

Throwback Thursday: A Reflective VE Day 75 At Home - We'll Meet Again (part 1)

Thursday 7 May 2020

Welcome to Throwback Thursday: A Reflective VE Day 75 At Home - We'll Meet Again (part 1), sharing our heritage from Bruce Castle Museum & Archive.

As we stay at home for VE Day Bank Holiday on Friday 8 May and events have been postponed or cancelled, we can still celebrate peace and very importantly take time to reflect, remember and commemorate those who fought for our freedom and who tragically died through warfare on the front or at home more than 75 years ago.

Looking back to VE Day in 1945 through our photograph collection, we can think about how we can come together and be thankful, until we are able to meet again.

Below are some local scenes of VE Day street parties from 75 years ago. The first shows Sutherland Road in Tottenham, gathering for tea and cake to rejoice on the news but yet also reflecting on the terrible losses that many families had experienced, following the end of the War in Europe. For members of the Allied forces who were still serving overseas on VE Day, the occasion was bittersweet. Although it meant victory in Europe, the War was not yet over in the Far East and Pacific. In May 1945, thousands of Allied servicemen were still fighting in the Far East and thousands more were held as prisoners of war in terrible conditions.

Tomorrow, on 8 May at 10.55am, Peter Desmond of Haringey Music will be playing the Last Post. You can look at this on the council's webpages and listen via Haringey Council's social media channels at that time. The Mayor Haringey, Cllr Sheila Peacock, will also be sharing her thoughts for the day. We will share these links tomorrow.





From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

There are happy memories of VE Day: 'Everybody gave a bit. If you had currants or sultanas, whatever you had, a couple of spoonfuls of flour, everybody made it go a bit further. You contributed what you could.' Although hardship would continue for a number of years, for the first time in a generation they could allow themselves the thought of a brighter future.



Photograph of children enjoying their street party on Derby Road, Tottenham N15. The road used to be where Stanley-Culross open Space is today.

From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

Staying safe inside (or in your own garden), you can think back to VE Day and remember these happier memories, perhaps exploring some [wartime recipes](#), that are healthy and can also get you through challenging times. Get your family involved or connect with friends virtually - and make historical connections. You

can see some activities, books, music and films collated by [Haringey Libraries](#) that you can look through too; it includes some references to other televised events happening on VE Day. You can hear Haringey's own Beverley Knight singing on BBC 1 at 8pm.

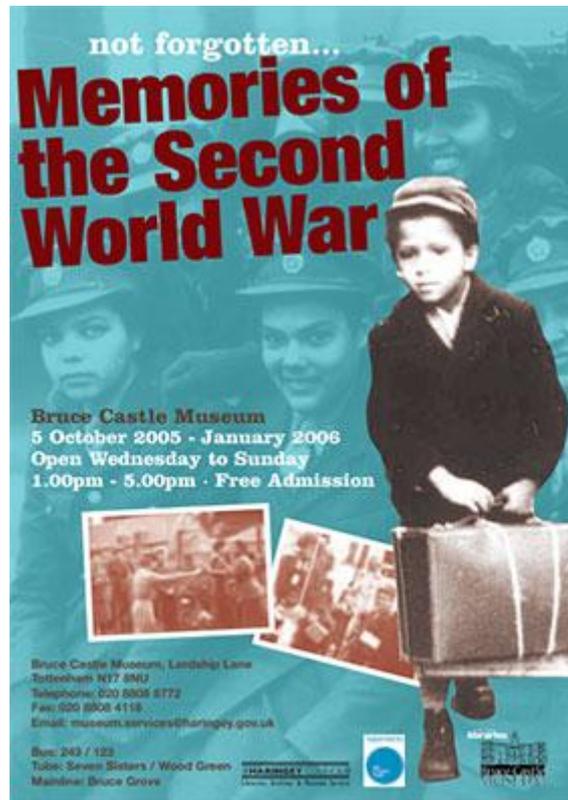


From the collections Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

Some of you might like to remember Frank Williams (above) who played the Vicar from Dad's Army, when he visited Bruce Castle for the 60th anniversary of VE Day in 2005.

If you want to learn more about Haringey in wartime, follow the link [here](#) and scroll through the different resources we have already added online (and will add more to over time), including a [curated album](#) of photographs and paintings from the collections of Bruce Castle Museum & Archive. You can also see below links to our two special exhibitions written and created by Bruce Castle Museum & Archive to commemorate local people and peace, bringing together memories of what life was like for local people during the Second World War.

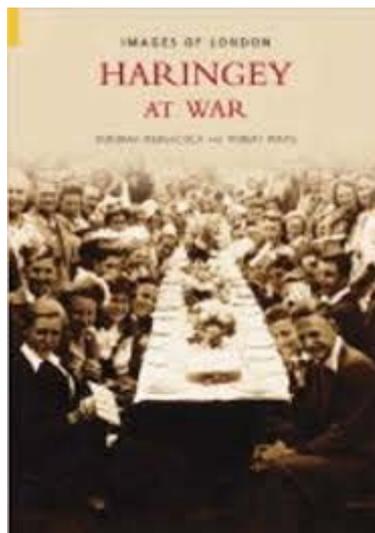
Other highlighted resources from our collections listed on our webpages and below, include a poem by **Pam Williams** a member of the Afrikan Heritage Writers Group; the children's novel *Catching Falling Stars* by Crouch End author Karen McCombie, the book *Forgotten Voices* by the late Max Arthur, also of Crouch End, and films about the second World War from Hornsey Historical Society and London Screen Archives.



