

That street party recalled

WITH reference to the photograph in the Herald of VE Day celebrations headed "But who turned up for this party?" It was held in Providence Street, Providence Place.

I was one of the children sitting about tenth on the front on the right hand side of the table (the one with the dark hair leaning right over the table).

Next to me sat my life-long friend Joan Hayson, who died some years ago. Next, coming towards the camera, I can see Gloria Dominy and Doreen Bunt. Standing behind and easily recognisable with her white hair is Mrs Whitlock.

On the opposite side I think I see Jimmy and Raymond Eames and Georgie Howard holding his baby sister Monica. The couple stood in the front left of the picture is Mr and Mrs Len Ford — he was a Labour councillor for many years.

What I remember of the party was the photograph being taken and the cake which I think was given by one of the American ships. We all had paper hats and there were races in the afternoon.

I remember my dad taking part in the fathers' race.

In the evening Ken Foster played his piano accordion standing on the roof of an air raid shelter built in the front garden of Mr and Mrs Pearce's house. I believe there was also a set of drums there too.

This picture will conjure up for all the children who were there memories of endless queuing at either Quarms in Armada Street for faggots, peas and chips; Ian Higston's in Deptford Place for fish and chips and the Co-operative in Armada Street for groceries.

Who, I wonder,

remembers the first time Pipers in Clifton Place made ice cream after the war and how we all queued right down Clifton Street for this wonderful treat?

Who, I wonder remembers the Hamer family who lived at the bottom of Providence Street. One of their daughters married her soldier boy friend and I can still see the ribbons of his regiment floating from her bridal bouquet.

We went to see the wedding at St Matthias Church and I can still hear the clank of his heavy army boots as they walked happily down the aisle.

His name was Fred and I know he survived Dunkirk only to be killed in the D Day landings.

There are many happy memories I have as well of this historic time: Playing

hopscotch and spinning top, double ball and marbles in Providence Street.

I went to Mount Street School and remember the bottles of milk warming in front of a huge coal fire for our mid morning break.

I still do not like to hear aeroplane engines overhead and would never go near an air show. How many times we waited with bated breath certain the next bomb dropped would be for us.

Many bonds draw people together in times like this and these bonds remained until time took its toll of the elderly and the younger ones moved elsewhere.

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But who turned up for this party . . . ?



Eighty-year-old Mrs C Biscombe, of Lambhay Hill, Plymouth, sent in the above picture of a typical VE Day celebration street party. She thinks it was in Providence Place, a turning off Clifton Place. Can anyone throw light on the matter?