

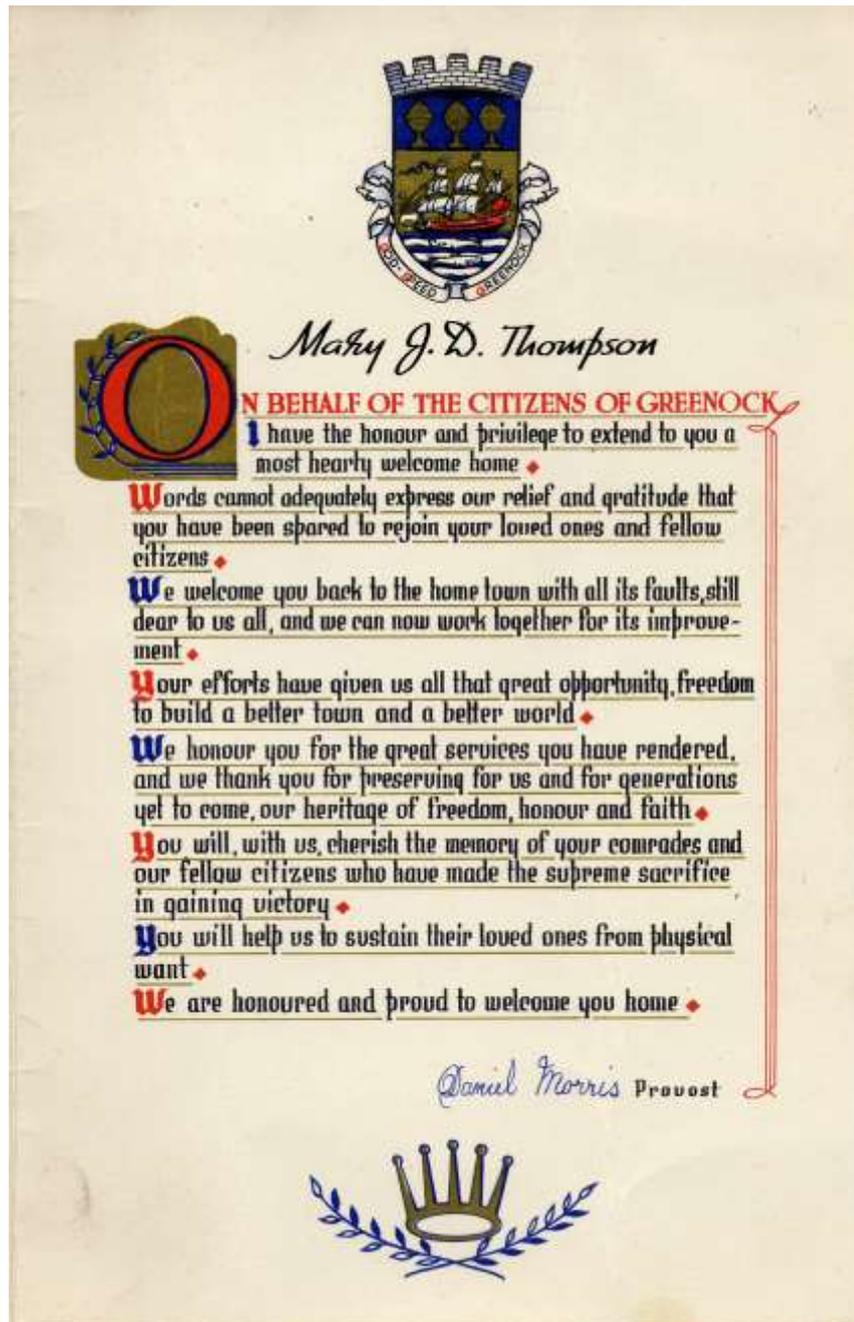
INVERCLYDE'S WAR - 75 YEARS ON...
END OF THE WAR

