

## THE DIGITAL HERITAGE PROJECT

.....'bringing archive alive'

# 'CHRISTMAS PAST'

**Thirty years of Christmas celebrations - 'Christmas Past' is a compilation of home movies showing how Christmas has been celebrated in East Anglia from the 1930s to the 1960s.**

Filmed in colour and black and white, it's a selection box of Christmas stories drawn from home movie collections, preserved at the East Anglian Film Archive. In keeping with Christmas traditions, there are films of decorated trees, turkey dinners with all the trimmings, paper hats, party games, crackers and presents enjoyed by happy families from all over Norfolk, Suffolk Cambridgeshire and Essex.

The traditions may remain the same year after year but, as these films show, Christmas looks dramatically different from decade to decade. A black tie Christmas dinner served on the family silver in the 1930s is a very long way from the informality of Christmas lunch with the children in a dining room in the 1960s.

Christmas isn't immune from the impact of world events. In December 1939 the first Christmas in war time was filmed in Clacton. Despite an uncertain future, in true Christmas spirit, the blackout boards on the windows were draped in paper chains. Five years later, in 1944 orphans billeted at Euston Hall, were given a Christmas they would never forget. American airmen based at nearby Watton volunteered to be a "Dad for a Day" and laid on a Christmas feast for the youngsters in the NAFFI. They enjoyed games, entertainments and presents from Santa Claus – all filmed by the film unit from the camp.

Christmas has its commercial side and a short Anglia Television film made in 1963 shows tills ringing in Curls, the department store in Norwich. This year they had a celebrity Santa – local farmer and TV presenter Dick Joyce was the man in the red suit and white whiskers.

This compilation is funny, touching and full of memories for everyone. It's one of many archive releases produced as part of Screen East's Digital Heritage project....'bringing archive alive' throughout the region.

Screen East is partnering two major film archives from both sides of the channel, Pôle Image Haute-Normandie and the East Anglian Film Archive as part of their Interreg Channel partnership, Digital Heritage. **The Digital Heritage Project** will access and work with the valuable, extensive film archives of Upper Normandy and East Anglia making these collections more available to a much wider audience online as well as continuing a dialogue on the culture and identity of these two regions linked to their screen heritage.

The Digital Heritage Project, by accessing the archives on both sides of the channel, aims to make archive film more available to local communities, students, businesses and tourists through a variety of media platforms.

Over the next two years, more screenings will be brought to you throughout Upper Normandy and East Anglia including Norwich and Rouen, as well as the launch of a bilingual website which will compare and contrast our region's colourful histories on film.

For Digital Heritage enquiries please contact Jane Jarvis, Digital Heritage Project Manager, Screen East at [j.jarvis@screeneast.co.uk](mailto:j.jarvis@screeneast.co.uk) 01603 776922 and read more about the Digital Heritage Project at [www.screeneast.co.uk](http://www.screeneast.co.uk)

NOTES:

**Screen East** is partnering **Pole Image Haute-Normandie** as part of their **Interreg Channel Partnership**, Digital Heritage. **Screen East** is the regional screen agency dedicated to developing a thriving film, TV and digital media industry for the East of England. Screen East allocates Lottery funding on behalf of the UK Film Council through the Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE).

[www.screeneast.co.uk](http://www.screeneast.co.uk)

**East Anglian Film Archive** is the moving image archive for the region. The Archive is owned and operated by the University of East Anglia, Norwich (UEA), as a not for profit research and public access resource. [www.eafa.org.uk](http://www.eafa.org.uk)

**Pôle Image Haute-Normandie** is a non-profit organisation funded by the Region of Upper Normandy and The Minister of Culture and Communication for its missions in favour of cinema, audiovisual production and photography.

[www.poleimagehn.com](http://www.poleimagehn.com)

**Interreg IVA Channel Programme** is funded by the European Union, within the scope of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The programme aims to promote emergence - between the French and English parties – of a space of common citizenship fostering a sense of belonging to a cross-border area, and endowed with a specific identity. [www.interreg3.com](http://www.interreg3.com)



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HAUTE-NORMANDIE

East Anglian  
Film Archive

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