

ATTFE College Learner Newsletter

ISSUE 14 - FRIDAY, 2 MAY 2025



Liz Barrett OBE

Principal

Welcome to our special 'Life in Modern Britain' Learner Newsletter which shares the Value of Celebrating VE Day 80

What is VE Day?

VE Day, short for *Victory in Europe Day*, marks the official end of World War II in Europe on **May 8, 1945**. After nearly six years of global conflict, the Allied forces accepted Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender. The day was met with spontaneous celebrations, street parties, and relief across Europe. In 2025, we commemorate the 80th anniversary of this momentous day — VE Day 80.

Why Celebrate 80 Years On?



1. Honouring Sacrifice

VE Day reminds us of the extraordinary sacrifices made by millions of people — soldiers, civilians, medics, resistance fighters — to bring peace. Many gave their lives or lived through unimaginable hardship. By marking VE Day 80, we honour their memory and say, “We will not forget.”

2. Learning from the Past

World War II was one of the most devastating conflicts in human history. It showed us the dangers of Fascism, unchecked power, and hatred. For today’s learners, VE Day is not just about history — it’s about understanding the importance of peace, democracy, and human rights.

3. Celebrating Peace and Unity

VE Day was not only a victory over tyranny but also the start of rebuilding Europe and creating lasting peace. Today, it serves as a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when nations work together. As we face modern global challenges, unity and cooperation remain more relevant than ever.

4. Connecting Generations

VE Day 80 offers an opportunity for younger generations to connect with the past — whether through stories from grandparents, documentaries, or community events. It helps bridge the gap between those who lived through the war and those who only read about it.

5. Reflecting on Modern Conflict

The world is still plagued by war and political instability. VE Day is a chance to reflect on the value of peace, the costs of conflict, and our role in promoting a more just world.

Celebrating VE Day 80 is not just about looking back — it’s about looking forward with the lessons of the past in mind. For college learners, it’s a moment to reflect, learn, and take inspiration from those who fought for freedom, so we can continue building a better future.

ATTFE College will be taking time to remember and reflect upon the sacrifices made during World War II on 8th May 2025 3.15–5.30pm on Sutton Lawns. ALL learners, family and friends are welcome to join this FREE event which will also host a Battle of Britain Flypast. Please follow our social media (below) for further details.



Academy Transformation Trust
Further Education College



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ATTFE College



ATTFE College

Liz Barrett OBE DL

Principal ATTFE College

Life in Modern Britain



VE Day

VE means Victory in Europe. On the 8th of May 1945, the fighting stopped in European countries like France, Belgium and Italy. People from all over Europe celebrated because after 6 long years, they were at peace.

VE Day is important to remember to honour those who fought and sacrificed in World War II, ensuring the lessons of history are passed on, and to appreciate the value of peace, unity, and resilience. It marks a major moment in history when Britain and its allies helped defeat Fascism and protect democracy. VE Day also provides an opportunity to reflect on the human cost of war and the importance of striving for peace and understanding.



Ralph's VE Day

Ralph Ottey served as a chauffeur in the RAF during the Second World War.

He was proud to do his part for the war effort, and he still remembers VE Day after many years...

"I can remember clearly VE Day...It was quite a day!"

The service of people like Ralph mean that VE Day, and peace in Europe, was finally possible.



We Remember VE Day

When we remember VE Day, we think about people like Ralph who served in the Second World War.

8th May 1945 was a life-changing day for him, and is still an important day for us now.

But although there was peace in Europe, it would be months before the war was truly over.



VJ Day

For 3 months after VE Day, many thousands of people were still fighting in countries like Japan and India. On the 15th of August 1945, the Second World War ended--this is known as VJ Day, or Victory Over Japan.



Dorothea's VJ Day

Dorothea Barron was a visual signaller in the Royal Navy.

She used her excellent eyesight to pick up and de-code messages from ships.

Dorothea has special memories of VJ Day – she met up with her future husband on London Bridge during the celebrations – they would be married for more than 60 years.

We Remember VJ Day

VJ Day marked the end of the Second World War.

This affected millions of people like Dorothea who had worked for peace.

VJ Day changed the world in 1945, and it's still very important now.



2025 marks the **80th anniversary of the original 'VE Day'**. There are plans for beacons and 'Lamp lights of peace' to be lit around the country, and for there to be street parties and other commemorative celebrations.