END OF WAR



**Welcome
Home**

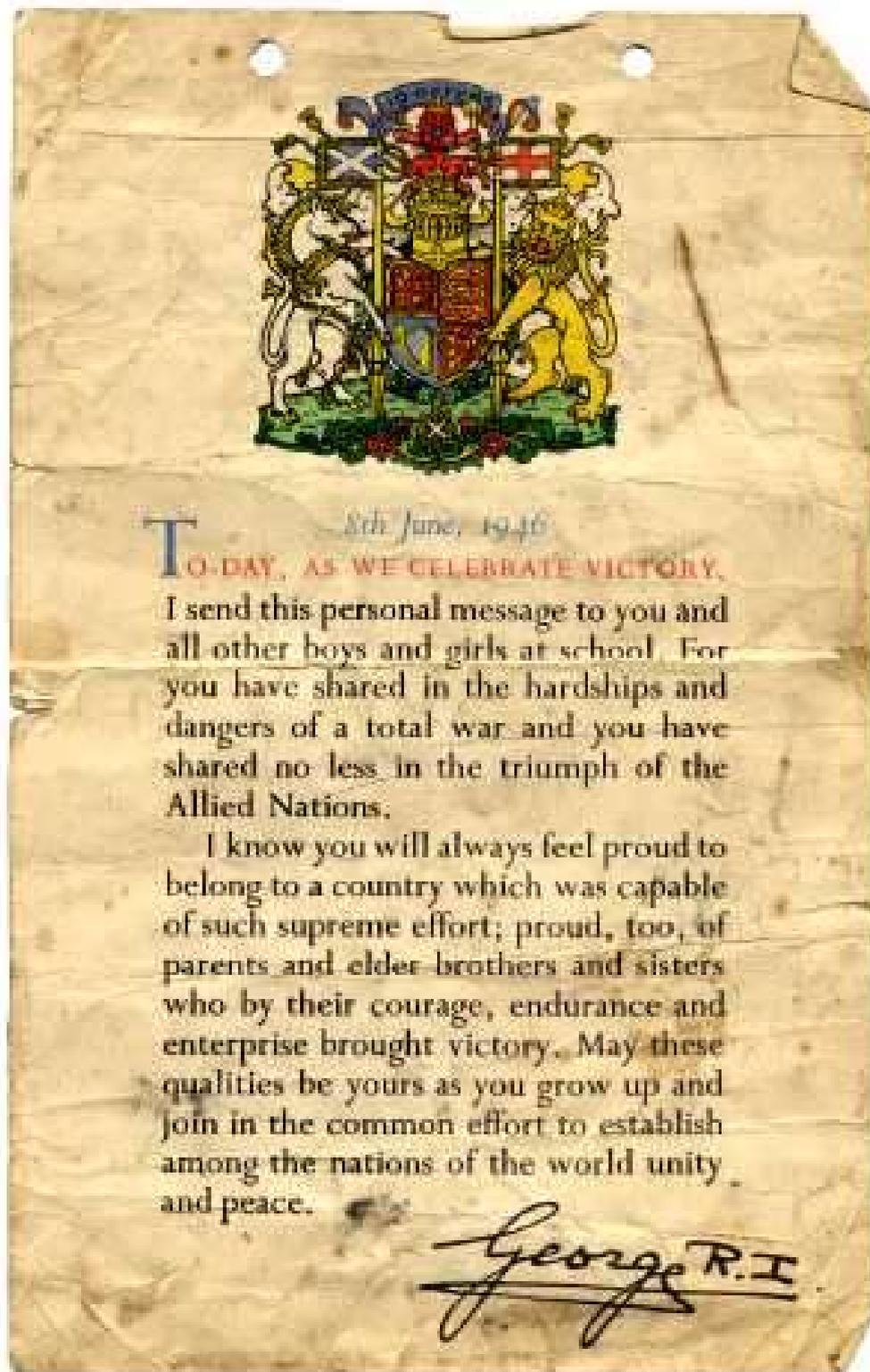
INVERCLYDE'S WAR – 75 YEARS ON...
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Victory in Europe Day – Tuesday 8th May 1945 - was a grand occasion, greatly celebrated locally, yet there was still a lot of fighting to be done. The war in the Far East was continuing and so for those who had family and friends fighting there, it was definitely a sense of the bitter sweet. Victory over Japan Day – 15th August 1945 - truly signalled the beginning of the end and people could look forward to seeing their loved ones again. The big question now was how all these people would reintegrate into society. This generation had a life experience which is nigh impossible to comprehend today. Many came back with a drive to change the world from the one that could allow such a war to start. Churchill was rejected at the next election in favour of a Labour Government. The humdrum of daily life was certainly a

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challenge to those who had spent the previous 6 years fearing for their lives. This is the generation whom we must thank for being where we are today.



King George had sent this
thank you to all the children
of the country

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Provost's Room, 8 May 1945

On this great and historic occasion of the declaration of victory over Germany, after more than five and a half years of bitter struggle, it is fitting that we should rejoice for the success of our arms and the victory of the cause of freedom and the decent way of life. It is fitting too, that our rejoicing should be tempered by a sober sense of thankfulness for the miracle of our deliverance from the grip of a ruthless and evil enemy.

It is hardly yet realised and still less known, how narrow was the margin between disaster and deliverance. But the many years of sacrifice and effort, shared to the full by the citizens of our town, are now reaping the reward.

We may justly be proud of the great contribution Greenock has made to this long-hoped-for victory. Our town has been throughout a key town and front-line town in the struggle. It did not flinch under the terror of the 'blitz' and it bears the scars of war in shattered homes and saddening record of broken families.

Our citizens have played their part in every war effort and activity. Our thoughts go first to the young men of Greenock who have so worthily upheld the good name of our town in battles on land, on sea, and in the air, in every theatre of this world-wide conflict. All have done their duty. We salute them with pride and humble acknowledgement of the great debt we owe to them. Some will not return. Let us not, on this day of rejoicing, forget their sacrifice or the sorrow of those who mourn for them.

Our men and women alike have toiled in the shipyards, the engineering shops and the factories to turn out the ships by which we live and the implements of war for the fighting fronts.

We have been called upon to give shelter and hospitality to thousands of our own people and of our Allies whom the chances of war have brought to our door.

To the women of Greenock a special word of praise is due, for their magnificent work in every branch of voluntary service. No call on their services was made in vain, and they have deservedly earned the gratitude of the men of our Merchant Navy and of our own and our Allies Fighting Forces for their unceasing work of mercy and comfort.

We take a special pride in the vital part played by the Port of Greenock when our harbours and anchorage held fast the end of life-line that bridged the oceans and brought help and supplies that meant survival.

