

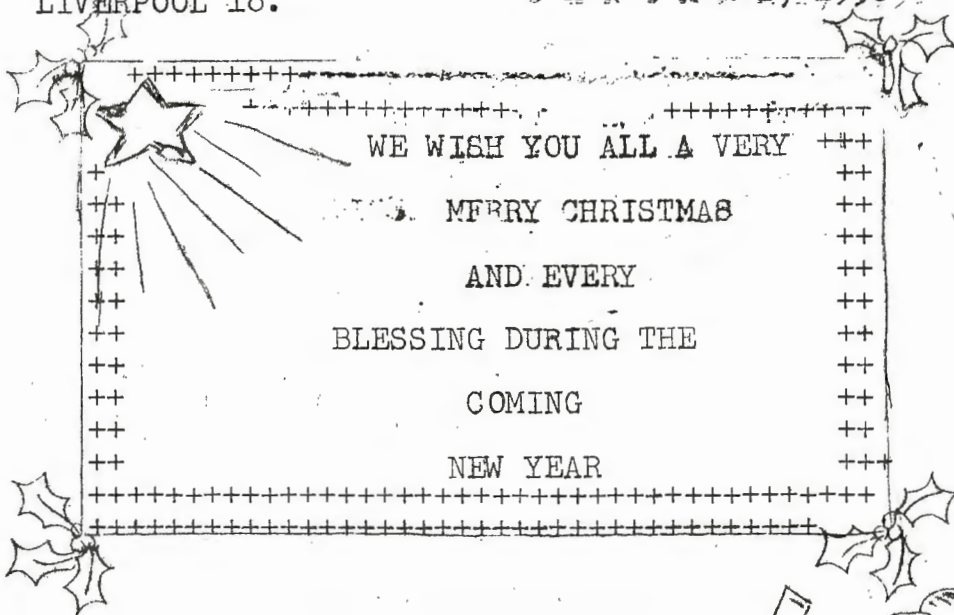


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THE LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC
RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION, and
HOLIDAY GUILD.

JANUARY, 1958



PERSONAL: Congratulations and best wishes for their future happiness are sent this month to June Talbot, who was married on the 31st November.

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YULE - TIDE WALK: The Yuletide walk this year will take place on Sunday the 29th December, and we hope that by now you will have booked your seat on the coach, and also paid your deposits. Instead of the usual Parkgate cafe, we are going to Rivington for our meal and social - and it's up to you, individually, to help make this social a success.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: As mentioned in the last Newsletter the Christmas party will take place on New Years Night. This is a rare privilege, and there will be all the usual festive trimmings associated with our Christmas Party. Admission will be 2/- (enjoyment worth double the price) and as a band has been hired for the occasion we hope you will arrive bright and early at 8.p.m - imagine how rotten they will feel playing to an empty club-room!!

It is customary on this occasion to take a collection for some local charity, and this year the Committee have decided that the collection should be given to the Lourdes Sick Pilgrims Fund. Previously the collection has reached approximately £7/8, and we feel sure you will be just as generous this year.

Whilst on the subject of this collection - Lourdes - if you need any enticement we recommend you to read the article included in this issue, written by a member who visited Lourdes this year.

GRAND DANCE: Our next big dance will be at the State on the 8th February. Tickets will be available fairly soon - SO MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE.

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R A M B L I N G P R O G R A M M E
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- Dec. 22 BLACKSTONE EDGE - Exchange 9.45 a.m. 6/6d
(A and B parties) Stn. Leaders: A) Tony Atherton
B) Bill Potter
- " 29 YULETIDE WALK St. John's Lane 10-15 a.m.
(coach) Leader: Bernard Edwards
- Jan. 5 CHALET WEEK-END
- " 12 LLANGOLLEN James St. 10-15 a.m. 7/-
(A and B parties) Leaders: A) S. O'Neill
B) T. Atherton
- " 19 HOUGHTON TOWERS St. Johns' Lane 9.45 a.m. 5/-
(Coach) (Benediction) Leader: Bill Potter
- " 26 ABERGELE James St. Stn. 10-15 a.m. 6/6
(Benediction) Leader: Marie Henwood

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S O C I A L P R O G R A M M E
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- Jan. 1 Christmas M.C. Refreshments Washers-up Gram. Carriers
Party: B. Edwards P. Murray K. Doyle/A. Doyle -
- Jan. 8 G. Penlington M. Smith M. Doyle/P. Plamping J. P. West/J. Connell
- Jan. 15 H. O'Neill M. Roberts B. & J. Parry F. Rowe/G. Skillicorn
- Jan. 22 W. Roberts M. Henwood S. Grossard/M. Gilmore J. Carroll/B. Edwards
- Jan. 29 C. Kelly P. Naylor D. Fenlon/A. McCann H. O'Neill/G. Hennigan

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MY ACCOUNT OF LOURDES 1957

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When I blithely agreed to write an article upon Lourdes, I little knew how difficult it would be, and I might as well tell you here and now that what I write will be very inadequate, as only those who have actually been can really recall the feeling of what, for want of more descriptive words, I shall simply call peace and contentment.