Wartime memories - two exhibitions by Bruce Castle Museum & Archive

- [Through the eyes of The Children - exhibition panels \(PDF, 5MB\)](#)
- [Not forgotten... - exhibition panels \(PDF, 6MB\)](#)

We can also highly recommend a very good resource *Haringey At War* (Tempus, 2004) by Deborah Hedgecock and Robert Waite, looking at Haringey during the two Wars through photographs from the collections of Bruce Castle Museum & Archive.



Poem: Our Heroes

by Pam Williams, local poet from the Afrikan Heritage Writers Group

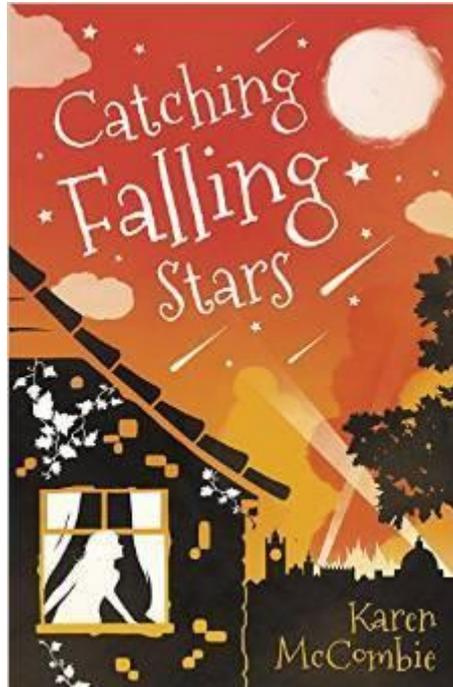
Whether they left,
Considering they might die
Or promised
'We'll be together again you and I'.
Whether they cried
In the solitude of distant foreign nights,
Or rued ever leaving their islands of sun
To fight.
Whether they relished the thought
Of wielding a gun,
Or wished they never had to
When the time had come.
Whether they knelt
In the muddy filth of trenches
And cowered,
Or dreamt of victory
And felt empowered.
Whether they battled ferociously
In the name of the Motherland,
Or prayed for help
From a higher hand.
Whether they met true allies
In whom they confided,
Or found their skin colour
Was hated and derided.

Whether they felt embittered
By the way they had been coaxed in,
Or lamented not being on the front line
Involved in the real fighting.
Whether they were buried
In an unmarked grave,
Or escaped that war
Body and soul unscathed.
Whether they journeyed home
Their minds not fully knowing,
Or returned limbless
Regretful of ever going.
Whether they no longer cared
If they lived or died,
Or saw their past
Through newly tormented eyes.
Whether they spent their remaining years
Existing in peace,
Or suffered haunting dreams
Without relief.
Whether they had fought for reasons
They were unsure were right or wrong,
Whether they eventually knew
it was for our future freedom they had gone
They are all

Our heroes.

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Catching Falling Stars by Karen McCombie



Here is the synopsis of the children's book by **Crouch End author Karen McCombie**, focussing on wartime memories, based on reminiscences by local Haringey residents, including those from our collections at Bruce Castle.

"The world is at war and London is no longer a safe place to be. Glory and her little brother have been sent to the countryside, far from everything they know and love.

To Glory, being an evacuee feels worse than the threat of falling bombs. The woman they must live with is cold and unwelcoming, and the village children are just as unfriendly. And even in the country they're not safe from enemy planes.

But what Glory doesn't know is that her life is about to change in ways she never imagined."

You can check out Karen's own webpages [here](#) to find out more about the book and how to get a copy.

Forgotten Voices of the Second World War: A New History of the Second World War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Were There

by Max Arthur

Crouch End author Max Arthur and his team of researchers spent hundreds of hours digging deep into this unique archive at the Imperial War Museum, uncovering tapes, many of which have not been listened to since they were created in the early 1970s. The result was the first complete aural history of the war, as we hear first-hand from British, German and Commonwealth soldiers and civilians.

Look [here](#) to find out more about the book.

Wartime films

There are some historical films and more recent films created by local film-makers that look back at the wartime period in the Haringey area and in London. One is by David 'Tec' Evans, a charming film that evokes fond memories of his evacuation from Hornsey as a boy which you can find [here](#) on the website of Hornsey Historical Society. The other is a collection of films, specially curated for VE Day by our archive film partner [London Screen Archives - Film London](#) ([external link](#)).

For now, we will leave you to reflect and learn from these resources. We will bring another post tomorrow, with more memories and resources, and will also come back to the theme of peace next week.

Until then, take care and best wishes
From us all at Bruce Castle

Deborah Hedgecock
Curator

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