

PEACE AT LAST

Iain Wakeford 2017



The villagers of Mayford held their VE Day party on the Green outside the Bird In Hand.

In April 1945 the Woking Council of Churches proposed that a special service should be held on Wheatsheaf Recreation Ground on the day after the cessation of hostilities, but it was generally thought that everyone would 'do their own thing', so the idea was quietly dropped.

The war came to an end on the 7th May with many streets and villages immediately

organising their own celebrations, such as at Mayford where the Village Green hosted a massive party. Ron Stillwell in Old Woking recalled that 'tables were set up along Rydens Way. Everybody clubbed together to provide food for the tea. The party started around 3.00pm and went on until late in the evening'. At Knaphill, Keith Sadler later recalled that 'we built an enormous bonfire on the common at

the end of Oak Tree Road to celebrate; another load of kids built a similar bonfire on the corner across the road from the Garibaldi Pub at the junction of Chobham Road and the High Street. We built huge bonfires on the same sites when VJ day was declared.'

With Victory in Japan in August signalling the end of the Second World War discussions began in the town on the provision of a War

In Westfield the residents of Downsvie Avenue brought out their tables and chairs to sit down for lunch.





At Goldsworth the children of Cherry Street gathered for a photograph before they too settled down to a tea in the

Memorial in the town. The villages started looking at how they could commemorate the war also, with most obviously opting to add the names of the Second World War heroes to the memorials to those who fell during the First World War. In Byfleet those names included three women and one gentleman from the village who died during the air-raid on the Vickers factory at Brooklands on the 4th September 1940 (Irene Coleman, Gwendoline Goddard, Dorothy Smith and Arthur Woodward).

1939 + 1945

wokinghistory.org

REGINALD F. HOPPER
WILLIAM D. JONES
HOWARD MORAN
HUGH A. SIBBALD
DOROTHY SMITH
PERCY SMITHERS
ARTHUR WOODWARD

1939 + 1945

wokinghistory.org

JOHN C. BEARDMORE
WILLIAM J. BENNELL
REGINALD BURGESS
IRENE COLEMAN
HENRY J. COLLIER
GWENDOLINE GODDARD
WILLIAM G. HADDRELL



In Brookwood they decided to build a new Memorial Hall in memory of their dead, whilst in St Johns the former YMCA Hut donated by the Canadian's, was to become their temporary Memorial Hall whilst funds were raised for a more permanent building.

Meanwhile Woking Council's 'official' celebrations were being organised by a special sub-committee. The Woking Electric Supply Company agreed to supply floodlights on Wheatsheaf Common where an area was to be reserved for dancing, whilst Cllr Ashley Cook was authorised to arrange for loud speakers so that the music could be heard, and for a 'speaker van' to patrol the district advertising the festivities. The council had hoped to have a

military band playing music at the event, but apparently none were available. Cllr Cawsey undertook to see if he could obtain some fireworks (the Deputy Surveyor to the council being unable to secure any), and the Assistant Clerk of the Council was instructed to communicate with the Commanding Officer at Inkerman 'with a view to arranging a baseball match by the Canadian army on Wheatsheaf Rec, on the afternoon of VJ+1'.

It seems most people enjoyed the celebrations, although some nearby residents may not have appreciated the disruption quite so much. It is known that a 'deputation' of residents from Wheatsheaf Close visited the Council's Parks Committee on the 21st June 1945 and possibly as a result of that the Council later recorded that the fairground operator was to be instructed to 'close the fair at 10pm sharp'.

The plaques added to Byfleet's War Memorial at the junction of the High Road and Chertsey Road.

HAVING FUN RAISING FUNDS

The VE Day (and VJ Day) celebrations were obviously quite special, but it seems that throughout the war the hostilities had not prevented local people from having fun - whilst at the same time raising funds.

I have a number of programmes and advertisements for events throughout the war including a concert held by the Weyside Singers at the Atalanta Ballroom in aid of the Polish Relief Fund of March 1941. The following May the 'Anglo-Russian Friendship Week' raised £1,500 for a mobile x-ray unit (with the same amount being donated in 1943 for a new ward at Stalingrad Hospital) and in the spring of 1943 a target of £600,000 was set (and more than raised) in the 'Wings for Victory' week. Events included an open air dance at Horsell Sports Ground, a 'Baby Show' at Wheatsheaf Rec., and a Boxing Tournament at the Grand Theatre.

Bagshot Rural District Council – the smallest in the county – raised £300,000, with Chobham apparently contributing £128,000 of that and Bisley £40,000. According to Sharon Cross, the Curator of Surrey Heath Museum in her book on 'Our Home Front' (published in 1995) 'the outstanding success of the week was a 'mock-auction', the highlight of which was the total of £500 bid for a dozen eggs'.

1944 saw the 'Salute the Soldier Week', set up by the Woking National Savings Committee, which raised £640,000, with events ranging from the sedate 'Window Spotting Display' to a more energetic display of army equipment. Camberley & Frimley UDC only managed to raise £200,000, whilst apparently Bagshot RDC once again excelled itself with a total of £260,000 from a host of events such as a Gala at Bagshot Park, with baby-shows, whilst drives, flower shows and country dancing adding to the enjoyment of the locals.

IN AID OF THE
WOKING WINGS FOR VICTORY WEEK

GRAND
BOXING
TOURNAMENT

(under I.S.B.I. Rules), at the
GRAND THEATRE,
WOKING.

by kind permission of LT.-Col. R. C. D. CHATTERTON DICKSON,
Comm'd. No. 1 Holding Battn., R.A.S.C., on

Friday, March 19th, 1943.

COL. G. F. GOUGH, D.S.O., M.C.,
has kindly consented to present the Prizes.

Officials :—

Capt. C. R. THOMPSON, M.C.	Capt. F. S. SMITH,
Capt. S. HURST.	Lieut. F. PEDLEY.
	Lieut. F. KEELING,
M.C.	S.M.I. DURBIDGE, A.P.T.C.
Chief Whip	Q.M.S. GRAY, A.P.T.C.
Medical Officer	Major A. E. L. PATTERSON, D.S.O., R.A.M.C.

Price - Sixpence.

PYRFORD'S EGG WEEK, APRIL 1940

Since at least the 1930's the Church of England Waifs & Strays Society had held an 'Egg Week' requesting local people to donate surplus eggs to their homes at Pyrford for the benefit of the crippled children in their care, but how successful such an event was at times of rationing I do not know. This colourful poster is from April 1940 may have attracted your attention, but with £500 being bid for a dozen eggs in Bagshot (as noted above) I doubt that there were that many 'surplus' eggs about!

St. Nicholas' & St Martin's
Orthopædic Hospital, Pyrford
The Church of England Waifs and Strays Society

EGG WEEK

SATURDAY, APRIL 13th
To
Saturday, April 20th, 1940

GIFTS of EGGS will be
welcomed at the
Hospital between the
- - above dates - -

PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS

St. Nicholas' and St. Martin's
Orthopædic Hospital, Pyrford.
The Church of England Waifs and Strays Society.

EGG WEEK

Saturday, April 13th,
to
Saturday, April 20th.
1940.

GIFTS of NEW LAID EGGS will
be welcomed at the Hospital
- - between the above dates - -

PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS

Printed by the Society's Apprentices at St. Aldhelm's Press, Frome.