



# Celebrating VE Day

## **A celebration heard around the world! Street parties in the UK started in 1919 as 'Peace Teas' after World War One (1914-1918).**

This was the first time street parties had been organised by residents on a mass basis. They were part of the Peace Treaty celebrations, and also provided a special treat for children to sit down for a tea in times of hardship. Following the military surrender signed by Germany on 7th May, Victory in Europe was declared on 8th May 1945 to signal the end of the war.

Celebrations erupted all over Britain with crowds gathering at local landmarks to rejoice. Crowds were encouraged to wear patriotic red, white and blue. Local communities came together to host joyous street parties, dances and sing-songs all across the country; many lasting until the small hours of the morning. Bonfires lit up the skies with reports of Hitler effigies being burned up and down the country.

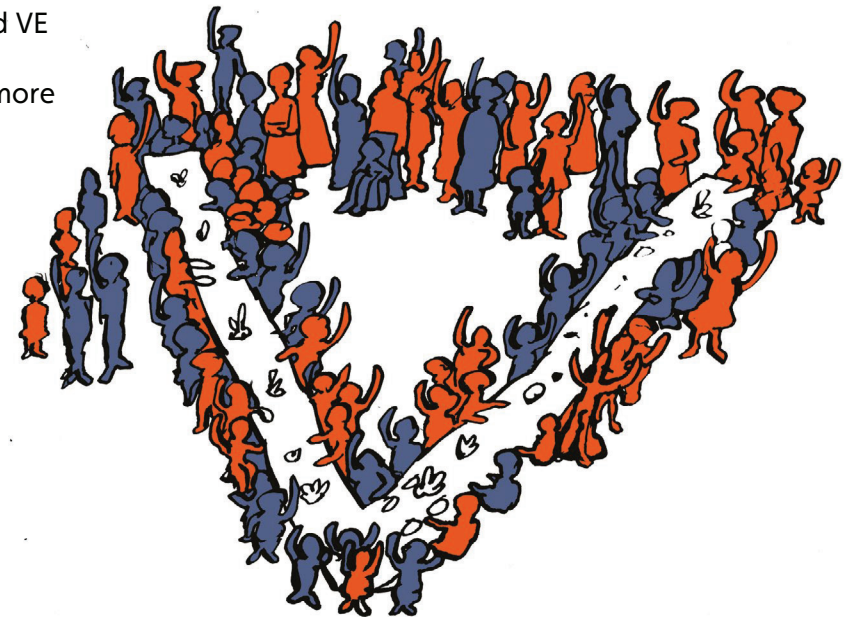
It is important to note that amongst the celebrations, the war in the Far East continued and many families would also have been mourning the loss of their loved ones.

## Activities

- 1 Read first-hand accounts of how people in Scotland celebrated VE Day on 8th May 1945. Diary extracts can be found at: [scottisharchivesforschools.org/LettersAndDiaries/VictoryInEuropeCelebrations.asp](http://scottisharchivesforschools.org/LettersAndDiaries/VictoryInEuropeCelebrations.asp).
- 2 Watch the Scottish celebrations of VE Day like this street procession in Dumbarton: [poppyscotland.org.uk/veday75/](http://poppyscotland.org.uk/veday75/)
- 3 Research how your town celebrated VE Day. Why not do some internet research to see if you can find out more about how VE Day was celebrated where you live?

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

During Edinburgh's VE Day celebrations, chocolates and chewing gum were showered upon the thousands of young people who had gathered in the streets of the city centre. It was also reported a marine conducted a community sing-song of war-time favourites such as, 'Roll Out The Barrell' and 'Land of Hope and Glory' as paper confetti and flags waved throughout the bustling streets.





# Host your own VE Day party

## Decorations for your VE Day Party

Throwing your own VE Day party is great way to engage young people with WW2 and VE Day. With anticipation of VE Day announcements looming, communities across Britain were decorating cities, towns and villages on the days running up to 8th May 1945. Flags were hoisted, Union Jack bunting was draped across public spaces and homemade confetti was scattered down streets across Great Britain.

## Activities

- 1 Collect old newspapers and decorate your home with recycled paper chains. See how long a chain you and your classmates can make.
- 2 Reuse old T-shirts and create your own VE Day bunting. Why not make your commemorative VE Day bunting to treasure forever. Find a simple bunting template to cut out here:

[tes.com/teaching-resource/diy-bunting-template-12129619](https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/diy-bunting-template-12129619)

- 3 Make your very own Spitfire and hang on your ceiling with invisible thread. Find a Spitfire template to cut out here:  
[teachingideas.co.uk/world-war-2/make-your-own-spitfire](https://teachingideas.co.uk/world-war-2/make-your-own-spitfire)

## Fun & Games at your VE Day Party

The lives of children were massively impacted by WW2 with the threat of evacuations, gas attacks, bombing raids, rationing and changes at home and school. Games provided much needed respite and normality with outdoors activities such as football becoming increasingly popular throughout the war for both civilians and those in Service.

## Activities

- 1 Jump rope was a very popular pastime for children during the war. Take up a skipping challenge – who can reach to 75 skips? Are there any 1940s rhymes you know to go along with your skipping challenge – why not research some?
- 2 Get out in the fresh air and get involved in a game of Chutes and Ladders or Hopscotch – all you need is chalk.

