



VE DAY 75

TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS TAKE THE LEAD IN THE VE DAY 75 CELEBRATIONS

Town and Parish Councils throughout England and Wales are taking the lead in the organisation of local celebrations marking the 75th Anniversary of the end of the war in Europe on the 8th - 10th May 2020. After six years of fighting, the end of hostilities were officially announced on the 8th May 1945 by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. That date has since become enshrined in history as VE Day.

VE Day 75, on the weekend of 8th - 10th May 2020, will be an international celebration of peace – a time to remember, reflect and pay tribute to the millions who played such a vital part in achieving it. This includes the Armed Forces personnel from many countries who gave their lives or were physically and mentally injured; the hard-working women and men who kept the factories, mines, shipyards and farms operating throughout the years of turmoil; the ARP wardens, police officers, doctors, nurses, firemen, local defence volunteers and many others safeguarded the home front.

SSAFA the Armed Forces Charity - which has been supporting service personnel, veterans and their families since 1885 - are the charity partner for this series of VE Day 75 commemorative events.

Sir Andrew Gregory, chief executive of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, said "It is our duty to keep the events of the past alive in collective memory, including future generations - this is how we ensure that such a conflict never happens again. It is our hope that the nation takes a moment to reflect on the significance of this date, as a milestone that changed the course of history for the whole world."

We would like to encourage you to engage with your local SSAFA branch to ensure community collaboration. To find out the location and contact details of your local SSAFA branch visit: www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/find-local-branch/

The planned activities over the weekend are as follows, please go to the VE Day 75 website – www.veday75.org to see the complete overview for this anniversary:

- The Playing of Battle's O'er & VE 75 Years
- The 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2'
- The 'Cry for Peace, around the World'
- Churches & cathedrals 'Ringing out for Peace'
- Street parties and parties in pubs, clubs, Hotels, on town and village greens and in halls etc
- Services of commemoration and celebration in churches, including the reading of the 'Tribute to the Millions' and the playing of the Last Post

The following pages have a run down of the timings and further details of these events.

BANK HOLIDAY FRIDAY 8TH MAY 2020 (designated a bank holiday by HM Government so all can partake).

3pm – Battle's O'er & VE 75 Years

3pm is the time Winston Churchill officially announced the end of the War in Europe from the Cabinet Office, 10 Downing Street, London, and to mark this unique occasion, pipers from around the world will open **VE Day 75** by playing the traditional piper tune, Battle's O'er, and the specially commissioned piece, VE 75 Years, at 3pm local time in the country they are in, paying tribute to the millions from home and abroad.

Battle's O'er will be played by pipers from the top of the four highest peaks in the UK - Ben Nevis, SCOTLAND; Scafell Pike, ENGLAND; Mount Snowdon, WALES, and Slieve Donard, NORTHERN IRELAND – and also at the five furthest points in the UK. Other unique locations include the Bridge over the River Kwai, Thailand, and at a number of sites that previously held concentrations camps during WW2.

All local parishes are encouraged to you try and source a local piper to play at a location of your choice at 3pm. All pipers taking part can register their involvement at the VE Day 75 website – www.veday75.org.

3pm – The Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2

To coincide with the playing of Battle's O'er, and from a location of their choice, local mayor's and other civic leaders are being encouraged to lead their local communities in the 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW II' paying 'tribute' by raising a glass and toasting the millions at home and abroad that gave so much for our freedom. This could be undertaken from the steps of the Town Hall, the centre of a village green or town square, in the local community hall during a celebration that day, or other locations of choosing . Please register your toast on the VE Day 75 website.

6.55pm – A Cry for Peace Around the World

Town Criers and members of local communities will be undertaking 'A Cry for Peace Around the World,' and will be performed at 6.66pm local time in locations around the world, starting in New Zealand. Town Criers and others undertaking this 'Cry' can register their involvement and download the official 'Cry' from www.veday75.org

7pm – Ringing out for Peace

Bells in churches and cathedrals will ring out at 7pm in a collective celebration of VE Day 75. The sound of church bells is deeply rooted in British culture; providing the grand soundtrack to our historic moments. This aspect of VE Day 75 could not be more appropriate, ringing out around the world to celebrate the peace we share today. Please encourage your local church to take part, registering their participation on the VE day website – www.veday75.org

12 noon onwards – Parties and Celebration

Parties and celebrations to take place in pubs, clubs and hotels, on town and village greens and in our streets, bringing the communities of the nation together in common celebration and friendship. Those town and cities twinned with others around the world are encouraged invite them to join in this joyous occasion. Please register your party on the VE day 75 website – www.veday75.org.

SATURDAY 9TH MAY 2020

Parties and celebrations continue.

SUNDAY 10TH MAY 2020

10.30am – Church Services of Celebration and Commemoration

Services will take place in cathedrals and churches throughout the UK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man to celebrate the peace we share today and remember those who lost their lives or returned home dreadfully wounded. The services will also recognise the sacrifices of those who kept the nation fed and functioning during years of turmoil, so please encourage your local churches to participate, involving other faiths too. Churches wishing to take part should register their involvement on the VE Day 75 website – www.veday75.org

Tribute to the Millions & the Last Post

Those planning services will be encouraged to ask a representative from their local community to read out the Tribute to the Millions, which can be downloaded at www.veday75.org, and involve a local bugler or trumpeter to play the Last Post and Reveille. Participation can also be registered on the VE Day 75 website – www.veday75.org.

We do hope that you will join other towns and parishes and take part in **VE Day 75** and honour those from your communities who served at home and aboard. Please be kind enough to register your involvement in one or more of the events by going to the VE Day 75 Website – www.veday75.org as soon as possible or by no later than 1st May 2020. Registering enables us to keep in touch with you, update you on progress, and inform the media of your participation nearer the time, as well as letting local people know what is happening in their area. Also please remember to engage with your local SSAFA branch to ensure a successful collaboration between the community and the local Armed Forces family. Please can you also promote VE Day 75 and the three days of commemorative celebrations on your website, parish magazines, notice boards and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Those that have already registered are being respectfully requested NOT to register again.

My warmest regards,

Bruno Peek

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