

SIBFORD SCENE SUPPLEMENT

VE DAY COMMEMORATIONS in SIBFORD
8 MAY 1995

'CELEBRATION on MAIN STREET'

Main Street, Sibford Gower was closed to traffic on Monday 8th May, when over 200 people, from the oldest to the youngest, sat down to a tea of sandwiches, cakes, jelly and ice cream at a table which stretched for more than a hundred yards down the middle of the road. Beer was dispensed from a front garden and songs of the wartime period were played on a piano brought out of a nearby house.

This followed sports in the adjacent primary school field, when senior citizens, mums & dads and children all took part together in everything from sack races and egg & spoon races to Gower v Ferris tugs-of-war.

The Big Tea was preceded by a short silence in memory of those who did not return and some words from the vicar. After the Tea and a giant pass-the-parcel game, all joined in the grand finale of the okey-cokey, the conga and Auld Lang Syne, rounding off, in spirited fashion, a memorable afternoon of community togetherness - an event thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part.

To mark the occasion, all children of primary school age and below were presented with a Commemorative Mug given by the Parish Councils.

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'MEMORIES'

Before regaling us with his melodic memories of the *Goodnight Sweetheart* era, David Ryall shot some video memories of part of the Sibford VE Day activities. Anyone who also has video footage or who has still photographs of the afternoon may like to call David (780574), with a view to compiling a video performance and/or a photographic display to record a unique day in the history of the Sibfords, which could, perhaps, be presented at the Village Hall later in the year.

LETTER to the EDITOR

Dear Sir

VE Day - From Brussels to Sibford Gower in 50 Years

I was one of the 'oldies' at the VE Day celebrations in this village last Monday. My thanks are due to the organisers and to their devoted assistants, for all the detailed work they put in to produce the great success the event undoubtedly was. Exactly the right note was struck and I, for one, went away with profound, yet mixed, feelings, varying between sadness & hope. It was the children who gave me the latter.

It may be of interest to you to know that on VE Day 50 years ago I was in Brussels. My feelings then were so different from what they are now. On that particular day we British soldiers were rapturously cheered wherever we went. Nothing was too good for us. We were the liberators bringing them joy and gladness.

Later that day, however, I was to have the second of two great experiences. The time was 3pm. I was outside my quarters, wandering idly in the *Rue Adolphe Max*. Suddenly the traffic stopped. So deep was the silence that you could have heard a pin drop. Then, from the radios in countless homes, came the chimes of Big Ben striking three and the announcer's voice saying "This is London and this is the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Winston Churchill - ". I shyly have to admit that I still have tears when I remember that occasion.

So now, here we are, 50 years later in Sibford Gower. Do I have the same feelings? No! The accent now is on Remembrance and the grievous & continuing agony of lost colleagues & friends. There is no way of making up for them. Only let us never forget them!

And that was why I was so moved and so pleased that we went through the two minutes silence at our VE Day gathering.
Thank you, Timothy. Thank you, all.

Yours sincerely

Jim Johnston

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"THANK YOU"

Cathy Ryall & Chris Hall wish to thank all those whose invaluable help & support, sometimes with almost no notice at all, made the VE Day Commemorations such a success.