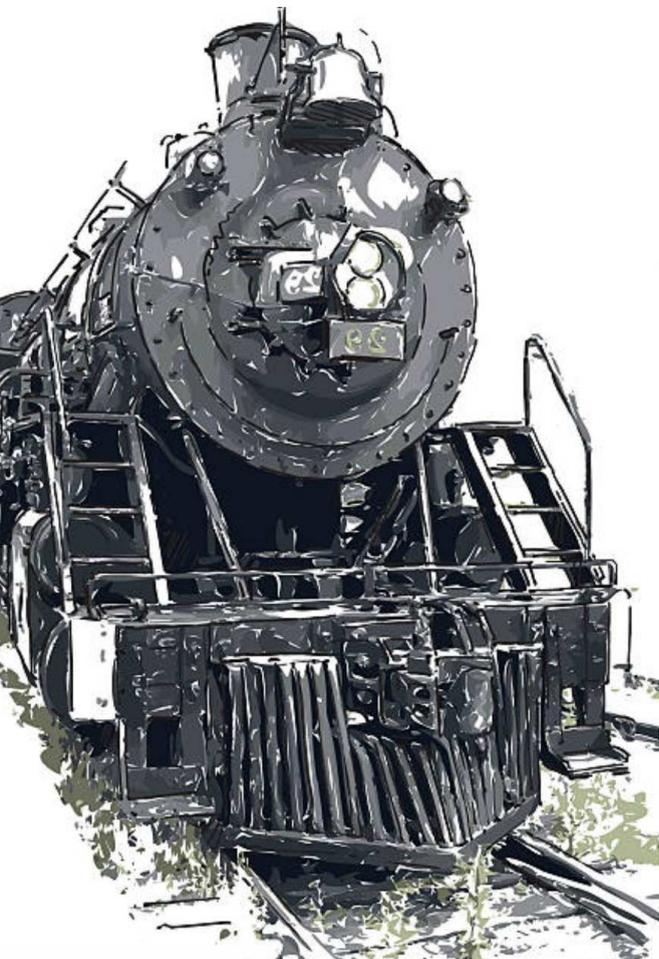


"When you were eighteen you had to do national service and I knew Foot Drill from the Jewish Lads' and Girls Brigade but I didn't know Rifle Drill. I didn't want to go in the army... Fortunately I passed [exams] and I went into the Air Force. I remember the Corporals would shout and scream at you... I remember after six weeks you were allowed to go home... and If you said 'what's the best meal you've ever had?' I know! I got home and my mother made me a veal chop, fried in breadcrumbs and onions. Oh boy was that lovely, I enjoyed that!"

[...]

"I did like the Air Force because of the Battle of Britain. Air Marshall Dowding orchestrated the Battle of Britain from Bentley Priory. I was very proud to go in the Air Force... The UK had been very good to us Jews and I thought 'how can I pay them back?' so I thought 'I'll give two years of my life to The Queen' so I did."

JEFFREY AUSTIN



"My father was the manager of a local transport firm, and before war was declared, was already working overtime to meet the extra orders from central and local government on war preparations."

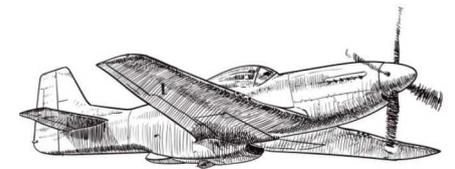
JIM WHITFIELD

"I joined the Home Guard and then I was doing the Home Guard for about seven months and then I got called up like thousands of other young fellas did. Then we went to Chepstow, the race course, and they trained us to handle ammunition...I'd been in army, I was just coming up to my eighteenth birthday. I'd not very long left school and then I'm up there with these men, with bombs and everything."

FRANCIS JOWERS

"I joined the RAF with a friend who also came from Pinner, or Hatch End, and we joined up together and stayed together the first nine months and then after that she was posted away and I was posted away... and then the first of January 1943 I went to the Bentley Priory [1] in Stanmore, in the dungeons as we used to call them - underground and I was working for intelligence there until I was actually on duty the night before peace was declared... From the Bentley Priory, down, coming home to Pinner where my parents had still lived, one of the fellas, a civilian that was working at Bentley Priory for the Home Office and he also owned a newsagents in Pinner which his wife and daughter ran while he was in the war. So he brought me home to Pinner, and on the way we stopped for a drink, I remember at the pub and I felt very wicked! Nine O'Clock in the morning having a drink on VE day."

MARY HULSE



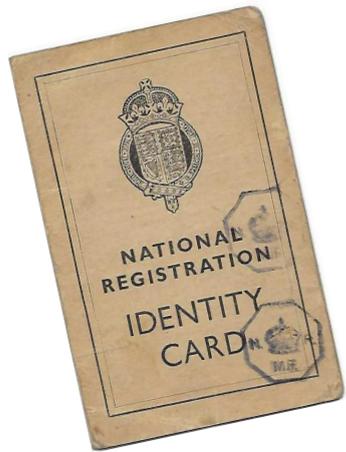
RAF BENTLEY PRIORY AT STANMORE IN MIDDLESEX , HEADQUARTERS OF FIGHTER COMMAND, 11 OCTOBER 1941.

©IWM

[1] *" Bentley Priory is best known for its pivotal role as Headquarters Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain in 1940."* - bentleypriorymuseum.org.

"My father was in the special constabulary in Bristol then when we moved to Painswick which is a village in the Cotswolds, he was in the Home Guard. And then when we came back to Harrow, he was a Special Constable based up in London in Tottenham Court Road ... He was a Special Constable for quite a few years holding back the grounds at various state processions."

HEATHER CONSTANCE LOUISE MOODIE



IDENTITY CARD.
PHOTO

©MICHAEL
PEARCE

"My Dad was a railway signaller, working mainly at Marylebone Station, Neasden Junction and various signal boxes on the old Great Central Line that led to Rugby, Leicester and the north via Aylesbury or Wycombe."

