

# V.E. Day 75

A huge thank you to everyone who sent us their memories of V.E. Day 1945. We were, quite genuinely, overwhelmed by the response. Below are just some of those stories...

## V.E. Day in the Capital

"We are a couple born in 1930, married in 1953 (the Queen's Coronation year), and now in our 90s. VE Day, flags flying, cheering crowds dancing in the streets, kissing, hugging, it just went on for days. My wife and I, although had not met then of course, celebrated as Londoners in our capital city along with thousands and thousands of like souls, a celebration one may never experience again in a lifetime."

Ken & Lyn

"I was fifteen on VE Day. My mother, a real Londoner, took me up to the West End to celebrate. I must have been a horrible brat because, as people were singing and even dancing in the streets, I asked how can people celebrate when so many people, not only British, had died? In desperation, my mother gave me a shilling and told me to go home. I still wonder if I were not right and I remember it like yesterday."

Janet

"I was seven years old when the war started. My parents and I lived in Edgware and my father worked at the de Havilland Engine Company, which made aircraft engines for such planes as the Spitfire about three miles away in Stag Lane, Burnt Oak. This made the whole surrounding area a target for the Luftwaffe during the terrible years of the Blitz. [...] The ending of the war was the most wonderful relief for everyone. We had a party in our tiny street in Edgware and, despite the food rationing, there seemed to be plenty of food for the children on the numerous tables placed down the centre of the roadway. [...] The greatest surprise for me was that my father, whose health had never been good, somehow managed to climb a streetlamp post and fixed our Union Jack to the top! I think his sense of relief at the ending of the war was SO great as to give him sufficient extra strength from somewhere to help him perform this unbelievable feat. His action will be my most precious memory of 8th May 1945."

Doreen

"I was 14 on VE day, and with a friend joined the crowds thronging in Pall Mall. We smiled, hugged strangers, danced and climbed lamp posts. Rewind a year or so back, and we lived with the fatalist knowledge that, if you heard a droning sound in the sky and it stopped overhead, there would then be a matter of seconds before it landed, destroying you and everything around you in the explosion. So if your number was up, that was it. It feels a bit like the hostile presence everywhere of the coronavirus now - you can't see it and then it may be too late. But it does end, and I still remember the universal joy of that day in May!"

Veronica

"I was ten years old and my mother (my father still not demobbed) took me to London to join in the celebrations. We got swept up in a huge crowd in Whitehall. I was terrified as I was small for my age. I felt myself being lifted up high where a soldier had put me on his shoulders. He really saved my life - much to my mother's relief!"

Annette

"As a teenager I remember going to the Mansion house with a pal of mine and seeing Churchill on the balcony waving to the crowds. People dancing around and everyone so happy ... we had a great time! Though I did get a bit of a telling off because I got home so late ... well, I was only 14!"

Harry

"I was six years old when we celebrated V.E. day. I went with my parents to Trafalgar Square and it was amazing. So many people. I remember I was carried on my father's shoulders. I can remember him putting me up on one of the lion statues in the square. Not long afterwards, I went to a street party where my aunt lived. It was in Enfield, Middlesex, but now is considered to be part of London."

Joan



"I was eight years old living in North London and my dad took me into the capital, Trafalgar Square then down the Mall where I saw Winston Churchill pass close by in a car on his way to an audience with the King."

Bob

"I was six, my sister eight. We lived in a flat opposite South Ken tube station. Our father was somewhere across the channel. I have no memory of any public transport but anyway our mother said we would walk to Buckingham Palace. The blisters really started to hurt by the time we were passing Harvey Nicholls. The press of people was a bit frightening [...] suddenly there we were, squeezed in with goodness knows how many thousands of other people in front of the Palace and when the Royal Family appeared on the balcony, blisters, crush, hunger were all forgotten. Even we children felt immensely proud though we can't really have known why we did. I don't remember feeling relief - I had known only war since my first birthday."

Caroline

"My wife, [...] my girlfriend then, we lived in London, 'kept on' about the '50 magnesium shells' that were going to be fired off over the West End of London and would not give up until we went! It was very crowded and a great atmosphere and the sky was quite spectacular! But she saw the spectacle and it has always stuck in my memory and my girlfriend was happy! Sadly she passed away four years ago but at least we were able to celebrate our Diamond Wedding Anniversary together after 60 happy years of marriage!"

