

## TRAMPS

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The weather outside was cold and wet, the night was particularly black, when someone knocked at our backdoor.

My father got up, put the outside light on and unlocked the door. I followed being curious but cautious enough to keep him between me and the door.

He was standing quietly there, with his long beard, long hair and long coat. His face shone out of the darkness. Who was it ? I knew, it was God .

I watched and listened, God asked politely, with a nice voice, for some hot water for his billy-can.

Whilst the kettle boiled, my father fetched food from the pantry, he cut some cake, sliced bread for a sandwich, and then filled the billy-can with tea, he gave it and the food to God, who said thank-you, blessed us and was gone.

"He needs to get to the hostel in Lincoln tonight for a bed, he has probably walked from Sleaford, there is a hostel there too, they are allowed a night and then they have to move on. Rotten weather to be out makes me feel grateful for my home and family. Were you frightened of him ? He did look strange."

No, I was not frightened of him or any of the tramps who knocked at our door on dark nights in the winter, or of the tramps I used to walk past on my way home from school. After all, who could be frightened of God ? My father was not, so why should I be ?

Tramps of the 1950s on Lincoln Road, Branston .

Susan Scouller     December 1999 .