This is our record. It is a good one. But the celebration of this day is, in the words of the Prime Minister 'a pause for thanksgiving'. There is much still to be done. Japan, that other ruthless enemy, is still to be broken and finally beaten. And there still remains the great task which peace will bring.

But if we can all pull together in the years ahead with the same zeal and single-minded purpose as we have done in the dark years we have left behind the prosperity of this fine old town will be assured.

James A Morrison

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Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette Tuesday, 8
May, 1945

V-DAY REJOICINGS BEGAN AT MIDNIGHT

SHIPS AND SHORE WERE LINKED BY FLASHING LIGHTS

VE-Day a tremendous welcome from ships at the Firth of Clyde anchorage. Almost as soon as midnight had struck, one of the vessels sounded the 'V' signal, and immediately it was taken up by all the ships at the tail-of-the-Bank, at the quays, at the anchorage off Gourock, and in the lochs.

Sirens blared, hooted and whooped, making a pandemonium of rejoicing, the sound of which carried far among the Argyll and Dumbartonshire hills and glens and across the Renfrew-shire moorlands. Guns and rockets were fired, whistles were blown, and ships' hand-bells rung. Verey lights and signal flares were set off, lighting up the Tail-of-the-Bank. Then searchlights began to stab "V" signals into the misty sky. One searchlight after another flashed all around the anchorage from aircraft carriers, other naval vessels. and merchant ships. It was a wonderful display.

SHIP-TO-SHORE SIGNALS

All Greenock. Gourock and Port-Glasgow were awake, and many of .the people joined in the show by flashing "V" signals from torches, powerful lamps and window lights, to find the searchlights swooping towards them in acknowledgment, and hooters blaring a "Victory-V" reply. The terrific joyful din and remarkable pyrotechnic display continued until half-past-one o'clock in the morning!

It was a demonstration unprecedented in the river's history, and was worthy of the great part played by our No. 1 Clyde Emergency Port in the war. There was no flood-lighting at the Municipal Buildings last night, although arrangements had been made to turn on the illumination had the official declaration of VE-Day been made. There was a dance in the Town Hall, which terminated at 11.30. The dancers then turned into the main street and joined the throngs of merrymakers. The Navy boys were particularly lively, and kept the fun going in spirited fashion. Some of the livelier spirits "held up" buses and cars, refusing to give way until persuaded by

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the police, who handled the rejoicing throngs in a good-natured manner.

DIM-OUT IGNORED

Many people "cooked their snoot" at the Home Office dim-out restrictions and let themselves go in the matter of lighting. The High School and janitor's house were flood-lit, and in streets in the district the fronts of houses were illuminated with fairy lights and star lamps, while lights from windows brightened the streets in which dancing was carried on until well into the morning to the skirl of the pipes and the strains of accordions. Round about Greenock West Station district, there were lively scenes. The midnight revellers "went their dinger." .so to speak. They sang, shouted, danced and made merry in groups. Young girls predominated in the crowds and their voices could be heard well above those of their male companions.

AS SEEN IN GOUROCK

A few minutes after midnight the stillness of the early morning was broken by shrill blasts from the sirens of two American destroyers at Gourock Pier.

Then the darkness was lit up by the vessels' searchlights, and flares and Verey lights were sent shooting into the sky. Other ships in the bay took up the lead, and before long the air was rent with the sounds of ships giving the "V" signal. Within a short time there was the greatest volume of sound, mingled with gunfire.

CHURCH BELLS BRNG

I joined the throng, writes .a Telegraph reporter, first at the Pierhead, and then in Shore Street. When the display from the water had been underway for close on half an hour church bells started pealing, and the chimes deeply impressed everyone. Church steeples were lit, and one church was partly flood-lit, while from several house windows were streams of small coloured lights. Parading the streets were young and old people. In Shore Street a piper, a bugler, and someone with a whistle added to the sounds, which continued till close on 1.30 am. Fortunately till then the weather was perfect, but the clear sky soon gave way to dark clouds, and rain fell. By that time everyone was satisfied. Their enthusiasm had found an outlet. They had welcomed victory with as much demonstration of feeling as the lateness of the hour permitted.

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Bonfires at Port-Glasgow

Rejoicing at Port-Glasgow last night went on till a late hour. Bonfires were lit in the streets at Woodhall, the Glen, the Alley and Bouverie, and singing and dancing crowds made merry to fifes, drums, bagpipes and accordeons. Black-out materials torn from closes were thrown on the blazing piles, and at Bouverie tarry barrels from Birkmyre's Mill were added to the conflagration. Ships in the harbours hooted wildly and a passing train whistled the V-sign!. Five flags are flying at the Town Buildings, four on the Picture House and bunting on banks and other public buildings add their colour to a gay scene. At the British Legion club-rooms in Anderson Street a brilliant display of flags spans Scarlow Street, and "Victory" in large letters is placarded on the building. Bands will play to-day in Coronation Park from 1.30 till 7 p.m. the Home Guard, Salvation Army and St John's bands taking part. In Argyle Street a stuffed effigy of Hitler is hanging over the street, and the slogan says "Little man you've had a Dizzy Day!