Martin

"I remember it was a few days after my little brother was born and I went up to the Mall with my father, uncle and cousin and we walked up to stand outside Buckingham palace. There were huge crowds of people singing and dancing."

Pamela

"As an 8-year-old we went to Tottenham Town Hall where we had the band playing to celebrate the moment. There was a big round drum playing and he became extra enthusiastic and let go so it came rolling down the steps as a rousing finale to the performance! What an ending!"

Harry

"I was six years old. A friend of my mother's had invited us from London, to stay with her for a week in Weston Super Mare for a short break, which we had never had. During the night, my mother came and woke me up and said, 'the war is over, people are in the streets singing and dancing!' I felt too tired and too young to go and investigate, but was extremely happy, and went back to sleep feeling very happy and relieved."

Sheila

# Around the U.K.

"I was born in 1935 in a London hospital. My brother and I were evacuated to Cornwall in 1944. We were lucky to be on a farm so plenty of food. We still keep in touch with the granddaughter of the farmer and his wife. [...] For VE Day we had a street party in Stoneleigh Avenue, how the mums found enough food I really don't know. [...] I don't suppose the children realised the significance of the occasion. I remember walking the streets after a bombing and picking up pieces of shrapnel. We had no tv of course in those days so would not have seen the celebrations going on in London."

Josephine

"My memory of VE Day revolves round a celebration in the Highlands of Scotland where we had a party and Highland Dancing for both adults and children. My mother and sister and I had been evacuated from the Blitz in London to Argyll in Scotland. I was only 18 months old when we left the rest of the family to spend the next four years in glorious countryside on a sheep farm amid mountains and Lochs. I still hold wonderful memories in my heart. I learned to speak the Scottish language, Gallic. I was aged nine before I discovered to my horror that I was not Scottish."

Anthea

"I was almost 4 years old and remember being perched on top of a pile of old wood put in my old black pram. My mother pushed me along the High Road at Woodford Green in Essex, then the wood was added to the huge bonfire on the green, and everybody danced around it. Happy times."

Shirley

"I was 17 when the war in Europe ended, a student at Edinburgh university. Small bonfires had been lit along Princes Street and we danced around them. It was a great relief, though not a family reunion; my father was still in Italy in the RAMC (he had been away for 5 years) and my Mum had been in France in ENSA, acting to the troops. Unless you had relations involved in the war with Japan, that war seemed very far away. I don't remember worrying about it after May 1945."

Brigid

"I was 10 years old and my memories of VE Day are hazy, but do remember as the school was close to a park, we and other local schools had a sports day, I am sure a band played and the children were given an orange and a banana. Many children had never seen the fruit and took a big bite of the banana through the skin! I guess this must have happened soon after 8th May 1945. I can remember my Mother crying that it was all over and we were now safe."

Dorothy

"Where I lived in Liverpool one lady who lived opposite our house, Mrs Birch, was a confectioner and on VE Day and at Christmas that year she collected all the appropriate ration coupons from everyone in the street and made an iced cake and a tray of fancies (small sponge cakes with cream and icing sugar) for every single household in the street."

David

"Born in 1937 and living in the outskirts of Birmingham/Walsall, I recall listening to the wailing of the siren of impending bombing whilst hugging the chimney breast to keep safe. Only a child with little understanding of what the commotion was and Dad going outside the house with a spade to battle the incendiary bombs. [...] Fast forward to VE day when it was the street party with food that magically appeared from nowhere and laughter I'd not heard before and really understanding what it was all for!"

Gil

"On VE Day I wore a hideous pink satin dress, cut down from a dress I had worn as a bridesmaid some months previously. [...] The party was held in the road outside our house on the Sussex Downs. We had jam sandwiches and weak orange squash, both unheard of luxuries in wartime England. I had my very own Bakelite mug and plate, which someone had painstakingly painted with cottage garden flowers in sticky oil paint. I treasured these for many years."

Valerie

"I developed measles and missed the village VE Day Party, so sad!"

Ruth

"On VE Day I was in the RAF, stationed at Bridgnorth on an aircrew training course called ITW. When the announcement came through we went round the camp, a noisy crowd, taking down all the wartime notices such as ARP, Emergency Water Supply, Fire Hydrant etc. They were made into a large pile on the parade ground and set on fire while we danced around it. Sacrilege as it was forbidden to even walk on this area. The remainder of the day is a hazy memory but we went in to Bridgnorth town and probably had a few beers!"

