

## VE day remembered

Script by Emma Jones and Terrie Howey

### CHARACTERS:

Actor	Character	Who they are	Their Flashback theme
Brandon	Frank	Soldier	War & coming home to an unknown family
Taylor	Edith	Mother	bombing – rations
Isabel	Shirley	Land Girl	Land Army, Make do and Mend
Dexter	Jimmy	Fire Watcher	Fire service & the bombs
Sophie	Cathy	Government worker	Women at war, women's lib
Ella	Lilith	WRN (Wren – Womens Royal Navy)	Bletchley Park – entertainment
Archie	John	Code Breaker	the work & food
Rory	Tommy	Evacuee	rations
Fox	Bobby	Evacuee	prisoners of war
George	William (and Announcer)	Conscientious objector	Conscientious objector

Everyone: Street Crowd

Actor	Character	Costume
Brandon	Frank	White shirt, dark trousers (school trousers) and a plain jumper
Taylor	Edith	Dress, apron, head scarf
Isabel	Shirley	Blouse and skirt or baggy trousers
Dexter	Jimmy	White shirt and school style trousers
Sophie	Cathy	Skirt, shirt and jacket
Ella	Lilith	Navy blue skirt and white blouse or dress
Archie	John	White shirt, school trousers, (Vest Top jumper or Jacket)
Rory	Tommy	School shorts and white shirt
Fox	Bobby	School shorts and white shirt
George	William (and Announcer)	White shirt, School trousers, plain jumper

### Scene 1: (London on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 – late evening)

Announcer: This is London, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945. Earlier today Victory in Europe was announced by The Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Since then the streets of London have erupted with people pouring out in high spirits and sharing congratulations. Here in Piccadilly there is a terrific throng of people, they have been here for hours celebrating Victory in Europe day and at 11.55pm they show no signs of tiring. People are packing every available space, it is a wonderful atmosphere here tonight.

The lads of the Royal Navy have showed off their training as they shimmied up streetlights to plant the national flags of Britain, Russia and America to great cheers from the crowd. Just down the street an American Solider is letting off rockets, but the right kind of rockets filling the sky over London with friendly bursts of light rather than the deadly ones of recent years.

Everywhere you look is a sea of uniform colours of army, navy and air force, from across the allied nations, along with nurses, and other lovely ladies who have supported the war effort, everyone having the time of their life.

*Focus on government worker (Cathy) flashback*

Announcer: Just below a group of Canadian, American and Australia soldiers are doing a snake dance which is all that is needed to start a great roar, the crowd are now whooping and cheering. There are so many different tunes being sung it is hard to pick any single song out.

In the middle of it all is a lone solider not paying the slightest bit of attention to what is going on around him, he is just reading the newspaper, by the light of search lights, now lit in celebration. I can see the headline of his paper “Enemy routed in Burma” maybe he has a friend or family member still fighting over in Asia.

*Party goers are singing and dancing the “hokey kokey” song fades out and the camera pans into the face of Frank still in uniform [his flash back begins]*

*The song fades back in and finishes with hip hip hooray by party goers*

Announcer: People are bustling around, no one is going in the direction they want to go, and nobody cares less – such is the joy and celebration being shared by the allied nations this night. This is certainly a night we shall never forget. It is light-hearted and carefree and I have certainly never seen such a wonderfully good natured crowd. Well that’s the scene on this historic night, I’m sure the celebrations will carry on into the small hours and even into the next few weeks, but from us at ten past twelve on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May we say good night.

**Scene 2:**

*On a long pebbled street covered in washing lines, a long table winds down the street packed with people and the finest food they can create from their rations i.e. spam, corned beef or lettuce sandwiches, fairy cakes, sponge pudding, treacle tart, Victoria sponge cakes, blancmange. Children are running around and adults are waving cheerily to each other as they set out tables, chairs and food.*

Cathy: Oh what a feast, what a feast, I mean look at all that butter!

Edith: *[sounding close to ecstatic]* I know, well we did it together didn't we. The whole street put their ration coupons together, eat up, I shouldn't mind if we go hungry all week.

Cathy: Thanks Mrs.H. I can help tidy up too, I have been given the week off. In fact, now the war is over I don't know if I have a job at all

Edith: Don't worry Cathy. We've all muddled through haven't we. Can you put some sandwiches up there? Mind you, I'm just glad me 'usbands 'ome I was so worried what with 'im away so long.