"FLAGS ALL THE WAY"

Yesterday morning Greenock and her neighbours were patches of colour standing out like oases in a grey desert. The people were eager to celebrate, and waited all day for the Premier's broadcast. When it did not come by the lunch hour, they thought it would be by three o'clock; then it was expected at six o'clock. By this time, however, there was a certainty that the war was over, and from lunch-time onwards the streets took on their victory apparel. Now it is flags, flags, flags—all the way from the Cloch to Woodhall. Thousands of them, all shapes and sizes but all symbols of the victory that came yesterday, but doesn't, officially start until today!

TO-DAY'S SCENES

All forenoon the main streets have been busy with crowds out to see the decorations and there is every indication that the merrymaking of last night will be repeated to-night.

In steady rain, large queues assembled at baker's shops to purchase bread. Most of the shops were soon sold out, and closed their premises leaving many in the queues disappointed.

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TONIGHTS GATHERINGS

Dancing will be the main attraction for young people this evening. Special gatherings have been arranged for the Town Hall and Cragburn. At the Town Hall there will be a pin-up girl competition to be judged by Mr. Matthew Young well-known adjudicator. The Ayrshire pin-up girl finalists Miss Nan Gordon and Miss Isobel Davidson will take part.

The dance starts at 7.30 and will end at 1 am. Dancing will be carried on until 2 am at Cragburn where the Kit-Kat Band will provide the music.

Canadians at Niobe have also arranged a programme of celebrations. They anticipate holding open-air dancing in the afternoon and in the evening will have an indoor social.

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**It was a people's celebration -
Greenock Telegraph 10th May 1945**

Gay crowds danced in public: bands played, and flags waved. (By Telegraph Staff Reporters.)

Greenock and her neighbours celebrated Victory in Europe royally and boisterously. The joyous scenes began on Monday night and continued almost without break until the early hours of this morning. Beflagged streets, illuminated public buildings and decorated shops and houses gave the whole area a festive garb.

There were no official arrangements to celebrate the historic occasion, but that did not deter the people from enjoying themselves.

An outstanding feature of the victory days was the regard paid by the people to the thanksgiving services held in the Town Hall and several churches. There were large attendances at all services.

Street parties and open air dancing took place in many parts of the town, while in the main streets crowds of people surged up and down from morning till well after midnight on each day. Cheering crowds, among whom were many sailors, soldiers and airmen, together with their 'opposites' in the Women's Services were leaders in much of the spontaneous gaiety which characterised the entire celebrations.

The scenes on Tuesday afternoon and evening - the day on which the King and the Prime Minister broadcast to the Nation and Empire - were repeated yesterday. For many people VE Day and its successor was one long round of merry-making.

Yesterday afternoon the main streets of the town were exceptionally busy and crowds followed the bands (St John's Prize and Home Guard) which paraded through the main streets. There was a brief pause in the public enthusiasm early in the evening, but it was only a case of holding something in reserve for a later hour. Once more the streets were crowded and public dancing was still going on in the early hours of the morning.

As on the previous evening the chief open air dancing took place outside the King's Theatre but there was also a large crowd taking part in open air dancing in Laird Street where also, for the second night, music was

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relayed from loud speakers erected by Mr James Tennant of the well-known music shop. A collection was taken on behalf of Red Cross funds.

A similar collection was taken during a dance in Gilmour Street when music and songs were rendered by residents.

Celebrations on VE Day (Tuesday) started off early in the forenoon when, despite a steady downpour of rain, crowds of people flocked into the main streets to see the decorations. There was no official programme of celebrations but that did not prevent spontaneous rejoicings. In the forenoon the townspeople were obviously waiting for the Premier's official announcement of the end of the war in Europe and there was little real stir. Many men in the streets were still in their working clothes. They had left home before eight o'clock in the morning to go to work but found the gates shut.

The merry-making received a good send off in the early afternoon when the flag-bedecked ships in the harbours anticipated the official Government announcement of victory by joyfully sounding their sirens and making the air ring with the famous V-sign. They kept up the din until 3 p.m. when the Prime Ministers broadcast began.

By that time the streets were crowded and thousands must have missed hearing the historic declaration that 'yesterday morning at 2.41 the enemy representatives signed the act of unconditional surrender'. There were few loud-speakers in the streets to carry the message to the crowds, although in cafes where radio sets were operating as many people as possible crowded in to listen. Soon afterwards the Salvation Army band appeared in the streets playing stirring music. The bandsmen and officers of the Corps went to Cathcart Square where a brief thanksgiving service was held then the band took up the march again.

Next on the scene was the RNTF Home Guard pipe band which played lively airs as the pipers swung among the main streets.

HAPPY SAILORS

By this time the sun had come through and the rain-soaked streets were quickly drying and in all parts of the town impromptu street dancing broke out. Sailors, soldiers and airmen freed from their duties joined in the revels. Indeed most of the impromptu dancing was started by the sailors who were the 'life and soul of the party'.

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And so it went on for hours. Crowds surged up and down the main streets and there were jollifications in the housing schemes and in the back streets. The few bands playing were followed by crowds of whooping children, waving Union Jacks and other flags.

In the evening there was more merry-making. Crowds flocked to the centre of the town, the Esplanade and on to the Princes Pier. There wasn't much to be seen at the pier but townspeople accepted the privilege of walking on to the pier without having to prove that they had business to transact.

