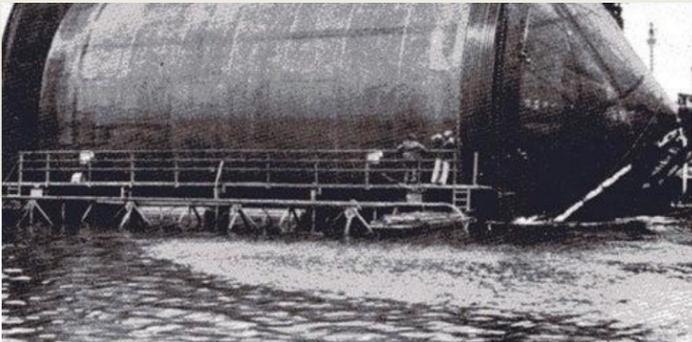


# V.E. NEWSLETTER

## LODGE PARK STUDENT NEWSLETTER



A pipeline being wound onto the drum.

### Pipe Line Under The Ocean

During WW2, workers at Stewarts & Lloyds Steel Works were working on a secret mission. It was called "Project 99" and without it the invasion of France, Operation Neptune (D-Day), could not have happened. On the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. It was vital that they received fuel for trucks and tanks so a giant pipeline was laid from the Isle of Wight to France. The success of D-Day led to the defeat of the Nazis celebrated as VE Day on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945.

Pathe News made a report that can be seen on Youtube <https://youtu.be/RqKxeYZLNmU>



(Thanks to Lacey Kettle, Year 8)

## Celebrating VE Day

**KATHLEEN ROBERTSON:**  
**YEAR 9**

This is the day that commemorates the formal acceptance of Nazi Germany's surrender at the end of the second world war.

Once everyone had heard the news, celebrations started plus remembrance for those who had lost their lives or families that lost loved ones. Licensing hours, which were brought in during the war, were extended and dance halls stayed open past normal closing times.

### Does Germany celebrate Victory in Europe day?

For Germans it is a day to remember the victims of fascism, which is a form of government that is a one-party dictatorship. It is also a moment to celebrate the freedom from fascism. For years

many viewed May 8th as a day of defeat.

### How do France and the UK celebrate?

France: Known as *Victoire 1945* or *La Fête de la Victoire*. For them, it is a day of celebration and remembrance with church services, ceremonies and parades. French flags fly from the tops of poles and the air force thunders overhead. Wreaths are laid as a sign of remembrance.

Usually VE day in the UK is celebrated with street parties, parades and concerts. However, this year it will have to be different because of social distancing rules.

The war in Japan continued till the 15th August. This is known as VJ day.



Due to social distancing rules people are being urged to stay safe and can show their appreciation for VE Day. This year's celebration will be:

11am: Two-minute silence to remember everyone who fought in the war.

11.15 am: The nation will be invited to join in with Royal British Legion's VE day live stream. <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/stories/ve-day-75-livestream> This will be where the nation can watch as generations of WW2 are brought together to share experiences.

3pm: A nation's toast to heroes of WW2 where people across the country stand up and raise a glass and say, "To those who gave so much, we thank you."

9pm: A pre-recorded address by the Queen will be broadcasted at the exact time as her father, King George VI, gave his address on the 8th May 1945.

A UK-wide rendition of Dame Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again' to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.



In 1939 there was much speculation about a war and as a result air raid shelters were built at schools and near places where a large number of people worked. Anderson shelters were given to each household that had a garden where it could be erected and buried underground. Houses without gardens were allocated a place in public shelters that were being built on sites around the towns. In Corby an underground rescue and gas decontamination station was built in Lloyds Road. An underground hospital was built in Weldon Road, on Stewarts & Lloyds land. Because of the threat of gas being used, everyone was issued with a gas mask. Babies had a type that the baby was put into and air had to be constantly pumped in.