When Nazi Germany finally surrendered to the Allies on 7th May 1945, it marked the end of six long years of fighting in which the UK suffered approximately 450,000 deaths – of which about 70,000 were civilians.

On 8th May 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave a radio address in which he said that 'we may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing, but let us not forget for a moment the toils and efforts that lie ahead.'

Beryl Walker's Recollection of VE Day

Memories of VE Day began for me the year before the end of the war.

I belonged to a local concert party with the usual mixture of artistes, comedian, singing duo, monologues etc. My part was to sing and tap dance to popular numbers.

We had an evening booking at Nottingham General Hospital (Hogarth Ward).

The party arrived to find the corridors full of wounded soldiers, also a huge, round ward full to overflowing with the same sight, very upsetting for us all to see.

We were asked to continue with our performance as best we could so, amid the chaos of wounded soldiers, stretchers, bandages etc, we did. To be honest I think we were the last thing these poor souls wanted to see.

None of the party were prepared for the sight we saw of the soldiers, many still with mud on their boots, arms, legs, heads swathed in bandages, often with blood oozing out of them. Yes, a very disturbing experience, and in those days we had no TV coverage to prepare us for these sights.

On returning home I fled to my bedroom and sobbed until my father came to comfort me and explain to me about life, war and people. A great help to me at the time.

Because of the distress it caused me, and unbeknown to me, my father contacted the hospital the following day and asked permission to take me back to see these soldiers when their wounds had been attended to and generally been cleaned up.

The hospital staff, doctors and nurses must have worked very hard, even through the night, because the difference from the previous day's concert party visit was truly amazing. All the soldiers had been cleaned up and dressed in nice clean clothes but many were still waiting to be shaved.

There were many shapes in plasters: legs, arms, torso and all bandages lovely and clean. The hospital corridors had been cleared and were all spick and span too. It was as though the day before had never happened.

My father talked to the soldiers and began to make notes. It followed that they required magazines, newspapers, cigarettes, paper to write home (many with their arms or hands in plaster needed help to do this.) My father's idea was that anything I could do to help them would also help me get over this experience.

So began the task of knocking on friends' doors and asking workmates collecting cigarettes, magazines etc. I made visits to the hospital 3 or 4 times a week to take these gifts.

As the soldiers' injuries improved I took them by bus to Long Eaton where I lived. (Wheelchairs were left at the flower shop near the bus station). They visited my Mum at home for a cup of tea and sandwiches. (How Mum, on rations, was able to provide this amazed us all). With the hospital's permission some were allowed to stay overnight, all sleeping in one room either on chairs or the floor. They were very happy to do this for a change from hospital routine.

In the mornings Father's duties were to help those with arms in plaster to shave etc, and the soldiers who were able helped each other.

One day our visit to a cinema caused quite a fuss when 8 soldiers arrived still with arms, legs etc in plaster casts. Trying to accommodate and seat them all was a real event!

On VE Day I took my sister Joan to the hospital to join in the celebrations. Some soldiers had been discharged by then so numbers were smaller but with those who were left we listened to Churchill's speech sitting on beds and eating cake that my mother had made for them.

After the speech we heard many funny stories of their experiences especially from 2 Scottish lads who came from Peebles. Later Mum and I were honoured and pleased to be invited to Chalfont St Giles to the wedding of one of the soldiers, Jimmy, to his girlfriend Mary. Pleased to say we are still in touch with them.

So, thank you to my Mother and Father for caring and guiding me through the war period. I am sure this is what helped me to work for local charities. Working with members of my adult education 'Keep Fit' classes I have raised money for many causes around Long Eaton. This I continued to do until I retired aged 74 years.

I shall always treasure these wartime stories and memories.



Joan Hall

"During WW2 I was living in Vale Road, Woolton, and my mum and dad worked in a local component's factory.

"I remember going into the shelters three or four times. We were only children, so it seemed like a big adventure all the time. We were still going to school, but we had to carry little gas masks with us."

On the day the war in Europe ended Joyce and her siblings were in bed and were woken up by the sound of singing and dancing outside.

"There was a big bonfire lit at the bottom of the road, someone had pushed a piano out and everyone was on Vale Road singing and dancing. It was dark but everyone was out, fifty or more people in the street. We waited for mum and dad to come up and get us and they took us down to the bonfire. Everyone was happy, singing and hugging each other."