*Jimmy is running around playing with Tommy and Bobby. Frank enters bringing something to the table*

Cathy: Hullo Frank, *(boys dash past)* Oooh! Steady on there you lot, you'll have the table over.

Frank: Boys!

Cathy: Oh no harm done. Let them burn off some steam.

Edith: Its nice to see them being able to play as kids again

Cathy: I don't know how you do it, two kids of your own and you still take in two evacuee boys. I thought I'd done well to offer my spare room as a billet for one of those Bletchley Park fellas

Edith: They are good kids really. Bobby's mum is coming up next week to collect him. Their house got bombed out, but she has found a new place. Bless him! He is so excited, but it will just be him and his mum, his Dad isn't coming home and his older brother, well he is still out in Asia somewhere. Makes me feel blessed *(she watches Frank)*

*Boys run off, Frank goes off to collect something.*

Cathy: How long was Frank gone again?

Edith: It were three years since we saw 'im last and that were only for a few days. The last year we only had very sporadic letters. I never knew where he was or even if he was alive. I know he had a rough time of it, it's like I haven't quite got all of him back yet. There were times I thought I would never cope without him, but well you get on with it don't you, I doubt I am the same wife he left.

**[flash back]**

Edith: But then again he must of seen some things. Hasn't said much, but you know, he is quieter and some of his old fun and mischief is missing. I'm sure it will come back now though.

Cathy: Oh it must be nice to have him home. I feel so sorry for Margery an' 'er lot. She only got the message that 'ers is up there when our lot came 'ome. I mean we're rubbin' it in 'er face without meanin' to.

*Shirley, Lilith and John enter and sit at the table talking and eating. The boys rush in and start tucking into food. Frank sits down too while Cathy and Edith watch.*

Edith: Well I guess it has begun then.

Cathy: Indeed, we better grab something before its all gone.

Frank: Well ladies you have done incredibly well on such merge rations – this is a banquet.

Bobby: Yum, This is lovely Mrs Harris.

Tommy: I haven't had a feast like this for ages, reminds me of the picnic me ma made, you know before the war... You should have seen what she made the night before... well the night before I came here. **[Flash Back]**

Jimmy: Yeah! Its lovely. - *Burp!*

Tommy and Bobby: Laughing and Cheering

Frank: James Reginald Harris! You will show some respect on this day! Its not all about fun, its about remembering the heavy price we paid for this day. Lads only a couple of years older than you will never come home to lark about. Be grateful boy.

Edith: Oi Jimmy, mind your manners and don't upset your father!

Frank: I'd have though this war would have taught you to grow up son. Did the fire service not teach you discipline?

Edith: If you don't behave you are never too big to go to bed early.

Jimmy: Ow Mum, I want to go off with the lads. Tonight is the first night I don't have fire watch in a month, I was just having some fun... **[flashback]** {bomb crash/table crash brings us back}

Edith: Shirley, come and help me with your brother.

Jimmy: I'll be good Ma

*Lilith is in deep conversation with John*

Shirley: Ma Lilith is showin' off, why can't I have pretty things like 'er.

Frank: Oi you lot, leave ya ma be, Shirley *you're* pretty enough. Plus you should be proud of yourself you were working hard growing crops and keeping the nation feed...

Cathy: Don't worry Shirley, you are a make-do and mend queen, I mean some of your outfits would make fashion designers jealous.

Shirley: Thanks Cathy. After a day working the fields with the other girls it was fun to come home and make stuff for myself and them, it was like a promise of better times, or looking forward to going out **[flash back]**

*Lilith and John look around at the others looking at them.*

Lilith: Er, why are you all staring?

Shirley: Sorry Lil' its my fault. I was just saying you always seem to have such nice things.

Lilith: Well I've been in uniform most of the time, makes your other clothes last longer. Plus on days off I'd pop down to London, Jenny, one of the other WRNS knew a fella, he'd get in some lovely clothes.

Shirley: I would have been down there all the time.

Lilith: Chance would be a fine thing! With only one day off every fourteen days most of the time you would just want to sleep in your bed, especially if you'd been on night shifts.

Frank: Where were you stationed?

Lilith: Bletchley Park. That's where I met John. We were in one of the drama societies together. **[Flash Back]**

Frank: What? So why we were off fighting you and the concees were living it as actors.