# VE Day Party Cake Bake

No party is complete without cakes! Still very much faced with austerity, communities joined together and shared limited food to create special celebratory spreads with lashings of warm tea. Although rationing was still in place during VE Day, people baked special treats like Victory cakes and Lord Woolton pie. Proceeds from your VE Day party bake sale could go to Poppyscotland.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Under rationing, home cooks had to get inventive with their baking. To overcome the lack of eggs, recipes would often call for mashed potatoes to be used instead. Try this version of Scottish shortbread [www.recipespastandpresent.org.uk/wartime/717/](http://www.recipespastandpresent.org.uk/wartime/717/)

## WEEKLY FOOD ALLOWANCE

**Here is a typical weekly food allowance for one adult during WW2. Children would receive half this amount:**

- Bacon and ham (3-4 slices/rashers) 4 oz
- Other meats – 2 small chops
- Butter 2 oz
- Cheese 2 oz
- Margarine 4 oz
- Cooking fat 4 oz
- Milk 3 pints
- Plus 1 packet dried milk per month
- Sugar 8 oz
- Preserves every two months 1 lb
- Tea 2 oz
- Egg (shell egg) 1
- 1 packet dried egg per month
- Sweets 12 oz

## Activities

- 1 Create a WW2 tuck shop selling wartime favourites like cola cubes, sherbet lemons, barley sugars, pear drops and liquorice.
- 2 Follow ration restrictions and use powdered milk and egg in recipes. Do a taste test – can anyone tell the difference? Have a go at recreating a wartime bake like this low sugar carrot cake. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome/recipes/wartime-carrot-cake](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome/recipes/wartime-carrot-cake).
- 3 Design your very own VE Day cake recipe using WW2 rationing ingredients. Decorate with wartime sweets and dried fruits. (see weekly food allowance list).

# VE Day Party Tea & Toast



## Help our Armed Forces community by hosting a Poppyscotland Tea & Toast.

Tea & Toast comes from a military tradition of having a cup of tea and slice of toast at break times when away on operations, providing a comforting reminder of home.

## Host a Poppyscotland Tea & Toast at home.

It is really easy to organise and great fun. All you need is some tea bags, some hot water and lots of toast. Poppyscotland's Regional Fundraising team are here to help you - from providing materials like Poppy bunting, napkins and collection tins, to letting you know the easiest way to send us the donations you worked hard to raise:

[poppyscotland.org.uk/tea-&-toast/](http://poppyscotland.org.uk/tea-&-toast/)

## Activity

- 1 Try out a wartime bread recipe on your guests like this one [www.thewartimekitchen.com/?p=106](http://www.thewartimekitchen.com/?p=106). Do a taste comparison to a modern loaf—can you taste the difference?



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Federation of Bakers introduced the 'National Loaf' in 1942. An everyday staple, the bread was made of wholemeal flour and packed full of vitamin B1. This was due to the reduction in the import of wheat which meant more flour was extracted from the grain. Unfortunately, the 'National Loaf' did not have many fans with many finding the bread's grey colour and unusual texture very unappealing.

# Music of WW2



## Ready for a sing-song?

Music during WW2 provided civilians and soldiers with a much-needed escape from the bleak hardships of wartime life. As well as being entertaining, music was an important morale booster for the British with American big band leaders Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw proving incredibly popular on the airwaves. The songs of the era often focused on feelings of longing and resilience which resonated to both the Home Front and Armed Forces.



## Activities

- 1 Sing along to some wartime favourites during your VE Day. See Poppyscotland's VE Day Playlist and Sing-a-Long sheets: [poppyscotland.org.uk/veday75/](http://poppyscotland.org.uk/veday75/)
- 2 Listen to the sound of the big bands. What different instruments can you hear in the songs? Here's one of WW2's most well-known instrumentals to get budding musicians started. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vOUYry\\_5Nw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vOUYry_5Nw)
- 3 Learn more about 'Forces Sweetheart' Vera Lynn or big band leader Glenn Miller.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Barrowlands, one of Scotland's most beloved dancehalls, remained open throughout WW2 despite bombing threats. The precursor to the now iconic shooting star sign was a neon light of a 'barra-boy' holding a wheelbarrow. It was taken down during the war as William Joyce (Nazi propaganda politician) frequently mentioned the landmark during radio broadcasts. It was eventually removed in case of recognition from German planes.

## DID YOU KNOW?

London born singer Vera Lynn, affectionately known as the 'Forces Sweetheart' had her own radio show, Sincerely Yours – Vera Lynn, where she passed on messages to troops serving overseas from their loved ones. The show was immensely popular with over 2000 requests for messages a week.



# Dancing in WW2

Dancing was one of the most popular pastimes in Britain, with young men and women flocking to local dancehalls, ballrooms and church halls to dance their cares away. These places offered a friendly atmosphere and much needed escape from the everyday challenges faced during the war. Civilians socialised with local and overseas forces. In the early 1940s, American troops introduced British dancers to new fast-paced dance crazes like the Lindy Hop and Jitterbug.

## Activities

- 1 Change up your social dancing class, get those endorphins going and have a go at the Jitterbug. See YouTube for lots of great instructional videos like: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs8tbzUr6cQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs8tbzUr6cQ) and this website for step-by-steps instructions: [dance.lovetoknow.com/Jitterbug\\_Dance\\_Steps](https://dance.lovetoknow.com/Jitterbug_Dance_Steps)
- 2 Host a dancing competition with family members dancing to our Poppyscotland VE Day playlist.



### POPPYSCOTLAND VE DAY PLAYLIST

**Glenn Miller**  
In The Mood

**The Andrews Sisters**  
-Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy  
-Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree  
-Chattanooga Choo Choo

**Johnny Mercer**  
G.I. Jive

**Vaughn Monroe**  
When The Lights Go On All  
Over The World

**Spike Jones**  
Pack Up Your Troubles In  
Your Old Kit Bag

**Vera Lynn**  
We'll Meet Again

**Flanagan and Allen**  
Run, Rabbit, Run

**Gracie Fields**  
Thing-Ummy-Bob