Dennis



"I can clearly remember VE DAY celebration. I was a child of 7. [...] We lived at the lovely old town of Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire. The River Avon flows under the bridge near the town centre. I spent many happy hours fishing there. There was a small island in the river near the bridge. On VE Day there were two very large letters, V and E, erected on the island which were illuminated at night. I particularly remember being allowed to stay up late that night to see the lights of VE switched on."

Peter

"I had put my age up and helped in the geriatric ward at Middlesex Hospital and on VE Day we decorated the ward for the elderly patients who were so excited. Then, of course, there was a street party and the food was amazing considering rationing. Fancy hats were worn and we sung all the wartime songs including Princess Elizabeth's favourite 'One of our planes is missing'. I was 14."

Jean

## Further Afield

"I was in Australia, having escaped from Malaya & Singapore with my brother & Mother, but sadly my Father, who left later, was in a cargo vessel which was machine gunned by the Japanese. We did not celebrate VE Day the same, as the Japanese war was still very much on going. My Mother had family in the UK so she was joyous for them, but I can remember feeling resentment at the celebrations on the news, as we were aware of the POW camps and the soldiers and civilians incarcerated still in them!"

Kate

"My memory of VE day is still quite vivid, as it was on that day in 1945 that my parents, brother and I left New York to return to our home in the UK. We were en route from Bermuda, where my parents had met, and married some 10 years earlier. [...] As we left our hotel in New York, we had to wend our way through streets thronged with thousands of people singing, cheering and dancing, with scores of others hanging out of the high-rise office blocks raining down ticker in a riot of colour and noise. As a five-year-old, I wondered why we were having such a send-off! We eventually found our way to the docks to embark on the RMS Aquitania. Later I learned about VE Day, and how important an event it was in celebrating our freedom from the tyranny of Nazi Germany. But I shall never forget that day in New York."

Roger



## Street Parties

"I remember vividly the street party on VE day. My parents' piano was carried out into the street and my Mother played and the whole street joined in a singalong. My aunt had made me a dress from an old Union Jack and silk flags which were given away with cigarettes. I wonder now how so many people were fed when rationing was in force."

Sylvia

"On VE Day we had a street party and I did a tap-dance on top of an old Morrison Shelter (they were the ones we used to have indoors). My partner was Joan Thompson (where is she now?) and we sang a song, long-forgotten, called "Wouldn't It be nice if we could fall in love. I could, could you?". That was in 1945 and I was 16 years old."

Jack

"I was 14 years old and spent the evening at a street party on Norwich Market place. There were funny old goings-on which I understood you did not tell your parents you had witnessed. I never did."

Derek

"I was 8 years old in 1945 and in Class 4 at Frith Manor School in North London, with Miss Price as my teacher. I remember all the girls were given red white and blue striped ribbons for their hair and the boys had a 'button pin' for their blazers or jumpers. Shortly after the VE Day, someone organised a street party in our road. All the goodies that had been tucked away in cupboards were brought out for a celebration that none of us children had ever seen before. [...] It would be lovely to have a street party now, wouldn't it? Would anyone eat fish paste sandwiches?"

Psyche



## Bonfires & Fireworks



"I was a child during WW2 and was eight in 1945. [...] At the outset of the war everyone had to hand in all sorts of things - even fireworks - but my father had left three rockets in the attic and he never declared them. Naturally we children were sworn to secrecy and naturally we would look at them, shake them a little (!) and wonder what they might look like if they ever worked. I can remember VE Day (Victory in Europe) and being woken in the night (it must have been the nine o'clock news) to listen to Churchill's announcement of the end the war in Germany. [...] The next day - I think a Wednesday though it might have been the following weekend - my father brought down one of the rockets before I had to go to sleep (It was daylight because we had double summer time then) and in great excitement we set it off from our front garden.. I remember being amazed at how it took off - I had never seen any fireworks before then. Of course we wanted to see the others set off but they were to be kept back for VJ Day."

Patrick



"My late wife lived in Essex during the blitz. One night a bomb landed between their house and the one 4 ft away next door. The explosion blew a hole in the wall of both houses. She was delighted as her best friend lived next door and they could crawl through to see each other!! I lived in Bushy with a great view of London. Whenever there was an air raid we would rush upstairs to watch wonderful fireworks quite unaware of the devastation. We were quickly dragged downstairs to lie under the dinner table."