Jimmy: I heard Bletchley was a prisoner of war camp.

Bobby: I doubt it, The Italian prisoners of war worked up on Farmer Scotts place.

John: Rumours may abound about the Park but remember, Mum's the word, loose lips sink ships!

Frank: You speak to me of secrecy when I was out there fighting while you were tucked up safe in comfortable manor house.

Lilith: I'd hardly say comfortable – it was a breezey building which could give you goose bumps in July.

John: Mr Harris, Frank, we all appreciate what you did, but I can assure you that you are not the only one at this table who has sworn an official secret act – and let that be enough said. **[Flash Back]**

- Cathy: John is a very kind man, he often did his duty for the ARP and he's very intelligent. He was a Don at Cambridge before the war, isn't that right Mr Clarke? Rumours about Bletchley are wild
- Frank: Well you should know, billeting him and all. There is no glory in war, but sometimes it necessary.
- Edith: Oh Frank, I know how you feel, all those chaps not fighting when so many others risked their lives.
- Jimmy: I hear William Fry has just arrived back in the street. They say he was a connee, put in prison for it because he wouldn't answer his call up papers from the army.
- Lilith: I'd heard he went on the run but was caught in Bristol.
- Shirley: They let him out of prison a few days ago.
- Tommy: Is that him over there.

*Camera focuses on man stood a little way off in his garden – this is William. [Flashback] William looks over at the party and approaches. The party goes quite and Frank is noticeably unhappy by William's approach.*

- William: Er Mrs Harris, this telegram came while you were setting up, as you were busy I said I'd pass it on, I hope its good news for you.
- Edith: Thank you Mr Fry.
- Frank: *(mutters under his breath)* Still cowardly, if you ask me.
- William: Well, er I shall leave you to your, er celebrations.

*Edith reads the telegram and calls Frank over to read it too, they look at Tommy.*

- Shirley: Hang on Bobby, how do you know about the Italian prisoners of war?
- Tommy: Ha-ha, That is where he got that bracelet he gave you for Christmas last. They made all sorts of things out of spoons, bits of wire, clever really.
- Bobby: You snitch! You promised you won't tell.
- Tommy: Cheer up Bob.
- Shirley: I'm shocked Bobby.
- Bobby: Well I went up there when I first came here, I was running away from the local lads. They were picking on me cos I was an evacuee [Flash Back]
- Shirley: Well you don't need to worry anymore do you Bobby, I hear you Mum is coming for you next week.
- Bobby: I'm so excited, I'm going to have a whole room to myself in our new house, we're going to live with my Auntie in Norfolk.

- Tommy: Well I bet when my mum comes I'm going to have a new room and toys, and it will be amazing. *(He runs off)*
- Bobby: What is wrong with him?
- Jimmy: Don't worry chum, he is still waiting to hear from his mum.
- Frank: *(Frank and Edith have been continuing to have a hushed conversation) ... NO Edith! We have enough mouths to feed.*
- Edith: I'm not turning the boy out on the street. He is one of the family now, we can adopt him and make him a proper Harris.
- Shirley: What is going on?
- Frank: It this blasted telegram William just gave us, trust a concee to ruin everything.
- Edith: Oh Frank, enough. Shh. Shirley keep this to yourself for now, Tommy, the poor lad, his mum... well she has had a rough time of it, she says she can't have the poor little lad back.
- Frank: So, your mother is set on keeping him...
- Shirley: Great! They are annoying but I was going to miss them dreadfully.
- Frank: Not you too.
- Edith: Well that is settled, just let's wait a while to tell him, let's have today at least, we need it. Stiff upper lips you two and let's get on with the party.

*They all gather around the table again*

- Frank: Alright, alright everybody calm down now, I have to begin with a toast, a toast to the women of England who helped out with the war effort growing for Britain, with working in the factories, taking care of the sick and injured, and housing evacuees, a toast to Mr Churchill for bringing us through it, and most of all a toast to my fellow soldiers who fought bravely on land, sea and air, some of who today are back in the arms of their families, and some who shall never be forgotten. Hip Hip...
- All: Hooray Hooray (x3)

*Camera pans to William in his garden*

- William: And may we can learn from such terror and never let it happen again.

*Fade Out*

*Cut to the Bard of Stony Stratford at the war memorial reading his poem*

***The end***