

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

I was pleased to receive a timely email from Christine Moore about the Christmas parties organised by the Village Hall Committee for the children of the Thornhams in the 1950s and 1960s.

Christine remembers tea with crackers, jelly, Father Christmas and games such as musical chairs, pass the parcel, spin a metal tray and call the next person's name out when the music stopped, and pin the tail on the donkey.

Annie Murton, who taught at Thorndon School, organised the games and played the piano for them.

Games had to involve much dashing around to keep warm as the hall was cold, with only a small open fire. Father Christmas was either Mike Howlett (Olive's husband) or Russell Etheridge.



Tea was served by Olive and her mother Dora, Dora's sister Winnie Blake (Honeysuckle Cottage), Bessie Aberly (White Lodge) and Eva Lummis and Nora Hunt from Parva.

Much appreciated by the children were the generous presents which were organised by Winnie Blake and Gladys (known as Janie) Andrew of Grove Farm. They went in Mrs Andrew's car on shopping expeditions to Ipswich and to Eye, where they shopped at Hollingsworth's, now McColl's. In 1954 they spent £8-3-11 in Ipswich and £2-10-4 in Eye.

In 1952 the *Diss Express* told of fundraising for the party: there was a door-to-door collection and a "moderately attended" social and dance raised £7.

Joyce Mayes has kindly shown me the account book in which names and presents were recorded, the number of children declining each year from about 60 in 1952 to only 40 in 1964. Presents included dolls, teddy bears, paint boxes, dartboards and ABC books. They cost around three or four shillings each, equivalent to £5 or £6 today. Joyce's daughter, Wendy, still has the doll and carrycot she was given in 1957. The accounts end in 1964, perhaps this was the last of these fondly remembered events.

EVENTS IN THE THORNHAMS ● Sun 10th Dec: Children's film, *Jungle Book*, 1967 version ● Tues 16th Jan: Magna Village Meeting ● Sat 20th Jan: Jumble sale ● Fri 26th Jan: Film, *Dunkirk*