

From
DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH

THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

16-iii-58

Dear Cremona,

I'm sorry our letters crossed in the post. I'd meant to answer yours before this, but on Wednesday I went down with what seemed like the beginnings of gastric 'flu; fortunately, it didn't develop and I'm all right now.

- I was glad of your comments on wines. I've discussed the matter with Llubera: for some reason he doesn't like the idea of Hock at a Catalan dinner - that seems to be taking national differences a bit too far - and would prefer a rosé. However, we can have something a bit more exciting before and/or after. I've ordered some rosé for a party of my own tomorrow: if it's any good, I'll get more of it. As far as toasts go, again Llubera doesn't like port, but that's no problem if we get something else as well - I agree with your suggestion of Madeira. Decanting port may be a problem - I'll find out if they can do it at Queen's Films, but I don't imagine they'll be used to that sort of thing. If they can't, it will have to be something else - I'll leave the choice until I see you; we can easily get something on the Friday or Saturday. As far as drinking before and after is

concerned, I suggest we have some sherry beforehand, say at seven, in the Staff Club, which is just across the road, and much more pleasant than the Flms. We could also end up there after dinner - people would have a much wider choice of drinks that way, and I think there'd be plenty of room.

I got the programme yesterday: it looks pretty comprehensive.

Just two points: I don't think we'll be able to have the Gerhard thing on Sunday morning: one of the performers is a Catholic priest and will almost certainly be at his church most of the morning - and I should think some of our own people will be going to services of various kinds, so we might not have a very good audience. Can we leave it at Saturday 3-15 as you suggested originally? I know it means having nearly everything on Saturday, but I do think it would be better to leave the early part of Sunday morning free. (And there is our party on Sunday evening.)

I haven't fixed up the tour of Belfast and/or environs yet. I was going to try and arrange something for the Monday afternoon, having tea somewhere on the way, but I see you've put it down for the morning.

What worries me a little is the number of people who'd be really interested in a trip of this kind. As far as I can see, over half those who will be attending are either natives of Belfast or know Belfast

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well: the Pierces and the Tates in the first category, Llubera, Ribbans and myself in the second. Frank Pierce will, I imagine, want to spend as much time as possible with his family, and I should think the same will go for the Tates. (Batista, so Llubera tells me, is totally indifferent to scenery.) On the other hand, Ribbans and I would be delighted to take you and anyone else interested on an informal perambulation round Belfast sometime on the Monday. There isn't really an awful lot you can do by bus in a couple of hours, and with so few people, the cost of hiring would probably come rather expensive. Among other things, some of the older Belfast pubs are well-worth sampling - not only from the point of view of their drink, but architecturally and sociologically - and we shouldn't be able to do this in a bus. However, let me know what you think - an opinion from you would help me enormously in discussing this with Llubera - he's rather sold on the idea of a bus trip at the moment, but hasn't any very concrete suggestions as to where we should go.

That's all, I think. Have the Gilis decided definitely about the Wellington Park? I promised I'd confirm my booking there this week. Ribbans, by the way, is staying with us.

Batista appears to be staying with the Lluberas, though he hasn't replied to Llubera's invitation yet.

With Best Wishes,

Yours ever,

P.S. Since you ask, I am married!

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