MICHAEL PEARCE

"There was one particular time where my mother didn't hear from my father for about six weeks; and so she wrote to the Military people and they wrote back and said 'no he's all right but unfortunately we can't tell you where he

is'

[...]

When he [father] came home it was such a magical thing but it must have been extremely difficult for my mother, and all the wives looking after children and not knowing whether the fathers were going to come back."

SYLVIA BOURDIN



"My dad didn't have to go to join up because he worked for the railway so it was a job that was essential work and he was on what they called the goods... He used to do firewatching when he was at work. He joined the home Guard, I used to have to help him with his gun and everything - practising what he'd do if he had an invasion."

BETTY ALEXANDER

"My mother didn't have a job when I was very very small. During the war she did, because all women were encouraged to work. She worked for Rothmans cigarette factory which was based at Headstone Lane Railway station... She must of had other jobs."

THELMA INWOOD

Monday 4th January 1943: *"Started Firewatching tonight. Seem quite a decent crowd. I have the top bunk."*

[DOROTHY WEBB'S DIARY EXTRACT]

HMC



"On the 14th November 1940, I, 20 year old Harry Vernon Nodder was called up for active service in the Second World War... I went into the Royal Engineers, as Driver Nodder 2130021, where I was supposed to drive lorries. This was a bit difficult as I actually couldn't drive! ... After basic training, where I proved to be extremely competent at drill, I was then posted all over the country with the Royal Engineers eventually being posted in 1942 to the Faroe Islands... Although I would say I did not see enemy action, I did my duty and am proud to have served my country."

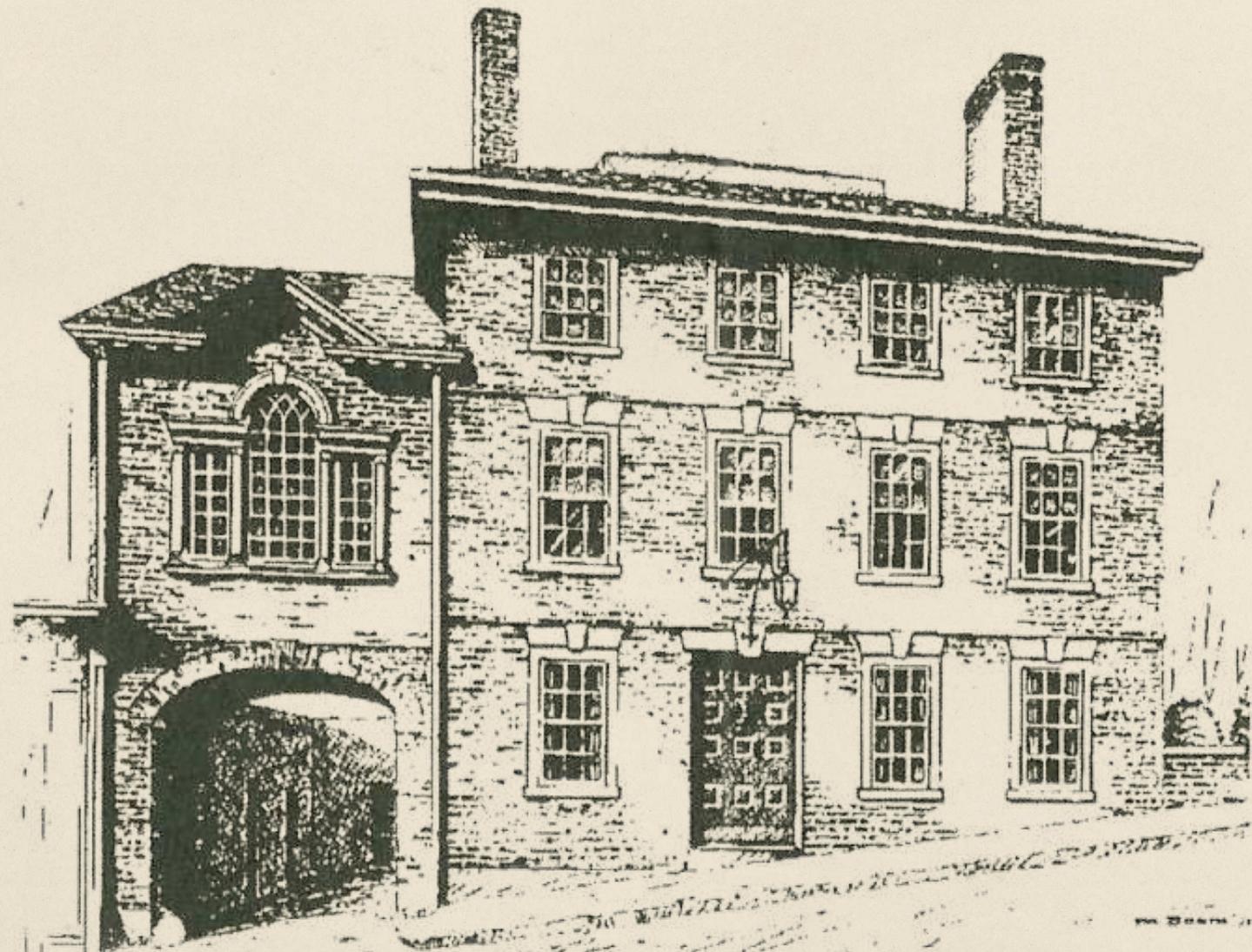
HARRY NODDER



THE HOME GUARD

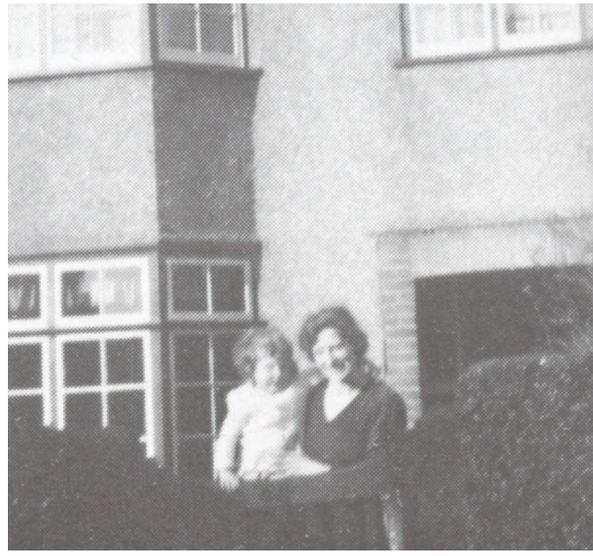
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*ON THE HOME
FRONT*