John

"I was 13 and the day peace was declared, my sister and I were home from evacuation and living in Westgate on Sea, Kent. First job was to scrape off all the criss-cross tape stuck to all the windows (to prevent them shattering after bomb blast) and then we made flags and streamers to decorate the house, mainly coloured paper and in the evening we all went to the cliff side and had a huge bonfire. Some people burnt their blackout curtains – we saved ours and made rugs of them. A great evening was had by all and we ended up by singing the National Anthem."

Frances

"I was 6 years old at the time and lived in Clevedon, Somerset. The town centre was known as the Triangle and in the middle stood a tall stone-built clock tower. That night there was an enormous bonfire in the Triangle with flames shooting up higher than the clock tower. There were hundreds of people singing and dancing and the noise was tremendous. There was a pub in one corner called the Wagon & Horses which must have done a roaring trade. It was a night I shall always remember."

Garth

"On VE Day in 1945 I was coming up to my 13th birthday in June and the day before I went [...] to Hamley's Toy Shop in Regent Street. There we found that they had a supply of fireworks; the first that had been seen since the war started. We were allowed to buy 12 of them which I took home with great excitement. The following day a large celebratory bonfire had been put together on the recreation ground at Hazlemere where I lived, and I took the fireworks along to the celebrations. They were a fairly puny selection by modern standards but when I let them off they were rapturously received particularly by all the children some of whom had never seen fireworks before."

David

"I remember VE Day vividly. My sister and I were living with my mother and her family in Hope Cove, a small fishing village in South Devon. My mother collected money for fireworks to celebrate on the day. We had a spectacular but short display as a spark from the first firework fell in the box and they all went up at once."

Maureen

"I was 11 years old at the end of the war. It must have been a few days after May 8th that some neighbours threw a party. It was a lovely Spring evening and we were OUTSIDE in their garden rather than in a shelter. There was a BONFIRE (forbidden during the war). [...] The thing I remember most was the Search Lights - they had been a warning of danger, looking for advancing enemy planes, but now, as it got dark they were weaving patterns and forming V signs in the sky. We knew that Victory had come."

Alison

# Fancy Dress

"I was 7 years old when we celebrated Victory in Europe in 1945 when my Mother made me the dress out of two Union Jacks, I felt very proud to wear the dress, until I over her a customer in my Parents Newsagents Shop, in Aldershot, (which was then "The Home of the British Army") tell My Mother that you could be arrested for defacing the Union flag. After that every time I was made to wear the dress I expected to be arrested ... luckily that never happened!"

Jean



"My school had a fancy dress party and I remember one boy came as a huge box of National Dried Egg. I still can see the precise shade of brown with white lettering and just his head sticking out the top! Thank goodness for our fresh eggs these days!"

Elinor

"I was 4 and a half and was dressed up as Winston Churchill, our local MP, to take part in a street parade at my grandparents' home in Chigwell. I wore a hastily cobbled together suit with a Union Jack waistcoat and my grandfather's Homberg hat. The hat kept falling over my eyes and my fingers gave the wrong V sign! I walked next to a girl called Delphine who was dressed as Britannia."

Mary

"I was 7 on VE Day, the town of Penarth in S Wales where I lived at the time organised a victory parade to be held on the Grammar school field. My mother made me a dress from the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes flags and my father decorated my bike with flags and bunting, I was chosen to lead the procession around the field and I can vividly remember how proud I felt. Afterwards we had a huge street party outside my house, all the mothers provided food, sandwiches, cakes, jellies and ice cream, I had never seen so much food it was wonderful."

Caryl

"I was nine on the 8th May 1945 and remember running home from school to tell my Mum that the teachers had told us the war had ended. She didn't believe me so I said she should turn on the radio to hear the good news.

In the heady weeks that followed numerous street parties and victory parades were held. Mums were very busy concocting fancy dress costumes from whatever materials they could find. I was very lucky in that my very resourceful Mum took on the challenge and stayed up very late creating a beautiful costume which transformed me into the Queen of Hearts from Alice in Wonderland. [...] At the first of these fancy dress parades I was so excited and fascinated with everybody else's outfits I didn't hear the judges saying, 'First prize to the Queen of Hearts'."

