

# VE Day

*Victory in Europe Day, known as VE Day, took place on Tuesday 8 May 1945; it's the day the surrender of Germany in Europe was announced, and it marks the end of World War II.*

A week before, on 30 April, Hitler had committed suicide, leaving Grand Admiral Donitz of the German army to admit defeat. The act of military surrender was first signed at 02:41 on 7 May, and a slightly modified document was signed in Berlin on 8 May.

Although the war continued in Japan, Germany's defeat in Europe was celebrated throughout the western world.

In Britain, the day was declared a national holiday and more than a million people celebrated, waving flags and dancing in the streets. In London, cheering crowds massed in Trafalgar Square and along the Mall to see King George VI and his family (including the future Queen Elizabeth II), appear on the balcony with the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.



VE Day, Trafalgar Square, 1945

Across the country, houses and streets were decorated in red, white and blue as a show of patriotic pride and victory.

*Most European countries continue to celebrate the end of World War II on 8 May, and 2020 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this important historic event*

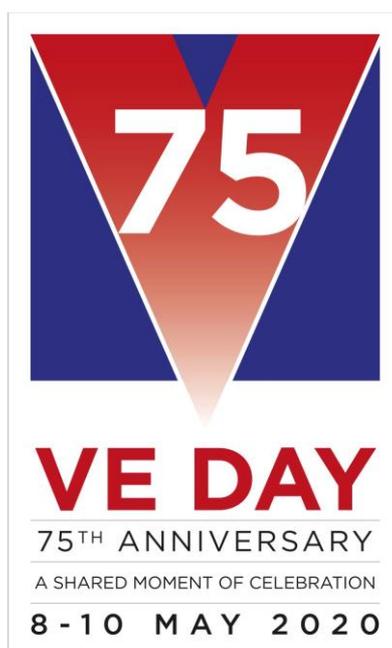
## VE Day 75

*To mark the anniversary, it had been intended to hold three days of national events over the long weekend of 8 to 10 May 2020. Sadly, the majority of celebrations have had to be cancelled or postponed.*

Although the expected street parties and gatherings are not possible, there are ways in which we can unite as a nation to commemorate the occasion from the safety of their own homes.

### Friday 8 May 2020

- 11.00am The Royal British Legion is calling on people to join in a two-minute silence as a way of marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in Europe.
- 3.00pm The Nation's toast to the heroes of World War II  
Safely at home, people are encouraged to stand, raise a mug, cup or glass and make the toast – "To those who gave so much, we thank you".
- 9.00pm The Queen will address the nation, delivering a special television message from Windsor Castle at 9.00pm – which was the time her father, King George VI, gave a radio address in 1945.



# Activities and ideas ...

Purley Residents Support Group (PRSC) is planning some community activity for VE Day on Friday 8 May.

As part of this, residents are invited to decorate their homes and themselves in red, white and blue and to have “afternoon tea/picnic” on their front lawns between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. There will be a prize for the best decorated house!

At 3.00pm, there will be a community toast to commemorate the original VE Day.

A mobile DJ will travel around the village playing 1940s music, and there may also be some special characters roaming around for children and adults to see – and guess who they are!

A photographer will also be going around taking pictures as a record of the day.

**We'll Meet Again!**

PRSC

Decorate the front of your house

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 1.30-3.30

'Social distancing'

Purley on Thames Tea Party

Take tea on your front lawn

Award for the best decorated house!

Local photographer will be recording the day!

75 VE DAY 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

DJ Jacko's mobile disco will be touring the village

Dress up 1940's style or in red white and blue.  
Lets' get our village partying together again!

## Decorate your house

*Even if you don't have a flag to fly, there are some simple but effective ways to decorate your house*

Templates for bunting to hang in windows may be found on West Berkshire Council's [web site](#). Simply print and choose whether to use the blank template and design your own, or to colour in the ones with pictures on – or you could do a mixture of both!



Your bunting could be decorated with flags, pictures of soldiers, relatives who were in the Army, Navy or RAF, or you might like to have rainbows, doves of peace or poppies.

If you're looking for inspiration, more ideas and guidance can be found on the [BBC web site](#)

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Red white and blue paper chains are very easy to make and are another fun way to decorate your house!

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Pictures of soldiers, etc, don't have to be used on bunting, they could be drawn or painted and put in windows for all to see. Or you could display photographs of family who fought in the Second World War, or those who worked on the Home Front.