Jack Bracewell

Jack Bracewell joined the Army in 1942 aged 19 and trained at Norton camp in North Yorkshire with the 11th Armoured Division C company. He later joined the 12th Yorkshire Parachute Regiment and trained for the D-Day landings in a camp on the south coast.



"It was kept very hush-hush, but I had an idea of what was afoot due to the amount of military personnel, there were thousands of us and hundreds of vehicles. We were confined to camp waiting to be deployed.

"I came in on Gold Beach on D-Day with the 1st Hereford, the 3rd Monmouthshire and 4th Kings Shropshire light infantry Regiments. I saw a lot of awful things that day."

On VE Day Jack was stationed in the north-eastern part of Germany, near the Danish border, when he heard the Germans had surrendered.

"In May 1945, I was stationed in the north-eastern part of Schleswig-Holstein Germany, near the Danish border, and things had noticeably quietened down. We heard a rumour going around camp that the war had ended, and everyone was asking is it true.

"When it was confirmed we were all euphoric and couldn't really take it in at first. There was a lot of drinking and singing that night."

In October 1946 Jack was de-mobbed and returned home.

"I had served four years and eight months. I was lucky I came home, many did not. They are the true heroes and that is why I go back, to honour their memory and pay my respect."

Albert Jarrett

Originally from Jamaica, Albert Jarrett, signed up to join the RAF in 1942 on the island before travelling to the UK in 1943. Joining at the age of 18 years old, Albert



wanted to do his bit as part of the Commonwealth and move away from plans his father has put in place for him.

Training in Jamaica, Albert was soon on a ship bound for the UK, travelling via New York and spending 23 days at sea until his arrival. Based at Sutton Coldfield as part of the ground crew for the spitfires, Albert

struggled to acclimatise to the UK weather, but soon got into the swing of day-to-day life in the RAF – sleeping with his rifle each night just in case it was needed.

Albert was in Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham on VE Day.

"It was a marvellous day unlike anything I have experienced since. It was a great day and we celebrated and went along to the dancing halls to have fun – wonderful to be with so many relieved people!"

After he was demobilised in 1946 Albert went back to Jamaica but returned to the UK in 1953 as part of the Windrush generation.

"I had a duty to my home country, and it was a pleasure to serve as part of a greater commonwealth effort during the war. It was an experience that's for sure."

V.E. Day by Patricia Denise Newman

*It's over, it's finished, the war has now been won,
Thank God it's finally ended; finished; over; done!
we'll no longer hear the sirens as the bombs come falling down,
no longer hear the aircraft as they fly above the town,
no longer see the searchlights lighting up the darkened sky,
or see the burning buildings of the terraces nearby.
We can hear the people cheering as the bells peal out the news,
and we gather, dancing in the road, dispelling wartime blues.
It's victory in Europe – oh such a lovely sound,
no bombs, no incendiary fires, no more sleeping underground!
The roads are filled with happy people, celebrating victory,
the lights are on in every town, such a brilliant sight to see,
there's bonfires and fireworks, a colourful display,
we'll sing and dance and drink with cheer until night turns to day.
We'll not forget the sacrifices made by others in our name,
they gave their lives so we might live in freedom's sweet domain.*

A former Dagenham resident has kindly shared the letters sent to her father on VE Day by her mother and grandparents (her father's in laws). Michael (Mickey) Behan was in the forces and still away at war in the Far East. Whilst Europe celebrated, the war in the Far East carried on for another 3 months until the Japanese surrendered.

Here are some snippets from the letters sent to Mickey by Mabel (his girlfriend, later wife) and Jim Pool (his future father-in-law). At the time the family were living at Whitebarn Lane, Dagenham and it's quite clear that the party spirit was alive and well in Dagenham even though loved ones still away in the forces were dearly missed.

17, White Barn Lane
Dagenham
Essex.
Thurs 10 May 45

Dearest Mickey

I received a letter off you this morning we have been all so merry & bright this last couple of days I feel in the holiday spirit an[d] to make life more happy I got another of your dear letters it was 3 weeks ago I got your last one, Well Darling as you must already no the war is over with the jerrys I really just can't believe it we all had 2 days off work we got the news 10 to 8 Monday but we celebrated Tuesday evening & boy did we celebrate off we trot down Rainham club 6 o'clock and left there 12 o'clock we drank all sorts I have not seen so many spirits drunk in war time gin whiskey & rum I had all we dance[d] in the hall on the green & in the streets there were bonfires every where fireworks and all the large buildings were flood light millions of search lights in the sky all criss crossing it made me dizzy looking at them Planes came over low and dropped different coloured lights Mickey it was really a wonder full night I would have missed it for a 100 dollars at a 1 minit past 12 Tuesday night all the boats tugs & barges on the river were blowing their hooters & cocker doodling and all the factory hooters I hope you can imagine all this just as I am trying to describe it Poor old mum passed out and Aunt Rosie

