

Village Echoes

Recent news reports say due to the state of the economy Christmas will be a struggle for many people this year. One way a lot of Goudhurst residents budgeted for Christmas in the 1950s & 60s would be to join one of the savings clubs run by various shops and pubs. Butchers, Burfields, on the plain, Freddie Southon in the High Street were very popular as was the Ex Servicemen's Clubs thrift club. The secretary of the latter for many years was Richard (Dick) Curd. Every Friday night Dick would collect the sixpences, shillings, half crowns or what ever the members could afford. This would be banked until the big night of the year, SHARE OUT NIGHT, when the members collected their savings plus a bit of interest. Many members worked on local farms or had other low paid jobs so this money made all the difference to their families Christmas celebrations.

As today many local organisations held a Christmas sale to raise funds, one in particular always booked the village hall a year in advance for the day after share out hoping to get the people in while they had a bob or two in their pockets. One year the club changed the share out day, what a furore that caused.

Each year the Methodist Chapel organised an evening of Christmas entertainment held in the village hall. In 1949 there were five carols which the audience were invited to join in singing with the cast most of whom were members of the Sunday school. Three of these youngsters gave readings or recitations. Another twelve performed a Christmas play entitled 'One Wise Maid' Two of the performers still live in the village so I won't embarrass them by naming the cast. I wonder if they remember who played Dorcas and who was an angel? (The only clue M.B. M.P.) The lighting for the event was arranged by Len (Mon) Prickett who arranged his spotlights along the front of the gallery, now replaced by the Jessell room.

Village children looked forward to the parties organised by different organisations one of the largest was that arranged for members of the junior lodge of the Goudhurst branch of the Oddfellows Friendly Society. This was held in the Church Room which almost burst at the seams as the youngsters played time honoured party games after consuming a vast amount of sandwiches, cake, jelly and ice cream.

Local History Society