



Macclesfield V.E. Day source materials

Source - Mass Observation

Date – May 1945

Author - A Macclesfield Serviceman

My first action on arriving home on V.E. Day was to change into flannels and sports coat, an R.A.F. tie alone proclaiming to strangers my association with the Service. On my lapel I added a Cheshire Home Guard badge.....My wife sported a rather unusual red, white and blue rosette (a relic of the Coronation....) A red, white and blue ribbon in the dog's collar completed our decoration.....

After tea we walked down to the Market Place which was thronged with people. A service was in progress at the Parish Church and folks were gathered all round the square awaiting the coming out of the Mayor.

In the lower part of the town the bi-annual fair was in full swing, this being I suppose, an extra visit as they usually appear in June and September.

We walked right through the town and paused for a drink at a very modern road-house which was crowded. It was decorated almost like Christmas and I noticed that there was about thrice the normal waitress staff. Serving was suspended while the King spoke and then everyone – perhaps little selfconsciously – stood to attention to sing 'God Save the King'. Beside me an old and shaky man didn't get his hat off very quickly. The landlord took a step towards him as if to knock it off or speak to him. Then he realised that his infirmity only had made this customer slow.

We left immediately afterwards and went to a pub at Gawsworth which is our rendezvous with friends. Here were the family who are our oldest friends in the district and many more friends and neighbours. We were there on the Sunday night when war broke out and then I made a mental resolve to be there also on the night when peace returned but, being in uniform, it was only by a stroke of good luck I was able to manage that.

We drank and talked and joked until 11.30. It was pleasant but not exciting. The place was crowded and the atmosphere gay, but at closing time only two people could be said to be really drunk.

The Royal Observer Corps who have a post nearby set off a rose-coloured flare and as we walked home the dark countryside was spotted with light. Several beacons blazed on the Pennines. A misty whiteness reflected the floodlighting of the town. It was rather like a Christmas celebration.

But I couldn't help feeling from the trend of the conversation before the party became gay that there is a little worry about the future. Housing? Demobilisation? Japan? Poland and Russia? There was a skeleton at the feast, before long thrust well and truly into the background.

Before going to bed I drew back all the curtains, opened the windows and turned on all the lights for a few minutes. Possibly this final farewell to the black-out was the most satisfying action of the day.



Source – Macclesfield Courier

Date – 11 May 1945

Headline – The Nation's Thanksgiving

Although after almost six years of total war so memorable an event was nothing if not fittingly celebrated, it was in no spirit of wild abandon that Macclesfield on VE Day, Tuesday May 8th 1945, commemorated the end of the war in Europe.

For joyously though the church bells rang, sending their silvern notes over streets gay with colour and the broad acres of fertile farmland, it was for most people a day of memories and heartfelt thanksgiving..

Although the skies were overcast and rain fell intermittently, people made their way through the festooned thoroughfares to the Market Place long before the Prime Minister was due to broadcast at 3 pm.

Encouraged by an improvement in the weather, more people than ever swelled the ranks of those who had remained in the Market Place....and by 9pm thousands were there to answer the King's call to 'join with me in the act of thanksgiving.'

Dancers congregated in the Market Place far into the night, and even the turning out of the Town Hall illuminations, about 1 am on Wednesday, did little to damp their ardour. Men of all the British armed forces, together with American comrades, were among those who danced to music expertly provided by an ex-serviceman, a former local bandsman. He answered call after call for popular songs, much to the enjoyment of his impromptu audience.

At last the dancers formed a circle for the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne'.



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Source – Minutes of the Watch Committee meeting

Date – 14th May 1945

Present – The Mayor (Mr Alderman Brees) in the chair. Messrs. Aldermen Abraham, Baron, Eaton, Kirk, Mowbray, Nicol, Potts and Wood; Mrs. Councillor Turpin; Mr Councillor Bettany.

V.E. Day. The Chief Constable submitted the following report, namely:-

I am sure the Committee will be gratified to learn that during the two days of celebration for VE-Day, no offences were committed by residents, and I made this fact known to the Magistrates on Friday last. Having regard to the historic occasion, the citizens of the Borough are to be congratulated on their splendid conduct and spirit of co-operation which enable the Police to carry out their obviously onerous duties on these two memorable days, with that pride and spirit for which the British Police Service is so well renowned.

Having presumably, like most members of the Committee, witnessed the very large concourse of persons assembled in the vicinity of the Town Hall on these two great nights; it was a unique spectacle to observe the good humour of the crowds and their obvious desire to enjoy to the full, and in a co-operative spirit, the blessings of the cessation of hostilities in Europe; further, it gave me a keen sense of pride and gratitude in the knowledge that I was the Chief Constable of this Force, and to notice the excellent manner in which the men performed their several duties. They exercised tact and understanding, thus enabling the celebrations to be enjoyed by the population in the best possible way, and without undue interference by 'the man in blue'.

The arrangements for the two days entailed considerable extra work for the police, and I feel the occasion demands some form of acknowledgement by publishing particulars of this report, and any recommendation which the Committee may be pleased to make, in the Council Minutes, as a tribute and future record for the services so well rendered by your Force.

The members of the Force had no holiday; in point of fact, it meant hours of extra duty. The Sunday Thanksgiving Service necessitated men who had performed a full tour of night duty parading again at 9-15 the following morning so that the processional arrangements could be successfully accomplished. It was, of course regrettable that the weather was not suitable for the procession.

The members of the Special Constabulary, under their admirable Commandant, Mr Wadsworth, are worth of praise by foregoing part of their holiday to come to the assistance of their regular comrades.

My personal thanks go to Chief Inspector Bramwell. I cannot speak too highly of him.



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Source – Macclesfield Courier

Date – 20th April 1945

Author – ‘Disgusted’

Sir – will you please enquire, for the information of your readers, who are responsible for the perpetration of the wicked waste of time and material being spent on the Town Hall.

At the same time, inform us which of the many Ministries have consented to the waste of timber, cable and electric bulbs and, presumably, the waste of electricity involved, whilst individuals are unreasonably restricted in the use of these materials for essential repairs and renewals of business and domestic premises.

Who suggested flood-lighting the Town Hall in any case? What will our boys think of our V-Day celebrations whilst suffering privation in Burma, Italy and in hospitals in Europe?

But probably the local powers-that-be have no sons who are serving in these and other war areas.

I suggest that if any ceremony is necessary it should be a quiet service in church, without procession or ostentation.

Yours etc. DISGUSTED.



Source – Macclesfield Courier

Date – 20th April 1945

Author – Unknown

Title – Resentment over Peace Preparations

A good deal of resentment appears to be growing following the preparations being made to observe the announcement of V-Day. The activities in the Market Place – the framing of the Town Hall for illuminations – has created much adverse comment, for it is felt by many people that this could have been delayed for some considerable time yet. It is unseemly when local men are daily sacrificing their lives that so much thought should be devoted to celebrations..

‘The preparations that are being made are nauseating when there is still so much suffering and risk being endured by our men and women on the fronts’ said one prominent citizen to the Courier on Wednesday: while an officer in a paratroop battalion stated that all this ballyhoo at home about peace celebrations is disgusting the boys abroad...

Another angle of opposition is from business men who have been unable to get wood, cabling and bulbs for their premises. Every foot of wood has to be obtained on licence while rubber is a Class I priority, a builder stated; and yet hundreds of feet are being used.