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A set of free, printable VE Day decorations – including bunting, cupcake toppers and wrappers, food labels can be found [here](#)

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If you'd like a more permanent decoration, the [Royal British Legion Industries](#) (RBLI) charity has launched the "Tommy in the Window" campaign to celebrate national heroes past and present. Special commemorative military figures and stickers can be bought and put in windows with proceeds going towards helping military veterans find employment.

## *Decorate yourself!*

*Having dressed your house, you need to think about how you're going to look the part too – you can go for authentic 1940s style or a simpler patriotic look*

You could dress as a soldier, sailor, air force, member of the Home Guard, land girl, factory worker or civilian.

Tips on dressing like an evacuee - [http://www.cees.org.uk/evacuees\\_dress.htm](http://www.cees.org.uk/evacuees_dress.htm)

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Women's hairdos were very styled with lots of waves, curls and rolls – no messy looks! Unstyled or dirty hair was creatively covered with a scarf, turban or large hat.

More information about hairstyles (men's as well as women's), can be found [here](#).



You can make flags to wave.

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Make your own rosettes to wear – there's a template to cut out and colour [here](#) or you can make one out of strips of coloured paper or ribbon.

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Paper hats can be created from old newspaper, wrapping paper, whatever you have to hand. Your hats can be simple and decorated, or you can find instructions and videos for making sailor hats, military caps, etc, online.

## What to eat

In 1945, food was rationed and there were no supermarkets so shopping and cooking were a very different experience. More information can be found [here](#)

The Ministry of Food published recipes like this one for potato scones to show families how to make most the most of their rations while having the most filling, nutritionally balanced meals possible.

### Potato Scones

6 oz flour

4 oz mashed potato

1 teaspoonful baking powder

½ teaspoonful salt

1 oz fat

4-5 tablespoonfuls milk

Mix the flour and salt. Add the baking powder and work into the mashed potato. Rub in the fat. Blend to a soft dough with milk. Roll out to ¼ inch thickness. Cut into rounds. Brush the tops with milk. Bake on greased baking sheets for 15 minutes in a hot oven. For a sweet scone add 1 oz sugar.



[Potatoes](#) were used in all kinds of unusual and imaginative ways in the wartime kitchen – quite a few other recipes can be found online.



One of the stars of the “Dig for Victory” campaign was Potato Pete, a character used to encourage people to eat potatoes.

*Some ideas to make your tea party a VE Day celebration*

- Red, white and blue meringues make a patriotic addition
- Cup cakes – you could ice them in red, white, blue or perhaps you’d prefer to make some small flags, put them on cocktail sticks and pop them in the top of your cakes
- Decorate your tea party with red, white and blue balloons – or perhaps you have flowers or plants you could use instead

## *What to drink*

*If you don't simply want to have a cup of tea, you could try lemonade, beer, ginger beer, cocktails (with or without alcohol) or perhaps a summery drink like Pimms.*

Just don't forget to have your drink of choice to hand for the toast at three o'clock!

## *Music and dancing*



*Don't forget this is a celebration!*

Dance styles of the 1940s were centred on swing and included the jitterbug, lindy hop and jive – perhaps you could learn and practice them as part of your lockdown exercise routine!

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A playlist of 1940s swing and jazz is likely to include American artists such as Bob Hope, Glen Miller, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Al Jolson, and Fred Astaire.

Very Lynn is, of course, one of the best-remembered British singers of the time so you might want to include “We’ll meet again” or “There’ll be Bluebirds over the White Cliffs of Dover”.

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You might also want to look up the words to some of the more well-known songs and have a sing-a-long!

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Don't forget to look (or listen!) out for the DJ who'll be travelling around the village playing 1940s music.

## *Some useful sites:*

The government's VE Day 75 web site - <https://ve-vjday75.gov.uk/> - there's even a toolkit with printable bunting, posters, etc, and a recipe for flapjacks!

English Heritage has some interesting information as well as a VE Day party pack to download - <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/ve-day>

Bletchley Park also an activity pack - <https://bletchleypark.org.uk/cms/2020/04/ve-day-activity-pack-3.pdf>

Royal British Legion - <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/ve-day-75>



*If you have more ideas for ways to decorate yourself and your house, or recipes and ideas for tea parties, please let us know – and don't forget to send photographs of your VE Day celebrations!*

*Just send an e-mail to [asstclerk@purleyonthames.net](mailto:asstclerk@purleyonthames.net)*