

Victory Celebrations in Dundurn Parish

Victory in Europe was a fairly low-key affair in the Parish. Whilst no doubt villagers were elated and indeed celebrated privately that we had won the struggle over Germany, as the war against Japan continued in the far-east and Burma, plans for a celebration appeared to have been put on hold.



The Village Committee set up a Welcome Home Fund, and between May and the end of June a variety of activities were undertaken to raise funds to eventually celebrate the event, culminating with a garden fete at *Port-Mohr*, placed at the committees disposal by John and Jean Gavin. The Committee Chairman, Rev David McLaren, introduced Mrs McNair-Snadden, who opened the fete with an interesting address in which she spoke of the great debt the country owed to its members of the services, and of the duty to remember those who had made the supreme sacrifice.

Miss Betty Muddie (*the Village Shop*) presented Mrs McNair-Snadden with a gift of books from the Committee. Mr Fettes (*Ardsheean*) thanked Mrs McNair-Snadden.

In the evening a Whist Drive and Dance was held in the Hall, with Card-Master Mr Urquhart Muddie (*the Village Shop*), and M.C. Mr James Hepburn (*Ingleside*).

The Treasurer Mr James Donaldson announced that the drawings had reached the gratifying total of £176 with The Welcome Home Fund standing at £711.

By the 21st of August 1945 the St. Fillans Village Committee had just completed its plans for the celebration of victory, when the news came that Japan had surrendered.

Bonfire Blaze on Loch Side

On the evening of Wednesday 22nd there was a Service of Thanksgiving in the Parish Church conducted by the Rev David McLaren. Though the notice had to be very short there was a large congregation. Later, a large bonfire, which had been in the process of construction all day, was lit on the shore of the Loch by Mr Tom Mackenzie (*Dunollan*), who had carried out the arrangements.

On Thursday evening the Library Hall was filled with an enthusiastic audience for a Victory Concert and Dance. Those taking part were Mrs Lamb, Misses MacDuff, Ferguson and McLeod. Mr Nicoll (*Colleopard*) and the Ladies Choir. Mr Lamb acted as accompanist. After tea came the dance for which Mrs McNaughton (*Oakbank*) played. Mr John Mills (*Rose Cottage*) was Chairman. A collection was taken for the Sports Fund that realised over £11.

On Saturday afternoon sports were held on the golf course, the weather was perfect and a record crowd for St. Fillans attended. A silver cup for the champion of the sports was given by Mr Mackenzie and presented by Mrs Mills to Miss Olive McLeod.

On Sunday a service in accord with the National Day of Thanksgiving was conducted by Rev McLaren. Members of the Home Guard and Civil Defence Forces attended in uniform for what was probably their last parade.

The Old Croc

Wartime memories from Ian Moncrieff,

Football and Fags, introduction to Sweet Chaparral, Passing cloud and Pasha via Polish, Canadian soldiers. Football and Fags, first pair of long trousers at fifteen and my last year at school.

Too much time devoted to Billiards!

Bonfires on Knock Mary, The Knock and in the middle of Sauchie Place in Crieff. Jack Halley (Skite) a champion piper at 16 years old played the bagpipes while his Dad was legless!

Weekly episodes of a hundred lines for being late arriving at French lessons because of Morrisons' girls arriving for Art lessons each Tuesday afternoon at two o'clock.

Clothing hand-downs from neighbours' lanky sixth formers. Red stockings!

Demolition of Anderson Air Raid shelter in garden. No garden lover but filled the garden and nearby allotment with potato plants in preparation for my Father's return from Burma.

Double Summertime.

Football, Fags, Freedom!

From Cathy Moncrieff:

Although I was a very wee girl during the War years, a few memories come clearly to my mind... waiting in the dusk whilst my Gran or Mum secured the "Blackout" blinds on the windows, ensuring that no single chink of light escaped once the gas lamps were lit. They danced round the kitchen on VE day with relief. Safe again.