Glad & I all had the same as them but we were able to keep on our feet, we just didn't care what happened, my one and only regret was Mickey Darling that you went there to share it with us Dad said he missed you but we shall have another night when the Japs are finished and I don't suppose that will be long so maybe you will be home for that, I only hope you were able to enjoy your self VE night as well as could be expected now no secrets I told you everything you tell me all about your night, I was suppose to be at work 6 o'clock this morning I arrived in 7.15. better late than never. We went down the club again last night but it wasn't quite so roudy as night before, we didn't go home VE night or I should say Wednesday morning we slept at Marys house I Well I think that is all I can think of to tell you about VE night. Well Darling how are you keeping, really really boy breaking your tory keep you just see you get them mended, No Mickey the house wasn't granddads own he sold all his gear & stuff and has gone to live with Aunt Mabel, so he of your I dears have gone west I hope the others dont, I have got promised of plenty of help if you intend to get married or at least mam has alvorts of good things to eat, you had your wish any way you said you didn't

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Well Darling as you must already [k]no[w] the war is over with the jerrys, I really just can't believe it, we all had 2 days off work, we got the news 10 to 8 Monday but we celebrated Tuesday evening & boy did we celebrate, off we trot down Rainham club 6 o'clock and left there 12 o'clock. We drank all sorts, I have not seen so many spirits drunk in war time, gin, whiskey & rum I had all, we dance[d] in the hall, on the green & in the streets, there were bonfires everywhere, fireworks and all the large buildings were flood light, millions of search lights in the sky all criss crossing, it made me dizzy looking at them. Planes came over low and dropped different coloured lights. Mickey it was really a wonderful night. I would[n't] have missed it for a 100 dollars, at a 1 minute past 12 Tuesday night all the boats, tugs & barges on the river were blowing their hooters and cocker doodling and all the factory hooters. I hope you can imagine all this just as I am trying to describe it.

Poor old mum passed out and also Aunt Rosie. Glad & I all had the same as them but we were able to keep on our feet, we just didn't care what happened, my one and only regret was Mickey Darling that you weren't there to share it with us. Dad said he missed you but we shall have another night when the Japs are finished and I don't suppose that will be long so maybe you will be home for that. I only hope you were able to enjoy yourself VE night as well as could be expected, now no secrets, I told

you everything you tell me all about your night. I was supposed to be at work 6 o'clock this morning I arrived in 7.15, better late than never. We went down the club again last night but it wasn't quite so rowdy as night before, we didn't go home VE night or I should say Wednesday morning we slept at Mary's house. Well I think that is all I can tell you about VE night...

WWII Memories of Jacqueline Bond: Life in Maidenhead

I was born in 1935 and lived in Maidenhead, 21 miles from London.

I have really clear memories of the war- the distinctive engine notes of German planes going to bomb other places further north, usually at night, the red sky when the London Docks and Portsmouth were on fire, the photos in the paper of children hurt in France when refugees were machine-gunned.

It was frightening to be walking in the totally dark streets and only have dim blue lights in the railway station.

One afternoon, there was a huge roar and a German plane swooped low in the gap between the houses. From the garden, I clearly saw the pilot with leather helmet and goggles and the rear gunner - he looked at my father and I for a second. To my surprise they were just normal young men.

In Feb 1944, my grandparents in Chiswick were hit. We used to visit them regularly. Three houses were destroyed with three killed and four dug out, including my grandparents. Both sadly died later.

My parents and I climbed amongst the wreckage and brought what things we could find back home including some tools. Other items were collected from Turnham Green Town Hall where things were laid out by address of where they were found. I still have quite a few of the books.

I saw several V1 (doodlebugs) and one fell on the St Martins jam factory near us, on July 1st 1944 (was my father's birthday so I remember the day). Fortunately, it was a Saturday afternoon, so not many people working there at the time.