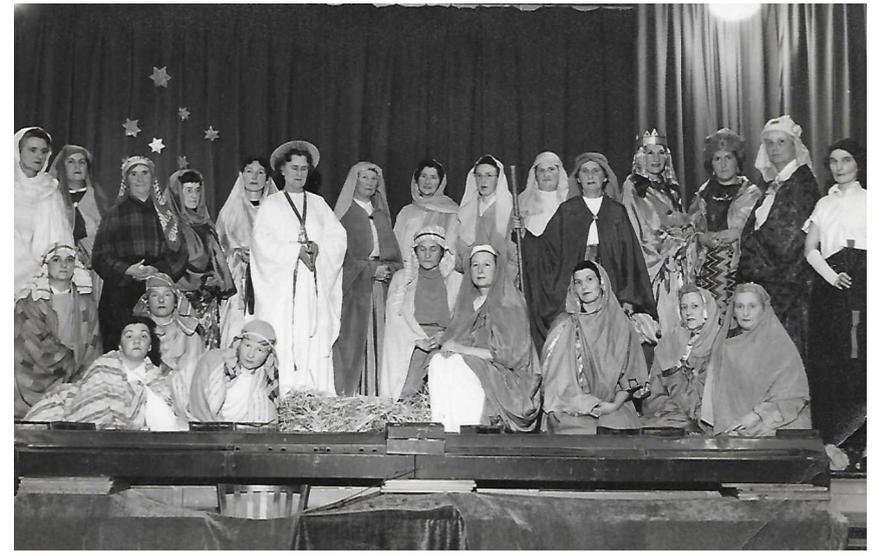




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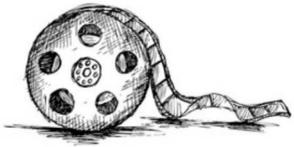


[6]

[1]GEORGE BEARDMORE AND JEAN WITH VICTORIA, 1940. COPY OF BOOK HELD IN HMM [2] 45 PINNER PARK AVENUE, NORTH HARROW, JEAN HOLDING VICTORIA AT GATE. COPY OF BOOK HELD IN HMM [3] TOWNS WOMENS GUILD ©MICHAEL PEARCE [4] MRS PRENDERGAST COMBINES HER SHELTER AND HER VEG PATCH' 1940. COURTESY OF THE PINNER ASSOCIATION [5] PEGGY FLACK JUST BEFORE THE WAR. HMC [6] ROXBOURNE HORTICULTURAL TRADING HUT ©MICHAEL PEARCE

"We used to go to the cinema at least twice a week, must have been very cheap in those days."

CLAIRE PALMER



"During the war, trains didn't run at night; and they used to run them, a good train, with guns on to protect because obviously they were after the railways- the bombers. They used to go off a lot."

[...]

"War was still on, but not very much when I went to work in Euston. I was fourteen in '55. We knew a lot about what has happening through newspapers. Used to go to the cinema and it would be on the newsreel. We had no tellies in those days so it was all what was in the paper."

BETTY ALEXANDER



"It was very interesting that we all looked after things and repaired them and nobody threw anything away."

[...]

[on air-raid shelters] "You felt that it wasn't nice somehow. It was dark, it was cold and we all had benches all the way along. There was a little bit of fear, then. And of course at night you could hear the bombs coming down."

SYLVIA BOURDIN



A YOUNG BETTY WITH
HER MOTHER
©BETTY ALEXANDER

"We used to sleep in the cellar. One night the building sustained a direct hit ... The whole house collapsed. And I remember as a child all the rubble falling on the dining room table and it drove four legs of the dining room table through the ceiling of the cellar. And when we woke up ' crash, bang, wallop,' glass everywhere and all that we saw when we looked up at the ceiling were the four legs that had come through the ceiling. And of course we had to get out so we had a mallet, like a big hammer and we banged on the paving stones and the emergency services dug us out and we all stood in the road in night dresses and pyjamas, glass and rubble everywhere."

BARRY MARCUS



"Shortly after war was declared we had a leaflet through the door to collect gas masks from a local school during an evening as soon as possible ... Every group of roads in Harrow had an air-raid warden's post. A small brick building about 10' x 10' where the duty wardens were based. The wardens did shifts according to their normal working hours. Their main job was seeing that the blackout was enforced. The warden's post had a register containing full details of all people living in the group of houses they were responsible for. This included visitors staying more than a few days."

[...]

"Some stray bombs fell on houses, or in gardens in the general area. Also some incendiary bombs usually dropped in clusters, especially around Harrow School... The bomb causing the greatest disruption fell in South Harrow in the roadway Northolt Road, in the middle of the main shopping centre."

