

# Corona Community 6

## **Memories of the ending of the Second World War**

We have had to postpone our VE Day celebration, but we do have the memories of villagers who were children at the time or served in the armed forces or on the home front, including Eileen Whymark who lived in High Kelling during the war.

## **War Time and VE Day Memories – Eileen Whymark (nee Knowles) – March 2020**

As far as I can remember, I went to school as normal on VE Day. I was 11 years old. There was a Street Party held in Holt in the Main Street. My sister who would have been 17 won first prize in the Fancy Dress competition as 'cookie on the kitchen front' I was second as 'domino girl'. There were lots of jellies, sandwiches and cakes to eat, which we hadn't been used to.

VE Day was a time of relief. No more sirens or having to go into the dug out which my dad had prepared in the yard. We spent many nights there when the sirens sounded, knitting socks etc for the war effort. Although there were four of us in the family, dad spent most of the war in London working on bomb repair damage. His poor eyesight prevented him being in the forces, although when at home he was in the Home Guard. In London, they would often sleep on Underground Station platforms at night, safe from the Blitz bombings. I was five years old when the War started. I remember hearing the words 'we are now at war with Germany', on our small portable radio.

In due course, we had two evacuees with us from the east end of London. One – Albert - had to return home because he was always in trouble with the police, for theft and chopping down trees. Charlie stayed with us until the War ended and became like part of the family. One night 14 bombs were dropped around High Kelling. No one was seriously injured or killed but a bungalow in Warren Lane was completely covered in mud. We had only half days schooling for the duration as with all the evacuees there wasn't enough room for us all in class at the same time. We had school mornings then afternoons on alternate weeks. At home, we had a deserter with us for one night. After this for a time my sister and I were taken to school with a police escort until he was apprehended.

There was rationing which included little meat. Weekly coupons for butter, tea, sugar. Fruit was scarce. There were no bananas or oranges. Some items remained on ration until the early 1950's. We were lucky in having a large garden and grew lots of vegetables, potatoes and some fruit. Our elderly neighbours (Mr and Mrs Dack) often gave us their sweet coupons in exchange for various vegetables. We also kept chickens which gave us eggs and ultimately a roast dinner.

At Christmas time we would have two army members from the local base at Weybourne who couldn't get home for the holiday, stay with us. Often throughout the year we would have service wives stay with us whose husbands had been sent abroad. Out of the 60 or so people who stayed with us, only one of their husbands was killed in service. I still receive a Christmas card each year from their daughter. Also a gentleman who stayed with us and eventually bought a bungalow in Avenue Road. There was an annual party in the library at Gresham's School which was the only local venue large enough.

High Kelling was a small village. Everyone knew each other and we all pulled together to help out.

I still have the certificate my father received from King George VI for his services to the Home Guard. Also a certificate given to my mother from Queen Elizabeth for sheltering and giving a home to evacuees.

## **Links of the Week**

- \* The Imperial War Museum has gathered a huge amount of material on the Victory 75 website <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/victory>
  - \* Want to know more about books - try the British Library online resources <https://www.bl.uk/learning/online-resources>
  - \* TED talks - 10-15 minute video talks on contemporary topics. Try Bill Gates back in 2015 talking about the danger of a pandemic <https://www.ted.com/talks>
  - \* 10 minutes gentle exercise with 10 Today <https://10today.co.uk>
- Go Explore.....and share your favourite places to visit with [patrickkelly9@btinternet.com](mailto:patrickkelly9@btinternet.com) or [Susan.Rutherford@holdenslaw.com](mailto:Susan.Rutherford@holdenslaw.com)

### Competition

There's still time to email photos of your spring garden in bloom to [patrickkelly9@btinternet.com](mailto:patrickkelly9@btinternet.com) before 31st May and the winner will win a £20 garden centre voucher

### Know Your North Norfolk



Where is this building and what did it used to be