

NAZARETH HOUSE Southampton

The children who went to Nazareth House were aged between 7 and 14. Some came from the province of Gipuzkoa and spoke Basque fluently. The Sisters of Nazareth looked after elderly people in one wing of the convent; in another, the refugees were housed. Two teachers, two helpers and two priests went with the children. The Sisters were admirable in their help and generosity providing the refugees with a home, food, clothes, shoes and toys. Wake-up time was 7.30, followed by daily mass. After breakfast, there were two hours of lessons, followed by an hour of recreation and games. Lunch was at 1.30, after which there were another two hours of study, then a quiet time dedicated to prayer and recreation. Dinner was around 8.30, and then it was bedtime. Since there were so few school textbooks, teaching was mostly done orally. The nuns provided the necessary paper, notebooks and pencils. Father Cirilo, who knew how to play the txistu, taught the children to sing and formed a song and dance group that performed locally to raise funds. Food was good and abundant, using much milk and margarine. Generally the children were healthy, spending much of their recreation time outdoors. The football team was especially good, easily beating local teams. On public holidays, students from Southampton would come and take the children out on local trips. These were rare occasions, and the children did not generally mix with the English. This meant that they did not learn to speak English.