Even arriving at the station, in all the commotion of last farewells, good wishes and prayers you almost immediately feel at home. At the time I myself didn't realise this. You see I didn't really know what was expected of me as a Handmaid, and I was quite honestly scared stiff - when I saw the crowds milling around, and especially the sick, I just wanted to turn and go home. Luckily, Mum and Dad were with me, so I had to put on a brave

face, and resign myself to the next few days. That resignation I now recognise was not what it seemed; it must have been somebodys prayers helping me to feel quite relaxed and able to cope with whatever lay ahead.

I think at this stage Freda was feeling just the same as me - and when the train pulled out of the station we were both very quiet, listening to the many friends and relations who were left on the platform, wishing Godspeed in the usual manner - singing the Lourdes Hymn.

On the journey we had to help feed the sick - which was rather worrying at first, but once you got to know them and to see how cheerful they were, it was easy to relax and be cheerful like them. And no-one minded when the train lurched and the peas you were guiding so painstakingly into someones mouth suddenly seemed to come alive and shot beneath the bedclothes. It was a long, tiring journey - and if the fit, healthy pilgrims felt jaded at the finish, what price the weariness and pain of the sick and afflicted. Can you imagine what difficulties they had endured during the journey and not feel impressed by their faith and courage?

After seeing the sick safely into their beds at the hospital - helping to give them their supper, and reassure them that they would have all their luggage within the hour - Freda and I wandered off to see the Grotto. Had I been asked what I expected there, I don't suppose I could have supplied an explanation, but I know I felt dreadfully disappointed when I got there. I'd been told, and read in books, about the feeling of prayer and devotion that overwhelms people there, making them feel compelled to kneel and pray. Well, I don't feel ashamed to admit it now, but I felt so ashamed and disappointed at the time; I had no urge to kneel, no urge to pray, and I just stood there and wished heartily that there was no such place as Lourdes. I felt almost ill with pity for the people who had travelled so far hoping to be cured, because right there and then I didn't believe such things could happen. In that state of mind I made my way back to the Hotel - having taken only a sip of the Lourdes water, purely because I was thirsty, and trying to blot out from my mind the picture of the milling crowds around the taps, bathing themselves, drinking, and filling bottles. Because I felt almost repulsed by the sight, I was convinced I was the wickedest Catholic alive.

No doubt you have heard how commercialized the little town is - well I suppose it is, but not in the way the degrades a place. It is only because of the demand that shops everywhere sell Rosarys, statues, prayer books, medals, etc. They have to. One little shop couldn't

satisfy the needs of the many millions of Pilgrims - so quite honestly I don't feel that commercialized is the right word. It gives the wrong impression altogether.

The next day we felt as though our work had really begun. At six o'clock in the morning we arrived at the hospital, and vigorously began to make beds, wash patients and make ourselves generally useful. At around eight we slipped away to hear Mass and have our breakfast, then duty again called and we were back at the hospital helping to get dinner served at eleven o'clock. Actually most of our time was spent at the hospital, even when we were not on duty, and when we were not there we were down by the Grotto or the baths or at the Basilica - hearing a Mass, taking part in a procession or wheeling stretchers and chairs. Mostly the Brancardiers did the wheeling and pushing, but the Handmaids helped out when necessary. I wonder how many decades of the Rosary were recited on the journeys to and from the Grotto?? Many, many hundreds a day would be putting it mildly. You see the Rosary has to be said out loud by the person pushing the chair or stretcher down to the Grotto - and it takes around five decades for one single journey. There again I was worried because I was simply saying the words without feeling or thought, and considering it an insult to Our Lady to offer prayers in such an absent way, until I had it pointed out to me that it was the desire to pray and not the actual prayer that counted, and that helping the sick and helpless was a prayer in itself. From then onwards I began to feel better about it all, and especially late one evening when a small group of us made our way to the Grotto and finding it almost deserted and quiet - I found the elusive feeling of contentment that had escaped me for what seemed an age. The person who gave me the quiet talking - probably will never know what good it did, I couldn't express my feelings and thanks in words - even had he expected it of me.