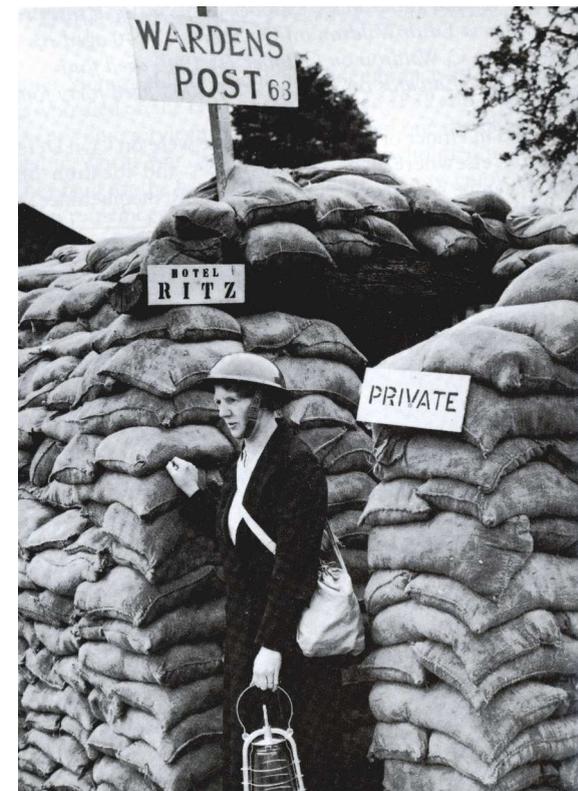
JIM WHITFIELD

"I was down the shelter in Pinner View which is one of the strongest shelters around here ... I didn't like it. Mum, I don't think would have gone down had I have not been a nervous wreck ... It was twenty-to-six in the morning. Mum woke up and she said ' come on it's daylight, it's all clear, let's go home ', and we just walked home, twenty minutes later a bomb fell... They were flying bombs. You didn't always get a siren beforehand ... I heard the thing coming. I can remember running behind the kitchen door which was swung out into the hallway... next thing I know I was in Harrow hospital... Margaret and dad were in bed here and they were both killed and mum was killed... I don't remember anything until I woke up in Harrow hospital."

[...]

"There were two entrances to the shelter. When The Blitz was on, The London Blitz, people would come from Albert Road and down one entrance and we'd come up from here and go down that entrance. You went down in level with the road, both ways, two flights of stairs, round the corner and into the Spinney. It was quite big... at one time it was very very crowded when the bombs were on and they were no bunks. The bunks weren't put in until after The Blitz. But I mean, by the time the flying bombs started, which is what ours was, there were very few people who went down there."

BETTY LEWIS



WARDENS POST
COURTESY OF THE PINNER ASSOCIATION

"I shall also never forget the dreadful sound of the Air Raid Siren."

[...]

"...long walk of nearly two hours from Durley Avenue to South Harrow with my Dad, pushing a wooden cart he made up from my old Pram. Once we reached the South Harrow Gas Works we had to join a long queue all waiting to get a precious load of Coke to keep our Kitchen Stove burning, and then the long walk home."

MALCOLM HUTTON

17th April 1941: *"My goodness what a night. Just got into bed when the guns started and noise didn't stop all night."*

[DOROTHY WEBB'S DIARY EXTRACT]

COURTESY OF HARROW MUSEUMS TRUST

"Only very few households owned a car so all activities involved walking, whether it was shopping or social visiting. The street was always busy with neighbours cleaning doorsteps and paths and working in gardens...

The Roxbourne allotments at the rear of our house, which stretched for about half a mile along the side of Yeading Brook were always a hive of activity with a hundred or so plots being cultivated by the local residents... The air raids were quite frightening. My parents spoke about the dangers so I had a childlike impression as opposed to a real understanding. When the blitz started, night time was a constant wail of sirens as the warning and then all clears were sounded.

Lots of explosions - both distant and close."

MICHAEL PEARCE



GEORGE BEARDMORE.
COPY OF BOOK HELD IN
HMM

"Locally, several people were killed in Edward Road, immediately across Kodak playing-fields, and a tremendous crater has appeared at the back of an empty house in Pinner Park Gardens."

GEORGE BEARDMORE

"When the air raid warning sirens sounded in the night, we slipped coats over our pyjamas and, with blankets under our arms, hurried down to the public air raid shelter just down the road. Here we sat it out, entertained with sing songs and stories told by friends and neighbours and do you know what - we kids loved it. Although we knew that death and destruction was raining down outside, I have no memories of being frightened or even concerned in any way. I guess it was just another normal night and we made the best of it."

PETER BAYLIS

"I remember being in Harrow once shopping with my mother and at the side of what was the Granada Cinema... there was an air raid shelter at the side of that... and I remember the alarm went when we were shopping."

[...]

"One thing I can remember is the Doodlebugs. You could see them going over with the flames spurting out of the rear end of them. We used to go in under the stairs and for some reason we thought they were a shelter and we would sit on piles of newspaper which probably wasn't a good idea. I can remember hearing the explosion of bombs, particularly the Doodlebugs. You saw them going over and you would hold your breath and wait for the bang and think 'thank goodness it's fallen on somebody else and not us'

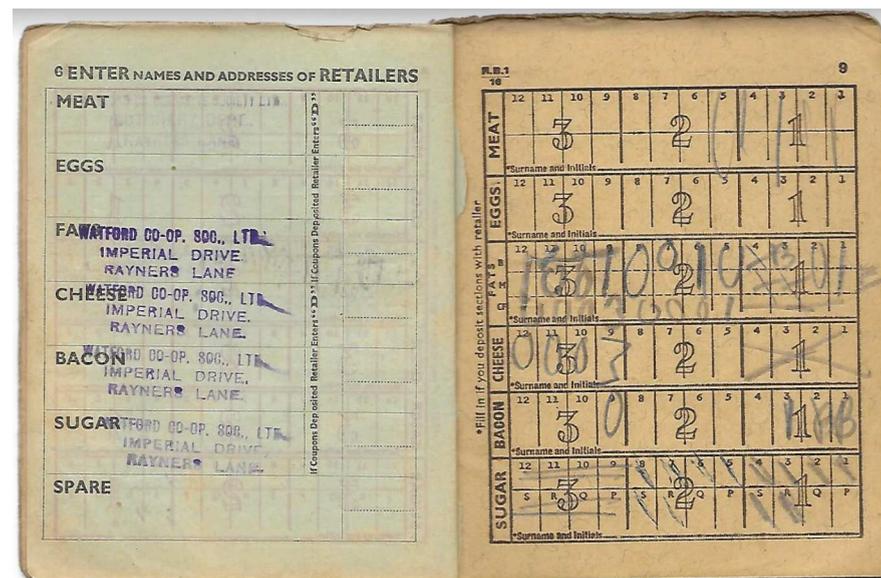
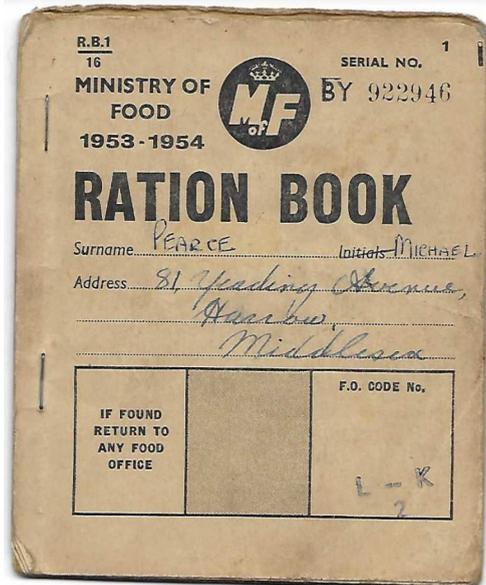
[...]