THE LIGHTS WENT UP

As dusk fell there was another side to the celebration. Dim-out regulations were ignored and lights winked from hundreds of houses. Outside some dwellings there were strings of coloured lights, and many private houses had coloured bulbs drawn up in 'V' shape.

Bonfires were lit in many parts of the town - on the hillsides, in the streets and near the water-front. This again was in defiance of the regulations, but the police turned a blind eye to the happenings. Much of the 'fuel' consigned to the flames came from black-out materials for which there is now no longer any use.

Public dances held in the town were also merry affairs and were crowded to capacity. One of the biggest thrills of the day came late in the evening when floodlights were switched on in Wallace Square, Clyde Square and Hamilton Street throwing the Municipal Buildings, with their bomb-scarred front, into bold relief. There were some cheers - and again the police looked the other way.

There was other floodlighting in evidence at the end of West Blackhall Street, where the King's Theatre was illuminated. In fact the King's Theatre manager, Mr Fulton, deserves a pat on the back for organising some public jollification. During the afternoon show in the picture-house he had the Premier's speech relayed to the audience following which he made a brief speech and then the audience joined in singing 'Land of Hope and Glory', 'Rule Britannia' and the National Anthem.

In the evening the theatres electrician, Mr McAulay, fitted up the floodlighting and laid a cable for relaying music to the crowds in the street. The result was that, when the film show ended at night, the manager was able

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to switch over to the loud speakers and until well after one o'clock in the morning crowds of young people danced in the open square outside the theatre.

Singing shouting and whooping crowds were in the streets until the early hours of the morning, private house parties went on till half way through the night and - to use the well-worn phrase - a good time was had by all!

Provost Morrison as head of the community led off the Victory celebrations at the Municipal Buildings on Tuesday afternoon - an hour after the Prime Minister had made his historic declaration. A large gathering of representative citizens assembled at the Municipal Buildings and were given a cordial welcome by the Civic Chief. Provost Morrison, rising amidst cheers, said it was a great occasion for the country, and also to Greenock, as a great seafaring port. They were all members of a great Empire and they had to receive the joyful tidings with feelings of deep thankfulness to Almighty God for His great deliverance. For many years they had lived and suffered but at last the cloud had lifted.

They had looked forward to the success of their Armies and it had now come - tempered with a sense of justice. They felt justly proud to belong to the British Empire which had stood the test against all the aggression of military dictators. And at one moment in the great drama they stood alone.

The Provost recalled Napoleon's historic sarcasm - that Britain was a nation of shopkeepers - and went on to say that Hitler had stated that we belonged to a decadent race. Well they had a great pride and satisfaction that they never allowed any aggression to stand in their way. They could never forget the work done by the Navy, the Army, Air Force and the Merchant Navy. They were really proud of these great Services in all they had done in the fight for freedom. But he thought that Greenock had been the 'key town' throughout the whole war.

In conclusion the Provost said that all looked forward to the day when they would work in co-operation - no matter how bitter or how hard it had been with some of them. He hoped their gathering would ever remain in their memories as a very happy occasion and also a very memorable one.

Among those present at this historic assembly of leading citizens were:-

Provost Morrison, Admiral Sir Richard Hill, Sir Guy Shaw Stewart, Ex-Provost Drummond, DL. Wing Commander Kemper, Commandant Langlais (French Naval Base), Mr David Paterson, DL, MR AH Gray, Town Clerk, Mr AJ Rooke, Town Chamberlain, Chief Constable Christie, Ex-Provosts Davey and JW Bell, Mr Peter Scott, MBE, Chief Warden, Baillie J

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Reid Kerr, Baillie Robert Wales, Baillie Boyd, Baillie Campbell, Treasurer Templeton, Ex-Baillie Hurry, and Councillors Mrs McLeod, Mrs Ewing, Mrs McDonald, John Morrison, S.McLaren, Walter Brotherston. Colonel Hugh C Walker, Hon Sheriff Substitute Morrison, Mr Malcolm S Swan and Mr John Hardstaff, Central Co-operative Society; Mr George Allan and Mr AA Smith, East-End Co-operative Society; Mr S Turnbull, Greenock Dockyard; Dr Johnstone, Medical Officer of Health; Mr Randal G.Kincaid, Mr Robert Greer, Mr Hugh Ferrier, Mr Thos. Boag, Mr Charles Stewart.

Others taking part in the function included Mr JW Coutts, Chairman of the Harbour Trust, Sheriff Inglis, Mr Colin Scott, Colonel Hugh Walker, Mr Kenneth Greig, Mr John Dempster, Mr Ian Lang, Mr R J Erskine Orr (editor of the Greenock Telegraph), MR RH Blackwood, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Greenock Royal Infirmary, Capt. FT de Morgan, (Torpedo Factory), Miss Isobelle Kerr (Red Cross), Mr George H Murray, Dr Miller, Mr JM Watt and Mr John Reid, Chairman of the Trades and Labour Council.

The formal proceedings concluded with tea and other refreshments served in the lounge.