All days seemed alike, and each one sped by so fast that in next to no time we were gathered together for the departure ceremony at the Grotto, which must have touched even the hardest of hearts, and I was just one of the many who silently vowed that if God spared me I should return again next year.

Have I made it sound as though there were no lighthearted moments? If I have given you that impression I'm sorry, because, far from it, there are hundreds of amusing things that happen - especially when you have a number of 'crazy Brancardiers' in the Pilgrimage!! And of course there are the amusing incidents which always crop up when you have difficulty in speaking the language, and if you imagine, as I did before I went, that the sick and afflicted would make you want to cry with pity, then you really want to go and see for yourself how mistaken you can be, because although you are sorry for them you realise they do not need your pity, as apart from being closer to God in their illness and humility, their cheerfulness makes you feel very small and insignificant in their presence. No wonder they say the sick are the elite of Lourdes.

Also there are the Handmaids and Brancardiers parties - which are given to show appreciation of their help. These parties consist of tea and piles of cakes and wine. (Well at least that is what the Handmaids had - I don't know for sure about the Brancardiers. Possibly they decided to forego the tea and cakes)?!!!

I must mention the processions before I finish - although how I can describe them to you I don't know. The Blessed Sacrament procession in the afternoons, with all the sick lined up in the Square outside the church, waiting patiently and resignedly for the Blessing, (and the cure^s which actually occurred whilst we were there), the Blessing, the singing and prayers, (and still that feeling of peace), can only be a very mediocre account of the actual occasions, unless I recalled every little detail for you, making the account far too long for the Newsletter. And just to mention the many millions of people from different countries lined up with their candles lit for the Torchlight procession will probably bring to your mind a seething mass of humanity; whilst the singing of the Ave in so many different languages will do nothing more than convey to you a loud confusion of babbling tongues - and believe me nothing is further from the truth. Apart from being a

In spite of the dance on Saturday, most people on the Coach were fighting fit as we set off to Alderley Edge, where, with badges looking like new pennies, we have the pleasure of meeting our friends from Bolton who have the same weird idea of spending their leisure as ourselves.

Having soon reached the peak of Alderley Edge, which though not quite as high as Snowdon was too high to jump from. Not far from the Edge a couple of pot-holes were reluctantly passed. On we pressed with but one thought in mind as time went by - tea. We were duly rewarded for our patience by a Cafe complete with lawn, china from which to quench our thirst and a swing. The football fans used this short stop to burn up surplus energy.

As Bernard did not advise Ray, our Bolton leader, that he would be wearing pale green boots, there was a little mud and Bernard did all but walk on his hands in order to preserve the delicate shade.

Naturally, besides straight forward walking, there were numerous barbed wire fences to be climbed or crawled under, leaving bits of red slacks thereon, to mention byt one colour. At one point the fence was an electrified wire, but, of course, this didn't deter the intrepid ramblers. To enliven the proceedings, bonnets, gloves and scarves belonging to the girls were borrowed so that the invading hordes were led on by a standard bearer supporting an unusual, colourful flag. The mediaeval strain was continued by a short, sharp joisting event. As field upon field was invaded by our colourful mob, the day passed very pleasantly with leaps and bounds which brought us to Prestbury where more refreshments were available. On we walked through fading light to reach some tea. There were some steep roads to be conquered though, before we earned the 'cuppa'. The last few miles passed quickly encouraged by vocal entertainment with only a short pause to thank and say 'au revoir' to our hosts as our ways parted.

The short journey home was made in a quieter mood due no doubt to the energy used up in trying to keep our of the mud!

... TWO THIRDS!! ...

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THREE BEACONS

24th November



If you were in Exchange Station between 9.45 and 10.15 on the 24th of November - then you were probably one of the many that surveyed (from a discreet distance) the assortment of shapes, sizes and colours, gathered together awaiting the train. The assortment was us. You may also have noticed the striking newness of the club badges against the tried and tested jackets - but that's beside the point!

10.0 a.m. !!!

It made a change having such a short train journey - we only went as far as Ormskirk - and we picked Lord Kennedy up on the way, looking rather benused. This expression we put down as his normal Sunday morning look, but he claims it was due to the emptiness of his stomach and the dash to Kirkdale Station (not to mention his age!!).