"Sweeties were rationed of course which was very hard for a child. I remember we used to swap some things. We didn't take sugar and we used to swap our sugar with somebody else for butter. But a lot of that sort of thing went on- people swapping things they didn't want for other things and of course if you knew somebody like a farmer, you could get a hold of eggs, poultry and things like that. We kept chickens."



HEATHER CONSTANCE LOUISE MOODIE



RATION BOOK
©MICHAEL PEARCE

"It was a delayed action bomb as I was told... we were notified that there was a bomb in our front garden and we should move out and so we went to a public shelter and it exploded later during the night so we were fortunate. We lost all our belongings, furniture etc... I suspect it [public shelter] was Harrow Weald recreation ground because that would have been the nearest one. After that we went to stay with a relative of my father's in Wealdstone and shared the house with them until another house further up the road became empty and we were allowed to rent it from then on... until 1950."

THELMA INWOOD



VICTORY OVER JAPAN & VICTORY IN EUROPE

Wendy 247

Church, Hill, Broadway,
STANMORE

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME
of
*Victory
in
Europe*
CELEBRATIONS

1945

Entertainments

Conjurer and Ventriloquist
Mr. H. WELDON
□□

Lightning Illustrations
by
Mr. C. BUCKLAND
□□

Punch and Judy Show
by
Mr. FROST
□□

Dancing on the Green
Music provided by
Mr. JACK OWEN
□□

Grand Finale
FIREWORK DISPLAY
□□

God Save The King.

PROGRAMME
of
VICTORY FETE

ORGANIZED BY THE FIREGUARDS
OF POST 100 AREA FOR ALL
CHILDREN WITHIN THAT AREA

ON
SATURDAY, JUNE 2nd, 1945

Commencing with
Carnival Procession
from St. John's Church at 2.15 p.m.
(Will all Children please assemble at the Church).

PATRON
Dr. E. F. CARPENTER

Prizes Presented
by
Sir JOHN FITZGERALD, Bart.



[1]



[2]



[3]

[1] VE DAY CELEBRATION ©MICHAEL PEARCE [2] VE DAY CELEBRATION BONFIRE ON VE DAY IN BELLFIELD AVENUE, HARROW WEALD. KINDLY DONATED BY ALLAN COOBAN WITH THANKS TO BRIAN MURPHY. HLHCA [3] VE DAY PARADE ©CLAIRE PALMER



"There was a knock at the door. When I opened it, a voice said 'Hello darling' and I saw a man in RAF uniform. It was my husband... What a wonderful end to VE day it was for me."

MRS A FINCH



"VE day made us all feel full of joy. The knowledge that the war was over and there would be no more bombing or threat of being conquered by the Nazis was paramount. At school we were all presented with a certificate containing a personal message to boys and girls from King George VI...A special entertainment afternoon was also held at a pub on Field End Road called The Clay Pigeon with lots of party food and entertainers. Life was suddenly full of light and happiness."

MICHAEL PEARCE

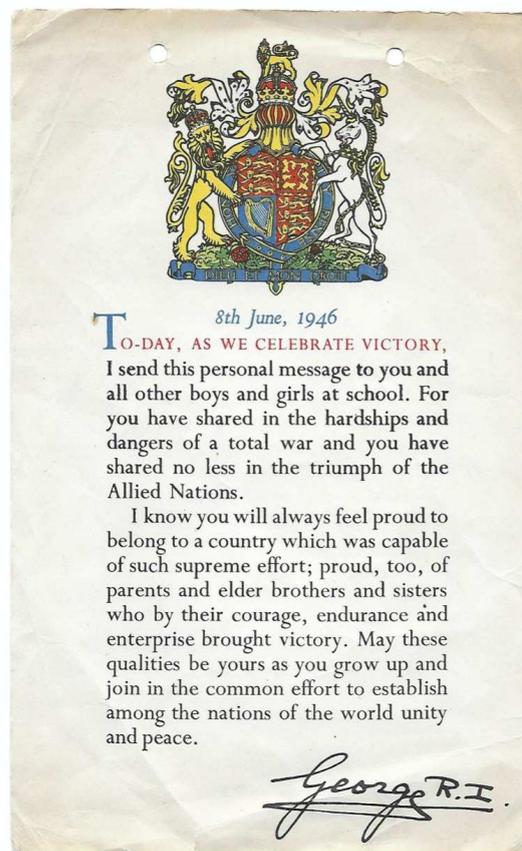
"I was evacuated in 1944, round about D-Day... and I was there for a year until after VE Day when I came home."

[...]

"VJ Day we had a street party in Greenfield Way, and I remember I had too much Blancmange or something, and I was rather ill in the bushes on this ruined house that had a landmine under it. But it was quite good fun- they had a table down the centre of the street the way you see in the old newsreels."

HEATHER CONSTANCE LOUISE

MOODIE



KING GEORGE VI'S LETTER TO THE CHILDREN

"... the celebrations came... I do remember kitchen tables and chairs being carried down to the street and set up ...And I remember plates piled high with food - sandwiches and cakes made by all the mums and pooled to make a gigantic feast. Long hoarded goodies were taken from secret stashes - in our case, from the back of the wardrobe. .. We ate until we were fit to bust"

PETER BAYLIS



"I remember my father, who was in the Fire Service, was at home when the news came through that hostilities would cease at one minute past midnight. He came excitedly and woke my six year old sister and me, telling us the war was over."