I had my very own little ration book with its strange letters and numbers on the little coupons; it allowed me to have "sweeties". But most vividly, I remember my lovely Dad, home on leave while serving in the RAF. We would visit my Granny and Grandpa's house at Tomaknock and coming home on a Winter's night to Crieff with glittering stars in a deep blue sky,

my Daddy would carry me on his shoulders, I'd snuggle into the back of his head with my hands round his neck, my face nuzzling the roughness of his tweed cap, smelling his "Willy Woodbine" cigarettes, feeling such love and warmth. With only a tiny knowledge of terror and wars raging in distant places, I was certain that this was a good place to be! All my life I have remembered how very safe and loved I felt, knowing my Dad would always look after me. Joy when he came back home!

Sally Watson's War Time Memories

We did not celebrate VE Day; VJ Day was the celebration in India as the Japanese were knocking on our door, fighting their way through Burma, on VE day. To celebrate VJ Day, a huge Darbah was held on the Poona Race Course and the Indian State Regiments, together with the Indian Army, marched passed the Viceroy, Viscount Mountbatten. The Infantry Regiments were dressed in khaki with colourful turbans, the fast moving Ghurkhas and the Cavalry with pennants floating from their spears, their horses' bridles jingling as they trotted by. The camels of the Camel Corps lurched from side to side followed by elephants with heavily decorated howdahs on their backs as they plodded by the motorised units. The parade went on and on; there was a contingent of Women's Army Corps India dressed in their fluttering khaki saris, to differentiate from the American WAC. My Mother was a junior Commander (equivalent to a Captain) serving at Southern Command and then as Quartermaster to the Indian Military Hospital, for which she was awarded an MBE.

Memoirs by Elspeth Smylie

War broke out on my 5th and my brother's 3rd birthday. Dad, a naval reservist, was called up and before he left found a safe house for the family in Dumfriesshire. Mother was pregnant with her 4th child (there was a 2nd son in between). The house was a farm labourer's cottage. It had no running water and no electricity. My mother, a city girl, was faced with, to us, unimaginable problems. She had to carry water every drop from a well in buckets. With no lighting, except oil lamps, and

no inside loo and the one we had which was a dry toilet had to be emptied manually.

This arrangement did have its advantages - we were safe and the farm people were very kind and we had ample milk and the odd egg or two. Sometimes a pheasant seemed to have dropped dead on the doorstep. Otherwise, with no refrigerator, all perishables were kept in a meat safe round the back of the house in the shade.

The nearest shop was some 8 miles away, so everything had to be bought from vans. Mum had a bike, useless with 4 children to look after but it was there for an emergency.

I went to school; it was about 2 miles away with no transport. So I cycled on my big tricycle for half of the way then had to walk through the short cut up through a wood, aged 5. When it snowed I went late on the milk lorry, sometimes clutching a hard-boiled egg to keep my hands warm and to eat for my lunch. With hindsight we were happy, we had such freedom. Now I don't know how my mother did it!

WWII memories from Kathleen Walls

I remember families coming together, supporting each other throughout the war years. I was living in Milltimber near Peterculter, Aberdeenshire. I finished school during the war years and then went on to attend St Andrews University living in the Halls of Residence. Food was supplied by the University and we were well catered for. I remember being at St Andrews when the end of the war was proclaimed.

My Father served with the Gordon Highlanders, he was based full time in Scotland during WWII, however, he served his main war effort during WWI.

Our family were very fortunate to have a large garden with plenty of fruit and vegetables. My father turned our coal cellar into a hen house much to my Mum's displeasure as the hens would escape and eat the fruit and vegetables from the garden!

The garden railings were removed from around our home and used for materials to support our war effort, my family were concerned initially that our dog would escape but he religiously stuck by my Father's side.

The Royal Indian Army Mule Company was stationed close to our home and I remember watching them play polo in the field opposite.

During the war, toilet rolls were in very short supply, I remember cutting up sheets upon sheets of newspaper into quarters and hanging them up next to the loo to use instead of toilet roll.
