

## Y for Youth Club

I can't wait to be 14, then I will be allowed to go to youth club. All my older cousins spend their Friday nights dancing, playing table tennis or billiards or just sitting around the big room at Sunday school. Every year they go on a trip to Blackpool to see the Illuminations and, on Christmas Eve, after the Sunday school social, the group are out carol-singing until the early hours.

Trouble is, I don't have the latest clothes and I'm still wearing short socks. I just know I will be laughed at. I beg my mum to let me have some nylons and shoes with heels. She buys me some beige shoes off the market. (I'm not allowed to choose my own) and a pair of American tan nylons with a suspender belt to hold them up. I try them on and practice fastening up my nylons although they are still wrinkled around my skinny ankles. The shoes feel strange after flatties.

The first time I go to Youth Club, I arrange to call for my friend Eileen so that we can go together. She's older than me but she didn't want to go on her own. I'm wearing a tweed pencil skirt with a thin blue sweater; Eileen has a dress that her mum has made for her. We are a bit nervous about going into the big room but my cousin Colin waves to me from the dance floor where he's jiving with a girl with long dark hair. I feel better then. Colin is a Teddy Boy- he wears a draped jacket that looks miles too big for him and crepe-soled shoes which are called Brothel Creepers. The boys are proud of their greased hair. They are constantly taking out a comb to adjust their quiffs.

Eileen and I have been practicing our jive in her front room to Buddy Holly records so, when Brian puts a record on, we recognise "It doesn't matter anymore" we take to the floor to join the others.

There's a table with refreshments. I've got a half crown coin, a week's pocket money, so I can afford a packet of crisps and a bottle of pop.

We wander through to one of the back rooms where a foursome are playing table tennis with a crowd watching. The Billiard Room, which I only normally see on Sundays, looks so different with the overhead light shining on to the green baize and the rest of the room in darkness. The players are engrossed in their game, their foreheads wrinkled with concentration.

There's a list pinned up on the noticeboard for names of those wishing to go on the trip to Blackpool. Eileen and I put our names down before we've even asked our parents. I will have to ask my cousins to promise Mum they will look out for me otherwise she will just say 'No'.

There's going to be a Youth Club Dance for Hallowe'en too. I can see my social life improving 100%.