MRS NAN SHAW-DAVIES



"I know there were tables all set out on the big green in front of the houses. All the children were dressed up put on the back of a lorry with small union Jack's & we were driven round the whole estate to wave at very one."

LINDA WESTERN

21 May 1945 "... our two Victory Days were almost ruined by bronchitis ...but all the same I made myself join in the bonfires, the staying-up when I wanted to be in bed, and the fireworks. The curtains were left undrawn because a community spirit is abroad, and everyone wants to share in everyone else's rejoicings. I must be anti-social because I find that rejoicing with a hundred thousand others isn't my idea of fun, or even of celebration."

GEORGE BEARDMORE

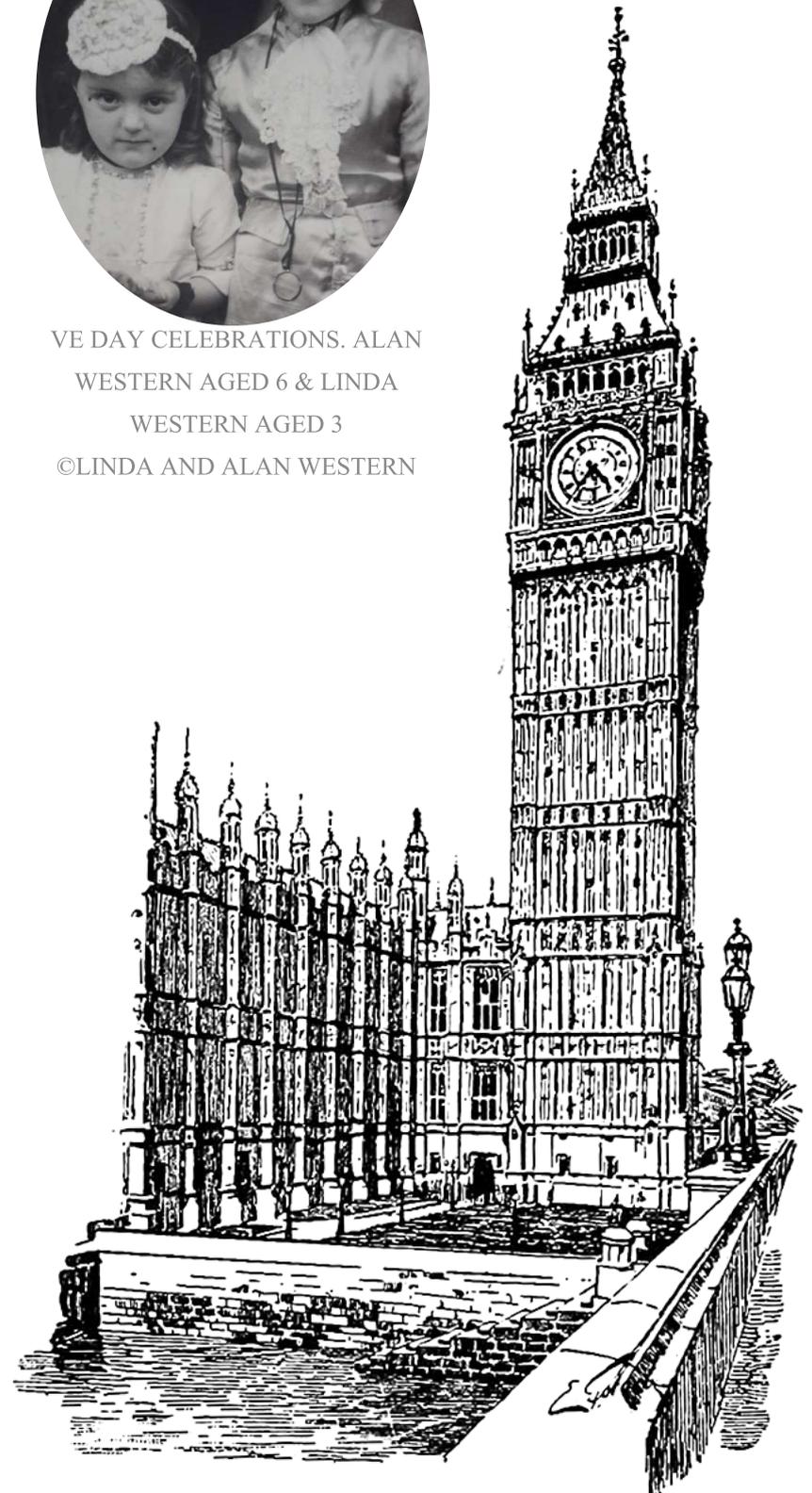
[From Civilians at War: Journals 1938-1946, published 1986, Oxford University Press]

"I was taken up to town by Dad and Mum... I was lifted up for a moment or two to see the King and Queen come out on to the balcony, and then the mad rush – carried along in the crush, almost off my feet much of the way along The Mall to Whitehall, and then I nearly suffocated being crushed like a sardine amongst so many people, and again lifted up to see the great man himself when he appeared..."

MALCOLM HUTTON



VE DAY CELEBRATIONS. ALAN WESTERN AGED 6 & LINDA WESTERN AGED 3
©LINDA AND ALAN WESTERN



"We went up to London ... It was mayhem. Then later on that week we went up again ... It was good fun up there."

BETTY LEWIS

"We didn't go to London but we read all about it..."

No more going down the shelters. No more worrying about bombs. It was a big relief because everybody was worried wherever they lived in England... rationing didn't really finish until 1954... things gradually got better"

BETTY ALEXANDER



"I finished work at eight o'clock in the morning, well there wasn't anything doing all night, we were on duty but there was nothing coming through, no messages or anything because it was all over, but I went up to London. I woke up after lunch, got up and had a bath and met up with friends and spent the evening and most of the night off in London as most people did. Went to Buckingham Palace and I can remember walking down The Strand and seeing St Paul's Cathedral lit up because we'd been in blackout for so long. It was very thrilling... I can't remember exactly but it was very strange. We'd all been busy for so long, I don't think it made me feel anything special, I was just jolly pleased the war was over. The atmosphere in London was terrific, all the people out all night long of course. I didn't get back home to Pinner I don't think until about 4 o'clock in the morning"

MARY HULSE



"Certainly the war left its mark, I think, on children."

