

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

The arrival of piped water and mains electricity in the Thornhams was a slow process, occupying the 1950s, 60s and even 70s. Meanwhile people were using paraffin lamps and candles for lighting and, for their wirelesses, wet acid batteries that were taken away for recharging. Later, some people had electricity from noisy generators and some had Calor gas for cooking and for heating the copper for the Monday wash.

Water came from ponds, wells and water butts, the more fortunate had a well serving a hand pump by the kitchen sink. The Red House had the luxury of an electric pump, and at the Magna Rectory one of the gardener's daily tasks was to fill the tank in the roof using a hand pump in the scullery.

Here is a photo of the surviving communal pump in the Parva: there are still identical pumps in Clay Street and at Little Swattesfield. The distinctive design shows they are Climax pumps, made by Thomas & Son of Worcester. The firm specialised in manufacturing those once-familiar lattice metal windmills. The mechanism from the blades could be connected to the vertical rod at the top of the pump, and pipes could be bolted on instead of the spout. Here, they were of course pumped by hand.



In Clay Street the Ashtons had a bowser for collecting and from the Parva, pump Jim Thurlow carried a pair of buckets on a yoke, Nat Hawes had a tank mounted on a bike and Brian Ralph carried a container on his bike. But the hard-won Parva water contained rust and having got it home and let it settle quite a lot of rusty water in the bottom of the container was unusable.

These pumps were perhaps installed by the Estate in the 1930s. The one in the Parva was provided in response to Florence Thurlow's complaints about the quality of the water from her pond and from Chapel Farm after she married and moved here in 1933.

I would be very pleased if you could tell me about other surviving pumps, as well as memories of pumps and collecting water, in the Thornhams.

AUGUST EVENTS IN THE THORNHAMS ● **Friday 10th:** Mad Hatter's Tea Party at Beyond the Wall, Walled Garden ● **Friday 31st:** Concert, Magna Church, 7.30pm, 01379 788130 or <http://musicatthornham.org.uk>