Shirley



# Some Unusual V.E. Days

“Do you really want to know what I was doing on V.E. Day?? If not delete now!! I had joined the Royal Armoured Corps about three weeks earlier and was doing my 8 weeks initial training at Bovington. I was on Cook House fatigues that day and was peeling (masses) of potatoes.”

Donald

“I was almost eleven years old when the war ended and I remember the day very well. My Father was Cornish but we lived in Hall Green, Birmingham, and we had already arranged to go down to Cornwall to stay with relatives for our annual holiday. On the train there were quite a few soldiers and I remember the atmosphere was amazing. [...] It was a long journey on the train from Birmingham down to Hayle in Cornwall and I remember a couple of the soldiers in our carriage climbed up onto the netting luggage racks above the seats and slept for most of the journey!! And my Mother shared the food that we had brought with us with the soldiers.”

Elva

“My parents and I moved from Lancashire to Sutton on VE Day. Needless to say we didn't know that it was going to be VE Day when the move was organised! I was ten years old and had never travelled so far before. London was a big surprise as you might imagine as there were people celebrating everywhere. I had never seen a city before. It took two weeks for our furniture to arrive as it had to be brought by train as far as possible because petrol was scarce. We stayed with friends until we were able to move into our new home.”

Diana

“On May 8th 1945 I was 17 years old and my brother Martin was 10. We lived in the ground floor flat of one of those imposing quasi-Regency houses in Bassett Road, North Kensington, just a short walk from Ladbroke Grove underground station [...] after the magnificent repast, our attention turned to the firework display – which someone sagely remarked was nothing like as impressive as those we had had the misfortune to have seen over our homes on so many occasions during the past six years! And then it happened – my young brother picked up a lighted banger which immediately exploded in his hand and enveloped his head in a burst of flame. [...] I'm pleased to report that he made a full recovery and the sight in his left eye was as good as in the right, for the next 60 years or so. He said he could readily identify a free G&T at a range of 50 yards!”

Dennis

“8th May, 1945 was my 8th Birthday. Because of the air raids we had suffered (our house was bombed) this was going to be the first time ever that I could have any friends to a Birthday tea. My mother had made cakes (probably with dried egg!) and sandwiches with bread and margarine and fish paste. [...] I thought it was wonderful that I could have some other children into our flat. [...] V.E. Day was announced and my excitement grew. Everyone was so happy and I thought that it was because it was my birthday. [...] 3 p.m. came and I waited for the first knock on the door. 4 p.m. and I was looking out of the front window from the 3rd floor, still waiting. No-one came. Everyone was having their own celebrations and had forgotten my party. I couldn't understand why and I remember sobbing at the tea table. Later in the day my Mother took my sister and me down to Buckingham Palace to try and cheer me up. [...] Oh yes! I remember V.E. Day, every year but for all the wrong reasons!”

Pam





## Tears of Relief

"I was seven years old when the war ended and I can remember walking along our road when a neighbour leaned over the fence and shouted, 'It's over, the war's over.' Then my mother and her just screamed at the top of their voices while jumping up and down.

I couldn't believe my eyes because my mother was such a quiet, gentle person who normally wouldn't have said boo to a goose. [...] Seeing queues outside supermarkets during this Covid lockdown reminds me of queueing outside shops when the news had spread that a consignment of a particular food item had arrived and the friendliness that was shown by complete strangers to one another. There was never a free for all, nor any pushing or shoving, just an orderly queue. The war was frightening, yes, but people were more tolerant and kind, and to a certain extent that spirit has returned to our modern society.

Long may it last."

Anna

"Being at war was the way of life. All I can recall of actual VE Day was seeing my mother and 'Auntie Elsie', who lived next door but one, dancing about together in the front lawn ... laughing and crying. Then life went back to normal. Food was rationed till around 1954 but to a nine-year-old that meant nothing."

Linda

"I was eleven years old, a last year pupil at the little dame school in Porthcawl, South Wales. On that day, our class had been taken for an art class down on the rocks near the beach. [...] Suddenly we became aware that our teacher was clambering up the rocks as fast as she could manage, to talk to a man standing on the seafront, shouting. Our teacher was French, Mademoiselle we called her. We never knew the rest of her name. And when she reached the man, she burst into tears. There she was, her arms waving us to come towards her and she was crying and laughing together. 'It's over,' she called out. 'It's all over. We're safe, my little girls, we're safe.' It was a day to remember."