Canucks 'Jam' Session

Pride of place for arranged V-Day celebrations on Tuesday night went to the Canadians at Niobe. The grounds of Smithston were the scenes of a large and enthusiastic gathering in which about 1500 people took part. It took the form of an open-air jam session dancing being held on the grass lawn adjoining the tennis courts. Fairy lights were suspended round the space allotted for merry-making, and the fun continued till almost dusk when the company made for the more open spaces where a large bonfire had been built. At a given signal Petty Officer Allan Briggs from Niagara Falls applied a light to the bonfire. Flames immediately crept round the huge pile and cheers rent the air drowning the music played by the Niobe band, as effigies of Hitler and Tojo were consumed by the flames. Then the crowd linked hands and danced round the flaming beacon. The glow from the fire could be seen for miles around. It was early morning before the last piece of wood disappeared.

VISIT OF "ADMIRAL"

Next item on the programme was an indoor dance, and this ended a memorable day for those at Smithston. Much humour was caused during the evening by the appearance of an "Admiral" complete with epaulets which, in this case, were the heads of mops. The "Admiral," AB Pocock, of

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Toronto, mixed among the company exchanging wisecracks. Captain J. R. Hunter and Commander E. M. Detchon took part in the merrymaking. The arrangements for the gathering were made by a committee headed by Lieutenant Herbert Linder, Toronto, and the band appeared by permission of Lieut-Commander Cuthbert, from Victoria. BC

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

At Niobe on Tuesday morning the Canadians held an impressive religious service conducted by Padre Holmes. The company inclusive of navy-men and Wren's, sang "Rule Britannia" and "The day thou gavest". The Last Post was sounded by a bugler. A Roman Catholic service was also held, being conducted by Padre Lauzon.

Thousands of townspeople turned out yesterday morning to watch the Naval parade. They lined the route from Cathcart Square to Bagatelle, and in some places they stood three and four deep. Sailors and Wrens of the Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy mustered at the Boom Defence Depot, Dalrymple Street. Led by the RCN band from HMCS Niobe, they then marched via Cathcart, Hamilton, West Blackhall, Brougham, Eldon, Madeira, Newark Streets, to Octavia Terrace, where the dismissal order was given.

Hundreds of young people and adults followed the parade from beginning to end. The stirring music played by the band drew householders to their windows, and shopkeepers joined the crowds on the pavements to see the procession. Behind the band were the Canadians, and then came the Royal Navy's contingent, followed by Canadian and then British Wrens. Bringing up the rear were vehicles representing the RN fire-fighting service. It was an impressive sight, and at different points of the route the spectators burst into cheering. Unfortunately there were heavy clouds in the sky when the march started, and some of those on parade wore oilskins and raincoats.

Just before the saluting base at Bagatelle was reached the band struck up 'Hearts of Oak' Rear Admiral Sir Richard S. Hill, Flag Officer in Charge, Greenock who took the salute, stood on the dais place at the gates of Bagatelle. He was accompanied by Rear-Admiral GBS Watkins, Provost Morrison, Captain Sperring, Captain Douglas, Captain Jauncey, Commander Skuse, Captain JR Hunter(Niobe), Captain FT de Morgan(Torpedo Factory), and Chief Constable Christie. In the grounds of Bagatelle, immediately behind the saluting base, were a number of guests. After the march past Admiral Sir Richard Hill entertained a representative company of naval and

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civilian guests in Bagatelle. In a brief speech the Admiral recalled the gallant service of those who had fallen in the long struggle for victory, and reminded his hearers of the savage and determined enemy still to be conquered to the East.

A number of children who were among the Admirals guests were entertained after the parade in a room of their own at Bagatelle where chocolate biscuits and orange juice were generously 'on tap'.

EX-SERVICEMEN'S CEREMONY

Yesterday was a memorable day for Greenock ex-Servicemen. It began with a parade in the forenoon and was brought to a close with a merry feast of song and music in the Inverkip Street headquarters in the evening. Three bands took part in the parade to the War memorial in Wellpark, and each in turn played spirited music throughout the march. The bands were - Torpedo Factory Home Guard, under Pipe Major Currie: St John's Prize Band, under Mr. Hugh Gilmartin: and Gourock Boys Brigade, under Mr. William Waddell. The veteran warriors made a brave show as they marched along the streets many of them displaying ribbons and medals won in the last war. Everything was organized in tip-top style by Mr. George Scott, the indefatigable secretary, who was assisted by Mr. John Daisley (president). Mr. R. Robertson (vice-president) and other officials of the Club.

SCENE AT MEMORIAL

Hundreds joined in the procession and the scene at the Wellpark was one of the most impressive ever held at the Memorial. Addressing the great throng of people who had assembled to watch the ceremony, Baillie J Reid Kerr, hon. President of the Ex-Servicemen's Club, said they were met that day to celebrate victory over a hard enemy. The victory, they all knew, was in the hands of the Almighty and for that reason they were met there that day to give thanksgiving to God.

They were standing there under the shadow of the Memorial erected to their comrades who had laid down their lives in the last war. Today they remembered all those who had laid down their lives for them in this war and they acknowledged with grateful thanks, the courage and devotion to duty shown by all Servicemen - in the navy, in the Army, in the Air Force and in all the other Services.

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A two minute silence was then observed at the end of which Wm Slater, one of the ex-servicemen, sounded the Last Post and Reveille and the pipers played 'The Flowers of the Forest' The ceremony was touching and impressive. Hundreds of townspeople lined the streets to watch the parade on its homeward march to the club rooms. The celebration of victory was kept up with zest by members throughout the afternoon, and in the evening. The bands played in turn, serving up delightful music. In the evening a concert was given and St John's Prize Band played an important part in keeping the spirit of the audience at a high pitch of enthusiasm. The Secretary specially complimented Mr. McGranachan and his staff on the able manner in which they had dealt with a very difficult task. The catering was all that could be desired, he said.