[...]

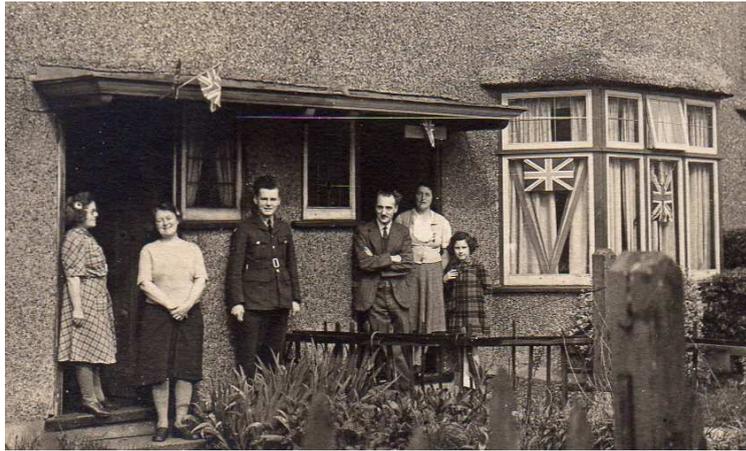
"We had a flag and we went up and we waved the flag. You felt you had to do something. We went to the Mall and looked at Buckingham Palace. This is why, to me, The Queen is such an important person because she was there in the army she was an AT [Auxiliary Territorial Service]..."

SYLVIA BOURDIN

"When the war first started everybody thought it was going to be over very quickly. And my mother was a seamstress, when she was at school, she had taken a course in dressmaking and she made me a little dress which was white and trimmed with red and blue to wear when the war ended. And she made that when the war started so of course when the war ended it didn't exactly fit me!.. It must have been organza or something, it was see-through with puff sleeves."



THELMA INWOOD



[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]

[1] VE CELEBRATIONS. ©CAROLINE BELL [2] VE DAY PARTY. KINGSLEY ROAD, SOUTH HARROW. HLHCA [3] VE DAY PARTY, SCARSDALE ROAD. HLHCA [4] VE DAY PINNER WOOD PARK ESTATE. HLHCA

"I was elated. I was sorry. I was sorry for both sides. Human beings killing each other for what?"

FRANCIS JOWERS

"I was at school and at lunch when the headmaster stood up in the dining hall and said the war in Europe was over and we could leave school after lunch, but be back tomorrow at 9 o'clock... That evening, like most of the houses in the road, we hung fairy or coloured lights in the house windows. On the next Saturday it was decided to have a children's street party. The road was closed... The milkman, baker and paraffin men were told to bring their horse and carts up the road early..."

One of the residents worked at Kodak and produced a show of cartoon films when it became dark enough. "

JIM WHITFIELD



[1]



[2]

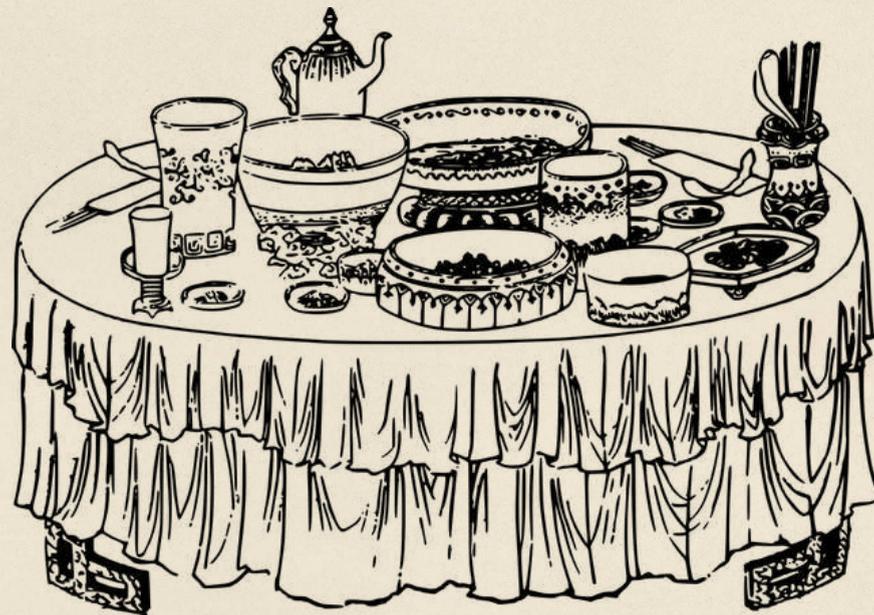


[3]



[4]

HARROW COUNCIL'S CELEBRATIONS





VICTORY PARADE, COLLEGE ROAD

HLHCA

4TH DECEMBER 1944

A VICTORY CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE WAS FORMED

THE VILLAGER, DECEMBER 1945:

"THE COUNCIL'S VICTORY CELEBRATIONS HELD IN HEADSTONE MANOR RECREATION GROUND ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE V.J HOLIDAY HAD TO BE PREPARED AT VERY SHORT NOTICE, AND PRODUCED AN ENORMOUS BONFIRE AS THE MAIN ATTRACTION."

THE VILLAGER, AUGUST 1945:

"AN OASIS OF LIGHT AND COLOUR, AMPLIFIED BY THE SURROUNDING DARKNESS BROUGHT A TOUCH OF FAIRYLAND TO THE TOP END OF THE HIGH STREET DURING V.E. CELEBRATIONS."

THE FLOODLIGHTING OF THE CHURCH AND THE FLAGS SUSPENDED ACROSS THE ROAD, WITH COLOURED LIGHTS OF THE NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS TO ADD TO THE GATEWAY OF THE SCENE, PROVIDED AS DELIGHTFUL A SPECTACLE AS ANY TO BE SEEN THOSE NIGHTS."