Men were encouraged to join the local LDV (the Local Defence Volunteers), later to become the Home Guard. Lots of things became scarce as people who could afford it were buying things to store. This caused people to queue for things that were in short supply when stocks arrived in the shops. This continued until rationing was introduced, but even then, queues still formed for goods in short supply that were not on rations.

On Sunday morning 3rd September 1939, when it was announced on the radio that we were at war with Germany, I was staying with my cousins at Draycott, a small village between Nottingham and Derby. I was 10 years old and always spent the 5 weeks school holiday there. My cousin wrote to my mother and asked if they could keep me until the end of the war as Corby was sure to be a target for the German bombers. Mother wrote back saying, "No, if we are going to die, we will all die together."

All around Corby they were installing anti-aircraft guns with a searchlight crew manned by soldiers and A.T.S. women. Smokescreens were along all the roads around the steelworks. They were manned by the soldiers in The Pioneer Corps, who were stationed in huts erected in the field where the fair for Corby feast was held in South Road. The thick black smoke they produced covered the works so it could not be seen from the air. The smell they produced hung about long after they were extinguished depending on which way the wind was blowing.

Aerodromes were built at Desborough, Kings Cliffe and Wansford for fighter planes. The one built at Harrington was a bit of a mystery at the time: it had all sorts of planes on the runways, but you never saw any taking off, other than the funny looking planes which were used mainly for reconnaissance. It was after the war that we learned that this was where spies and equipment for the underground were flown from.



I used to do a lot of the shopping as my mother worked in the Steelworks as did many women during the war years. We had hens for eggs and a pig which we killed for bacon. I also kept rabbits for eating. We also had a big garden where we grew a variety of vegetables.

When the Americans entered the war, aerodromes were built all around Corby at: Benefield, Polebrook, Grafton Underwood, Molesworth, Chelveston and Alconbury, among others. These were for the B17s known as "The Flying Fortresses". I suppose they got this name because of the number of guns they had. The aerodrome at Harringworth was for Dakotas, the supply planes. These were also the planes that towed the gliders which played a major part in the disastrous attack on Arnhem. On some Sundays if you were in uniform you could get a flight in a Dakota. Both the times my brother, who was in the Rescue Squad and I, who was in the army Cadets, cycled to Harringworth but they weren't taking people up as they were practising taking off with the gliders. They let us stop and took us to watch them practise and they gave us chewing gum before we left. Some of the aerodromes used to send lorries into the towns to take girls to the dances they held on the bases. This was how some of the romances started and led to the weddings where the bride was known as a G.I. Bride.

The American planes did all the daylight raids. They used to take off about 7.30am then fly around to get into formations, always in denominations of 3, usually 18, 21 or 24. All the formations would join up and the sky was full as they set off. If you were near an aerodrome you could see them return. On one occasion, when I was at a farm I used to visit that was under the flight path for Benefield, the planes were returning. As usual they had counted the planes out and were counting them back. It had been a bad day - there were 6 missing but sometimes some were late returning. Later, a plane was heard and we went outside to see it circle the airfield, throwing out coloured flares. These were to let the ground crews know the conditions when their radios weren't working: some meant there were wounded on board, others the state of the aircraft. Two more returned throwing out flares. Then much later we heard another. This time we could not believe our eyes, only 1 of its 4 engines was working and as it passed over so low you could see holes in the wings and part of its tail was missing! It was throwing out flares as it approached the runway but its wheels weren't down. We saw it land in the field before the aerodrome. With all the damage it had suffered it was a wonder it flew at all.

The night raids were carried out by the RAF at the beginning of the war by the Wellingtons - the 2-engine bombers - which in those days were considered very big. These were later replaced with the 4-engine Halifax and Lancaster. I don't know where these were stationed but they were very high when they passed over. They were never in formation, just single ones but close together. The radio next day would say, "a thousand-bomber raid was carried out over the name of a town in Germany." Although we were at war with Germany you always felt sorry for the people in these towns as we knew how people in our own bombed towns and cities suffered.