Leading off from Ormskirk Bernard kept up a good pace to the first Beacon. The day was ideal for walking and we had a lot of ground to cover, so it worked out nicely that the first Beacon should be reached simultaneously with the dinner stop. Twenty-six hungry ramblers replenished themselves and set off for the second Beacon, and shortly after this we arrived for Benediction. When we came out it was getting dusk and we still had quite a way to go for the third Beacon -

so here a few of our number turned back. It was most enjoyable walking along in the twilight - May and I sorted out the problems of the world, between singing an odd assortment of tunes (Father out of tune) and felt extremely pleased with ourselves, for no particular reason, and in this state of elation we arrived at the third beacon.

It was with a shock that we learnt on arrival at St. Helens, that we had walked about 23 miles. It seems ages since we've had such a long walk - I hope we'll be having more of them soon.

.. Marie ..

10.0 p.m.!!!



The leader of the Three Beacons walk requested an apology to be made in last months' Newsletter, but as we ran out of space it had to be delayed - so for those who didn't hear Bernards apology for lateness, here it is "Sorry folks!".

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Your prayers are requested for Mr. & Mrs. Henwood who are both sick, and also for the special intention of one of our lady members.

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And because Joe Kennedy 'forgot' to send me his Rambling Notes, we have quite a bit of space to fill - so here goes -



May we present 'Tinkor' -
The family Tom,
By special request of
The Athertons' Mom!!



CHALET WEEKEND - Nov/Dec.

Frank Sinatra made the weekend. The moment the shopping party recognised Peter West in Mold, (bent double under a record player and a kit bag full of packing around the Sinatra long player, we knew all was well.

We peeled spuds to The Voice; I think they cooked to It while six of us walked and some pot-holed; we dined with his melifluous tones wafting around us. The evening meal was Hash, Irish Stew or Scouse, but such a meal by any name tastes good. Joe Bolan was an excellent M.C. He brought a lovely surprise for us. - three of Frankie Vaughan's latest discs. After he'd placed them lovingly on the sofa near the gram, someone just as lovingly placed a pile of blankets on top of them to air. The situation built up unsuspected and eventually somebody put an innocent elbow right through the three of 'em. They're still a surprise, Joe.



Sunday morning was glorious and even the news of Gigli's death cast only a momentary gloom. Poor Bernard had to leave us in Mold to prepare for London to train for a new job. All the best! After "Break-fast with Sanatra", Len Bassett offered to lead us round the block - a few times in the wonderful sunshine until the day-enthusiasts joined us. With early arrivals Arthur and Vera, the whole 'house' fell in and Len took us up, down and around every hill over 10 ft. within a mile of the Chalet. The less hefty females were 'led' down into any dips which occurred. He then ditched us in a quarry and went to collect the day party. Cyril packed in here and, after leading himself for a short-er walk, returned to the Chalet and got things cooking. When all the "Livingstone, I presumes" were over, we pressed, or were shoved, on. I thought that a beautiful friendship was developing between Bop-King Rainford and myself until I learned that he'd christened me with an 'L' plate. Eventually it me while I type round a bell) finished up on Pat and was worn as a badge of honour for the rest of the day. Re-Hash, tomato on toast, Sap ditto, cheese ditto and cheese and onion(burnt) were on the menu for tea.

(Scuse Bamford day. cheese

This was a truly happy weekend. Newcomers and oldsters were all helpful - no queen bees or kings, just a happy mob of drones. Whether this was due to Joe K's personal charm or his muttered threats we'll never know, but the results were highly successful.

FMR.

What with bells, cherubs, robins, cats, etc., I can say very little this time. (Alright Marie, I love them really). But if I can't be SOCIALite, don't (drat these wings) let that stop anybody else being completely sociable over Christmas and the new year and joining in all the programmes laid on. Join us on Sunday the 29th Dec. for the Treasure Hunt(see Marie Henwood). The Hall is beautiful and should lend itself excellently to a fine social Christmas afterwards. Here's another reminder of the party on New Years Day as well. Have a happy Christmas, everybody, especially those abroad - among them Pauline, Chris, John Bickerstaffe and Vi Duffy and Her Majesty's Forces and anybody else who can't be with us.

Hall is beautiful and should lend itself excellently to a fine social Christmas afterwards.

Best Wishes,

SOCIALITE. X X X

And to spoil Christmas for some of you, Mona Roberts wants your SUBS, now!