A V2 rocket came down a few miles away and the blast brick wall built in front of the school windows saved the building, the wall rippled but stayed in place. There was no shelter; we had to go to the main hall in an air raid. All children had to put on their gas masks once a week for practice just in case they were needed.

We knew invasion was imminent when fully loaded trains were rumbling through the night for days.

On May 7th, 1945, my mother and I were in Oxford Street on our way to the Middlesex Hospital. The street was deep in paper floating down from the windows and people were really excited saying, "the Germans have given in and it's over". I have a red, white, and blue rosette I picked up that day.

No street party for us but a big bonfire that didn't need to be extinguished before dark. Mother, father, and I sat on St Paul's Cathedral steps to watch the lights in London go on again.

You can read more on people's recollections of VE Day, [here](#).

Upcoming Activities

**ATTFE College VE Day 80
Peace Party Celebration**

THURSDAY 8TH MAY | 3.15PM TO 5.30PM

Academy
Transformation
Trust Further Education

VE DAY 80 PEACE PARTY

FREE to
attend

VE Memorial Day Battle of Britain Flypast

VENUE:

SUTTON LAWN, SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD

What3words location: ///lamp.hammer.firms



FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

BRING SNACKS, LAWN CHAIRS, AND PICNIC BLANKETS

On-site parking is limited. We recommend walking or using nearby town centre car parks where possible.

For any enquiries, please email InThisTogether@attrust.org.uk

**Join Selston Parish Council for a FREE
Community Picnic & Entertainment
Event!**



'Community Picnic & Entertainment' - FREE Event **Thursday, 8th May 2025 from 5.00 pm - Woodnook Recreation Ground**



Vera Lynn Tribute by Jane Gregory * Underwood Rock n Soul Singers * Pinxton Puppets
Jacksdale Marine Training Corps * Pye Hill & District Male Voice Choir

	<p>9.00pm - VE Day 80 Proclamation - by Deputy Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire 9.30pm - VE Day Tribute - Rev Lee Gordon 9.30pm - Beacon lighting - a member of the Mercian Regiment Grand Finale - 'A 30 second firework display of falling red leaves' - Sponsored by Gillotts Funeral Directors</p>	
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Also supported by **2nd Brinsley Underwood Scout Group * 1st Jacksdale Rainbows * Jacksdale & District Royal British Legion * Robin Hood Rifles** and much more, including a face painter, a local coffee van and cake stall

The nation will come together to remember the millions that paid the ultimate sacrifice fighting and securing the freedom we all enjoy today. Remembering the fallen heroes and celebrate the peace after six years of war.

Selston Parish Council would like to thank the many contributors and to also thank the community who continues to support such events

- Date: Thursday, 8th May 2025
- Time: From 5pm
- Location: Woodnook Recreation Ground

Bring your picnic blankets and join us for an evening of fun, community spirit, and remembrance!

Enjoy fantastic live entertainment, including singers, choirs, and even a puppet show! Plus, there will be face painters, a local coffee van, and a delicious cake stall to make the evening extra special.

This event is a chance for us to come together as a community to honour and remember the millions who made the ultimate sacrifice to secure the freedoms we cherish today.

Don't miss out on this wonderful occasion—see you there!

ATTFE College Stitch, Crafts & Marvelous Table Top Sale

FREE TO
ATTEND



STITCH, CRAFTS & MARVELOUS TABLE TOP SALES



**28
MAY**

10AM - 12.30PM

ATTFE in the Community Venue
9 - 11 Low Street, Sutton in Ashfield

Free to attend. Drop in at any point, no need to book.

#INTHISTOGETHER

This Week's #WellbeingWednesday

FRIENDLY
REMINDER

YOU'RE DOING
YOUR BEST



Online Wellbeing Resources

A friendly reminder that ATTFE College has a range of wellbeing resources available on our [Wellbeing Website Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#)! Whether you're interested in Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Yoga, or beginner's exercises, we've got you covered.

Don't hesitate to share these resources with your loved ones!

ATTFE Wellbeing

Dragonfly Skims Water



Tai Chi Kicking Exercise



Powers of Tai Chi Chuan



The Frolic of the Monkey



Chair Based Exercises



Five Loosening Exercises



Restoring Vitality



Tai Chi Stretching



ATTFE College

Sutton Community Academy

High Pavement, Sutton-in-Ashfield,
Nottinghamshire,
NG17 1BW

Dukeries Academy

Whinney Lane, New Ollerton, Newark,
NG22 9TD

Portland College

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