"MIDNIGHT ENTERTAINMENTS TO BE HELD ON THE SIX DAYS, 31ST MAY TO 7TH JUNE 1946 (SATURDAY CELEBRATIONS AND SUNDAY EXCLUDED) AT THE FOLLOWING CINEMAS: ODEON CINEMAS, SOUTH HARROW, KENTON, WEALDSTONE AND RAYNERS LANE; DOMINION CINEMA, HARROW; EMBASSY CINEMA, NORTH HARROW"

25th May,
1946.
Victory
Celebrations
Committee.

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APPENDIX.
VICTORY CELEBRATIONS.

(A) MIDNIGHT MATINEES

DOMINION THEATRE, HARROW, Monday, June 3rd.
ODEON THEATRE, RAYNERS LANE, Tuesday, June 4th.
ODEON THEATRE, WEALDSTONE, Wednesday, June 5th.
ODEON THEATRE, SOUTH HARROW, Thursday, June 6th.
ODEON THEATRE, KENTON, Friday, June 7th.

ALL PERFORMANCES COMMENCE AT 11 P.M.

THE WESTERN BROS.

The Radio "Cads"

PETER BROUGH
and
"ARCHIE ANDREWS"

DORIS BURNS
and
LOUIS DARE
B.B.C. Duettists

HERBERT
ALDRIDGE
Compere

NORMAN
MAJOR
"Watch your pockets"

FRANK LYNN and MARGOT, Comedy Musical Presentation

SYD. HOWARD

Acc of all Hoop Jugglers

GWENDO PAUL

Piano Accordion Virtuoso from
Radio Programmes, "Keyboard
Cavalcade" and "Howdy Folks"

The Well Known Radio Comedian

TOMMY BRANDON

From B.B.C. "Music Hall," "Old Mother Riley," "Shipmates Ashore"
and "Workers' Playtime," etc.

Admission by ticket (1/- including tax) obtainable at Cinemas one week
before advertised date of performance.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW VICTORY
CELEBRATION COMMITTEE MINUTES, 1946

©LBH

THE NET COST OF VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS TO BE
£2,972 18s. 7d. That's £105,692.09 in 2020

OVER 20,000 HOUSES REPAIRED BY THE COUNCIL
FROM WAR DAMAGE

"OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE TO BE AUTHORISED TO
ARRANGE FOR THE ATTENDANCE OF A CIRCUS AT
KENTON RECREATION GROUND FROM 7TH TO 12TH MAY,
19-15, 1945"

OLD PEOPLE'S TEA PARTIES
1,888 TEAS HANDED OUT IN 1946, PUBLISHED IN THE
LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

(B) HEADSTONE MANOR RECREATION GROUND.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH Commence 2 p.m.		SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH	MONDAY, JUNE 10TH Commence 2 p.m.	
MEDVEDEFF'S BALALAIKA ORCHESTRA	BICYCLE POLO	2 P.M. No. 1 REGIONAL BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE	GRAND ATHLETIC MEETING (under A.A.A. Rules) including INTER-CLUB TEAM RACE with well-known Internationals also EXHIBITION RUN by DOUGLAS WILSON (English 1½ Mile Record Holder)	BAND OF THE EAST SURREY REGIMENT
PONY RIDES	HORSE RIDING GYMKHANA	3 P.M. BAND OF THE IRISH GUARDS		OPEN AIR DANCING
OPEN AIR DANCING		5 P.M. No. 1 REGIONAL BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE		PONY RIDES
PUNCH & JUDY		7 P.M. BAND OF THE IRISH GUARDS		METROPOLITAN POLICE BAND
MILITARY BAND PERFORMANCES	DISPLAY by MEMBERS of HARDY SEA CADET UNIT			JIMMY YARDE'S DANCE BAND
TEAS AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS				TEAS AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
ADMISSION FREE		ADMISSION FREE	ADMISSION FREE	

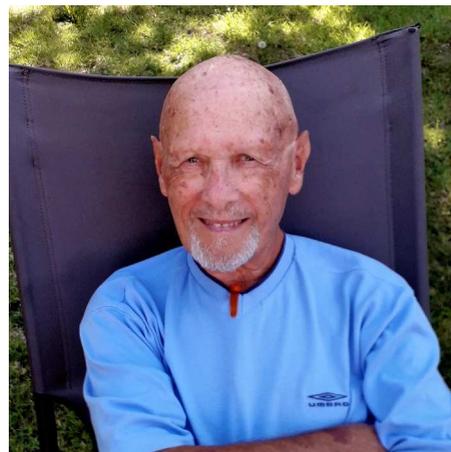
25th May,
1946.
Victory
Celebrations
Committee.

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These former and current residents of Harrow are some of those who were interviewed in early 2020 for our 75th Anniversary for VE Day project. Their oral histories, along with others, will be deposited into the Museum's permanent collection.



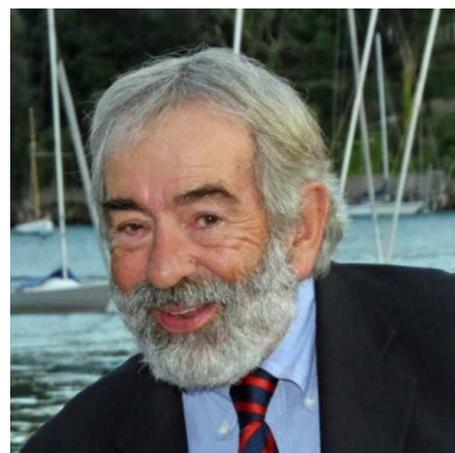
HEATHER MOODIE



BARRY MARCUS



FRANCIS JOWERS



JEFFREY AUSTIN



BETTY LEWIS



PETER BAYLIS



SYLVIA BOURDIN



THELMA INWOOD



BETTY ALEXANDER



MARY HULSE



VICTOR ROAD, CORNER OF ALBERT
ROAD.
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