GOUROCK SCENES

Gourockians made their own enjoyment on Tuesday afternoon. The burgh was a popular place with one-day visitors and these joined the large crowds on the streets. The Pierhead was the scene of great enthusiasm. Young people danced eightsome reels to lively airs of the Home Guard pipe band, which was later joined by Gourock Boys Brigade pipe band. Both combinations marched through the streets followed by merrymakers among whom were many sailors. In the evening large crowds again thronged the streets. Cragburn which had a late dance had a full house. As soon as the 12 o'clock news was ended destroyers, small Dutch and Norwegian vessels, started blaring out the famous V sign on their sirens. The noise however was a whisper to that created the previous night. On Tower Hill there was a bonfire, which drew hundreds of people who cheered heartily when Gourock BB pipe band played. The fire lasted for several hours. Yesterday was quieter in the burgh. There were many people in the streets, but the enthusiasm of the previous day was less boisterous. Last night was 'all quiet'

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VARIORUM

Prominent in the Bagatelle show of bunting is the Soviet Navy flag.

Doors from air raid shelters made good "food" for many street bonfires.

Gourock War Memorial has been floodlit in the evenings since Monday.

During Tuesday night's celebrations at Niobe there was a minor out-break of fire. But the Canadian fire fighters were soon on the spot, and the excitement was over in a few minutes.

Two sailors at Gourock tried hard to swap a Scottish Standard for a Russian flag on Tuesday. They were most persuasive in their attempt to get a change, and caused amusement among spectators, but they had to admit defeat.

Old song recalled. Strung across Charles Street was a rope carrying a washing. Who said "Siegfried Line"?

Band not needed! A group of sailors and girls danced an unaccompanied eightsome in Clyde Square on VE night.

'Holiday golfers on Gourock course counted over three-score ships lying in the sunlit waters of the estuary.

Mean ' actions. Flag stealers were busy after dark on Monday, and several emblems were torn down from outside, shops and houses.

Carrying his good luck with him! A lone sailor, wearing a civilian hat, walked along Cathcart Street on Tuesday evening carrying a black cat in his arms.

Some of the bus drivers - no doubt helped' by their conductresses -made good shows at decorating the radiators of their vehicles!

Cheers greeted the performance of a sailor who climbed on to the top of the Lyle fountain and hoisted a White Ensign.

How many times have you used the phrase "When the war is finished" since Monday night?

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Just after ships welcomed V-day with their sirens on Monday night Canadians at Niobe led by their band, had a "pyjama" parade round the grounds. They carried their captain shoulder high, and joined in a community singing for more than any hour.

How's the head to-day? Some folk find two Victory days in succession rather a strain.

Not approved. The ban on search lights didn't please the Navy.- "Blankety-blank red tape" was how a very senior naval officer described it

Everyone was pleased to see Provost Morrison looking very fit and cheerful at his many V-day functions, and was glad to notice that his recent illness had not left any bad effects.

Wrens were granted a late pass on Tuesday night. A dance on HMS Ravager was one of the attractions.

V-day, festivities at the Victory Club in West Stewart Street gave pleasant evening to nearly fifty Servicemen. The whole company, marched in a body to the top of the Lyle Road at midnight, and then back to the Club for another song

A prominent Gourock Councillor, was one of the many in the western burgh to decorate their house with a V in lights. A residence near the golf course went one better than most by having a complete' VE in strip lighting.

Weaker sex? Navymen wore (or carried) oilskins in the Victory Parade—but the Wrens faced the elements without their raincoats.

Accompanied by a piper and drummer and followed by large crowds, a Norwegian flag was marched through the town in the early hours of Tuesday

French flags were prominent in displays throughout the town but the "new edition" bearing the Cross of Lorraine was noticeably absent, because so few, have been manufactured. One of these flags, however, was included in the Telegraph's display of bunting in Charles Street. It is the property of the local French Committee.

Small Dutch and Norwegian ships make a brave show with their bunting in Gourock Bay.

First two Hammer and Sickle flags noticed by a reporter in the main-street protruded from the windows of the

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Communist Party – and the offices of a well-known local lawyer!

A special Victory variety show is being staged in the 'Port" Town Hall on Sunday evening.

Lit-up with fairy lights extending practically the whole length of the building, Cragburn presented a pretty picture in the evenings.

“£80,000 wanted. Greenock’s Welcome Fund Target Set.

A target of £80,000 has been fixed for Greenock Welcome Home and Remembrance Fund. This was decided at a meeting of the Committee held last night. The sum agreed was based at the rate of £1 per head of the whole population, and it was thought that this could be realized with effort and a little sacrifice.