Corby was very lucky as the Steelworks was never a target for the bombers. We only had bombs dropped 3 times and then it was by a single plane. Once, some bombs fell on houses in Stephenson Way and on the Works. The ones on the Steelworks fell into a coke wagon and onto the corrugated sheds they had erected to cover the slag. These were at the top of our garden and as a result all the windows were blown out of the houses in Lloyds Road. Some of the houses' ceilings came down including the one that fell on my brother's bed and my bed. Next morning, the gardens were covered in coke which we collected and burnt on the fire. There was also some twisted corrugated sheets and scaffold tubes. On another occasion a single bomb was dropped in the road outside the incomplete new post office which carried the scars for many years.

*This witness account of the war in Corby and surrounding areas was contributed by Victoria Centre on 29 June 2004 and is available on the BBC Article ID A2792072*



Stephenson Way and the Steelworks (1950)  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/48365218>



## VE DAY ISSUE

### WW2 AROUND CORBY

## Local history

### *Exploring the past on your doorstep*

#### MR MCDONAGH

The best way to think about history is to look around you. Like many Scots, I came to Corby for work. The reason is simple history, the Steelworks was owned by a Scottish company. When it comes to WW2 there are areas to visit around Corby that may now look quiet but during the war were full of soldiers and pilots from around the world.

There are some things like on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1941, Stephenson Way was bombed. The German pilot dropped the bombs while trying to escape the RAF.

Grafton Underwood, a quiet hamlet between Geddington and Kettering was once home to the 340th US Air Force. The base had a cinema, shops, dance hall and housed one of the squadron commanders, Major Paul W. Tibbets who later flew the *Enola Gay* to Hiroshima on the first atomic bomb mission. The local church has a beautiful window dedicated to the pilots and crew. Many local pubs had coins stuck in the beams placed in there by pilots and if they came back they could collect them – if they didn't, they were left in their memory.

Corby Heritage Centre is full of interesting local history. Please support it.  
billy.dalziel@corby.gov.uk



The Memorial at Grafton Underwood. The local church has a stained glass window dedicated to the pilots and staff at the air bases<sup>1</sup>.

To me as a young person in lockdown, VE day is important because in these times we miss family. So VE day is just another way to be thankful for all of what we have today including our family, who we are extremely grateful for in these times when we are unable to be with them. So I think VE day is an important time to be celebrated because it allows everyone to come together in uncertain times to become stronger and celebrate the heroes that have allowed us to have this life.

**Kathleen Robertson**

### BELSEN

#### SIXTH-FORM VISIT

#### MR MCDONAGH

As part of a project, I accompanied two Sixth Formers on a visit to the site of a notorious concentration camp, Bergen-Belsen. The camp was liberated by British troops on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1945. The troops found thousands of disease-ridden people who had been left to starve in filthy conditions. The camp was so overcrowded and unsanitary that the British eventually burned the whole place to the ground. Many people get confused about the difference between places like Auschwitz which was a Death Camp and Belsen which was a Concentration Camp. Belsen held a mixture of prisoners: Russian and Italian POWs, Jews with passports who could be exchanged for German POWs and a children's camp.

As the Nazis were losing the war, they tried to destroy evidence of places like Auschwitz and marched many prisoners across Germany to Belsen. This meant that the camp was seriously overcrowded with no water and the Nazis refused to fix the pipes. Deadly diseases like typhus and typhoid were rampant in the camp.

The British troops were completely unprepared for what they found and even with their best efforts, many unfortunately died, even after liberation.

The saddest sight for me was the mass graves which the British troops built with thousands of bodies being piled together to try to sort out the carnage.

I was standing in front of one grave marked only with the number, 3000, the amount of people buried together. Thinking about those people as we walked round the corner there was another mass grave, and another.

Never again.....

<https://www.het.org.uk/>

BELSEN

75

<sup>1</sup> Philip Halling <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4619803>