Geraldine

"Even now all these years later I find myself shedding a tear, having lost in the meantime my parents, 4 brothers and a sister. It was daytime and so the menfolk were at work. The reader may find it difficult to grasp that in London NW10 (surrounded by ministry of war factories ) we had suffered the blitz, doodlebugs, V2 rockets, evacuation on 3 separate occasions and sleeping outside in an Anderson shelter for a very long time. Cars on the residential roads were a rare sight. All public recreational areas had been given over to allotments and so the streets had become our communal playground. [...] But that first hour or so was eerily quiet - TIME STOOD STILL. The women and children came out of their houses and onto their front gates - some walked a little as if in a trance , none speaking , all in a state of shock unable to come to terms with the news and not able to find words. [...] And then the enormity of it all erupted. I could write a book, but I see that I that I have already written far too much. I do hope that this brief account gives the reader some sense of the surreal atmosphere of that moment in history."

Frank



## Father's Coming Home

"I was 6 years old in 1945 and I hadn't seen my father for some years and I still remember the day he was due to come home. I was dressed in my best dress and spent the whole day at the window looking for him. I must've driven my Mother crazy as every time someone turned into the road I asked "is this him?" He didn't arrive until after I had gone to bed but my Mother got me up to see him."

Brenda

"For me 8th May was extra special ... my 14th Birthday! My father had to stay in London Zoo throughout the war. As one of the senior zookeepers he was needed to keep all the menagerie well cared for and The Zoo open for visitors. [...] But I do remember that my beautiful birthday cake, made especially by our local confectioner ... pink and white with little pink sugar roses was not cut until later that night when my Dad came home."

Audrey

"We celebrated VE Day on the greensward at Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, with a huge bonfire. I was probably a 'pain in the neck' as I went round to anyone I knew, to tell them the war was not really over. My Daddy was not coming home, he was still in Burma. In fact he did not get home until February 1946 having been sent to Palestine on his way home to Europe. His mildewed trunk arrived about 6 months later, smelling strongly, so we thought that must be what Burma smelt like."

Judy

"My father joined up before war broke out for 15 years' service coming from a rural background where there was little work in South Wales. He joined Royal Marines at Plymouth, Devon, and served the first 3 years of the war on the Arctic Patrols. He was on the HMS Edinburgh when she was sunk, after a German U-boat attack in the Barents Sea, having just left Murmansk with Russian gold on board, in payment for arms and munitions. He was injured with shrapnel and stayed in Russia until he was repatriated back to the UK. He was later sent to Kent and Southampton Barracks to train, in secret, for the D-Day landings. He was part of British contingent troops who landed at Gold Beach, Normandy. [...] Happily, he survived the war and was demobbed in 1950. On VE Day, my father was on mainland Europe and my mother was pregnant with me so they were apart until my father managed to make it home for my birth later in 1945."

Vivienne



## Babies on V.E. Day

"I was born on 4th May 1945 in Sheffield. [...] I was the only baby with any hair so the Nurses had tied red white and blue little ribbons in my hair."

Jenny

"I was born in London in October 1943 this is a picture taken of our V E party in Tilloch Street Islington, North London. I am on the right hand side in my highchair with my Mother standing behind me as can see I was not old enough to remember but it's nice to look back on as it was more or less outside of our house."

Robert





# Rationing Recipe

## Rice & Cheese Balls with Vegetable Sauce From Marylin

I was born in 1934 so my childhood memories are of my mother making the most of wartime rations. My oldest sister was friendly with an American GI who used to give my mother the odd tin of US army food and a supply of American magazines. Here's a recipe Mama took from one of those magazines. I later used to cook it for my family too when my children were small - especially when we had visitors...



Quantities vary depending on what's available!

Boil white, long-grain rice and when it's cool enough to handle, mix with grated cheese, salt and pepper and form into egg-sized balls. Dip each ball in beaten egg, coat in breadcrumbs and deep fry.

For the sauce, grate some carrot and onion. (The original recipe said to grate a green pepper, too, but my mother could never get those during the war).

Shallow fry the grated veg, add some vinegar (white wine vinegar is best but Mama didn't have that either). Then add a "cup" (225ml) of milk until you have a thick sauce. Season.

Serve the rice balls, sprinkled with fresh parsley (my father had an allotment) and with the vegetable sauce separately on the side. You can have this dish hot, cold or somewhere in between.

Happy childhood memories for me and my own children!