

CHRISTMAS ROUND UP.

Every year, just before Christmas, Southend-on-Sea gives a slap-up dinner to a thousand of the borough's old people - their ages range from 78 to 101, and they certainly know how to enjoy themselves. After all, they've had long enough to learn! Some of them weren't born when this annual event started - this year's dinner is the 81st.

Everyone gets a two pounds packet of tea to take home - but what would a party be without a nice glass of stout?

From the old folk of Southend, over to some youngsters who deserve all our sympathy and help - spastic children at Craig-y-Parc School in Wales. Even if they can't run around like most children, Santa Claus hasn't forgotten them. He turns up with his sledge his ~~sledge~~; the lot - the fully laden.

Craig-y-Parc is one of three schools set up by the National Spastics Society during the past year to provide education and treatment for badly handicapped spastic children between the ages of 5 and 16. It accommodates 35 children at present, doing everything possible to help them live normal lives - and what's a normal life without a real good Christmas?

Still in Wales, at a toy factory in Swansea. This factory heard of the bad luck of children whose father lost their jobs when the local pit closed. Christmas didn't look too promising for them - so to cheer them up they were all invited for a trip around the toy works.

There are fancy hats for everyone, tea and cakes all round, and a coach trip both ways - but what really gets them is the sight of all these wonderful toys actually being made! Perhaps one or two had the idea they grew on Christmas trees.

Everyone one of the guests has a present - though some of these ideas may be laying up trouble for future husbands!

Come along, hurry up - it's nearly Christmas, and they'll all be needed.

It's no good, son, you'll never get away with it!