The Committee also approved of a recommendation that an endeavour should be made to have religious services of thanksgiving to be attended by the returned men and women, in churches to be arranged and that possibly on the same day receptions be held in the Town Hall and that tangible tokens of the occasion be presented to each returned Service man and woman in the form of a money gift and, in a folder a picture of Greenock taken from a vantage point, surmounted by the burgh coat of arms and with an address of appreciation and thanks for their services. It is understood that about 6,000 ex-Service men and women will be involved”

Greenock Telegraph 27th December 1945



Jack Doyle

“When VE Day happened I was 3 years and 40 days old and I can remember going through the town with my mum and all the flags particularly in West Blackhall Street going from building to building. When I lived in Bow Farm we mixed quite freely with the German prisoners of war, in fact my sister and my mother used to take trays of tea to them. The German officers kept their uniforms on – I didn’t know that at the time, my sister told me. There was no animosity between us and the Germans. They were there to build the roads – after the war, they had to put these prefabs up so



One Reichsmark given by a German POW in Greenock to a local boy

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they were there to build the roads. I actually kept in touch with the German who took me on his lorry. My family kept in touch with him over the years and when he got married he sent us a wedding photograph to us. I think my sisters got that. He left after the war ended but he kept in touch with my family. We're not in touch anymore, these things get lost over the years."



John Frame

With my family's farming connections it was inevitable that I spent school summer holidays on farms. Thus on a farm near Strathaven, I encountered land girls - city or town girls who were recruited to work on farms as an alternative to the Forces such as the Army, Navy or Air Force. I recall a Glasgow girl taking umbrage and leaving the farm because her lunch was sent out to the field where we were working rather than her going to the farmhouse for a well-deserved break. Most farm workers appreciate the more civilised lunch break, though they do not mind mid morning or mid afternoon tea breaks in the field. One summer on the same farm, an Italian prisoner-of-war, Luigi by name, arrived daily by a lorry which contained prisoners willing to work on farms. At night the lorry then picked him up along with prisoners working at other farms to return them to the prisoners' camp.



Beryl Mackay nee Welham

I remember the night the war ended. There were bonfires in all the streets and most of them had open air dancing too. Someone had wheeled a piano into the street and everyone was dancing. There were some great eight some reels and dashing white sergeants that night and everyone, young and old joined in. Discos had not been invented then... Next day flags began appearing at windows and bunting was spread across the streets from a window on one side of the street to the one opposite on the other. Later, as servicemen began arriving home, each one was treated to a "Welcome Home" party. The biggest one I remember was for a boy a few closes away who had been a prisoner of war with the Japanese. He came home looking like a skeleton but was given a party everyone remembered for a long time. When my Dad went to war in 1939, I was 9 years old. When he came back in 1945 I was a teenager - all of 15 years old. It took Dad a lot of getting used to the fact that his wee girls were both teenagers and had grown some since he had been away. However, after going to England to see my English relations. Dad went back to work and things settled down. In spite of being treated like a youngster, it was great to have Dad back home with no need to wonder where

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he was and if he was safe. At one point (about 1941/42 when he was transporting the troops) we had no letters from him at all and we didn't know if he was dead or alive as, obviously, there was no way of delivering letters. However, when the mail did arrive it was in great batches. It is only now that I can appreciate how much my mother must have suffered and worried during this time.



Tom Robertson

D. Day was on the sixth of June 1944. The "Bridge too Far" at Arnhem had come and gone and it was now certain that we would win the war. I had never seriously thought that was in doubt. Again I had a map of the Cherbourg Peninsula and Normandy and initially I followed events closely. After that I became less interested as the German collapse seemed only a matter of time. The war in the Far East was more difficult for me to follow as the USA and Japan fought from island to island in the Pacific. I knew about the attack on Pearl Harbour which had brought America into the war, but I was somewhat uncertain about events, just as I had been about earlier conflicts in Burma, Singapore, etc. Germany finally surrendered on seventh of May 1945 - V.E. Day and there were great celebrations throughout the United Kingdom. In Greenock, as in every other town, many street parties were quickly organised. I was at a party in Moffat Street where a number of my friends lived. Long tables were set up along the middle of the street and entry was roped off. All the mothers supplied sandwiches, biscuits and lemonade after which we played party games. Three months later, we learned about the atomic bombs dropped by the Americans on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was horrendous, but resulted in the unconditional surrender of Japan on the following day. That finished the war so far as I was concerned. When it started I was nine years old; when it ended I was fifteen.



Isabella Shields

"The Canadians occupied Greenock. This was a base for them and in fact I have 2 cousins who married Canadians. I also had cousins on my fathers side who were in the Canadian Forces – one in the army and one in the navy. They visited us while they were stationed here plus all their friends, to get Scottish hospitality. On VE or VJ night one had just left my house when the victory bells went. They all went mad with joy – what a night to remember and I think I still have that kit bag that was full of beer. Everybody spoke to everybody that night – all were out

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singing and dancing to all hours of the morning and everyone sharing what they had with everyone else. That was a great night – the streets were decorated and we all baked and put rations together to have a big jollification.



Maurice Taggart

“Then there was joy and the wonderful celebrations at the end of the War in 1945. I remember my face pressed up against the railings looking through to Shaw Place at Clyde Square and watching the soldiers, sailors, wrens, everyone dancing in an anti-clockwise direction to Big Band music. There were church bells ringing, boat horns hooting, ice cream and jelly and numerous street parties. It looked like great fun.

At the end of the celebrations I remember the German Prisoners of War building and making repairs to the Peat Road. They were stripped to the waist and breaking up stones with big picks.”



VE Day Benview Terrace, Prospecthill St.