

by Brian Boobbyer

AQUILA was a businessman. He and his wife Priscilla came to live in Corinth. Paul of Tarsus came to live with them. When Paul moved to Ephesus they did too, and created a home for him.

The Early Church consisted of homes. Out of them grew Christian civilisation.

Our family in Oxford consists of two parents, two sons, a dog, a cat and an endless variety of visitors from many lands. Some of them stay for a year or two. There is also a small garden which gets its full share of cricket and rugby practice.

Philip, who is 15, constantly asks who is coming next to stay or for supper. When there is no one he asks why not. He likes the sense that a home is for the world.

In life the pressure to be someone else is always strong, and nowhere more than in a university city where students from over a hundred countries compete. Home is the place to be yourself and to help guests be themselves. It is also the place where unselfishness can be learnt. In fact, home

becomes a jungle without it.

In the Dark Ages men like Benedict and Columba detached themselves from society, founded monasteries, and the result was Christian Europe. Perhaps homes today can do what the monasteries once did and be centres of new life and new ideas. The detachment is not the cloister but the early morning hour or two with God—where there is time to forget time, to forget the pressures of life and to look into the distance—time to find peace as well as direction.

In *The Ascent of Man* Henry Drummond gave this vision of family life: 'A man cannot be a member of a family and remain utterly selfish. The family is the starting point and threshold of the true moral life. It is the masterpiece of evolution. It is the generator of the forces which alone can carry out the social and moral progress of the world. The family contains the machinery and nearly all the power for the moral education of mankind.'

Harvard undergraduates.

And while the bills get paid, the small apartment is certainly used in the life of the community.

The spare bedroom is seldom unoccupied by visitors, often from abroad. In the kitchen, which is also the living room and playroom for Rebecca, endless cups of coffee welcome individuals calling by, or the students who meet regularly there to discuss the relation of personal faith to radical social change. And the small office is rapidly transformed into a dining-room when a local senator comes to dinner.

There may not be a dishwasher or a colour television. But it is a home with an outreach and an open door, and there are perhaps far too few families in the affluent West of whom that could be said. JMC

**Further South, in New York, a much larger home operates on the same principle. ROB LANCASTER, who lives there with his wife Betsy, writes:**

AT A TIME when there is talk of oil rationing in energy-hungry New York, Fred Small, a black union official, calls the MRA centre in mid-Manhattan 'my filling station'. Fred, whose days are filled with the hurly-burly of union rounds and school board politics, talks of getting 'tanked up with a new spirit'.

The Smalls were among the many whose conviction and generosity made this home possible. They felt the need of a centre where people could come and find new motives and attitudes.

Over lunches and dinner parties we see this happening as UN officials, businessmen, workers, meet and talk. Hearts are opened, new ideas flow—and people find God's leading on the problems they face.

## Office party



The Hamlin family

SCEPTICS who think a Christian life based on faith and prayer is only a medieval, monastic ideal should take a trip to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

There, in a Latin-quarter apartment close to the dignified domes of Harvard University, Anne and Bryan Hamlin have been setting up a family home and work-base without the material security of a salary or any other fixed income. Their only permanent asset is a certainty of their calling to be full-time Christian workers in this important educational centre.

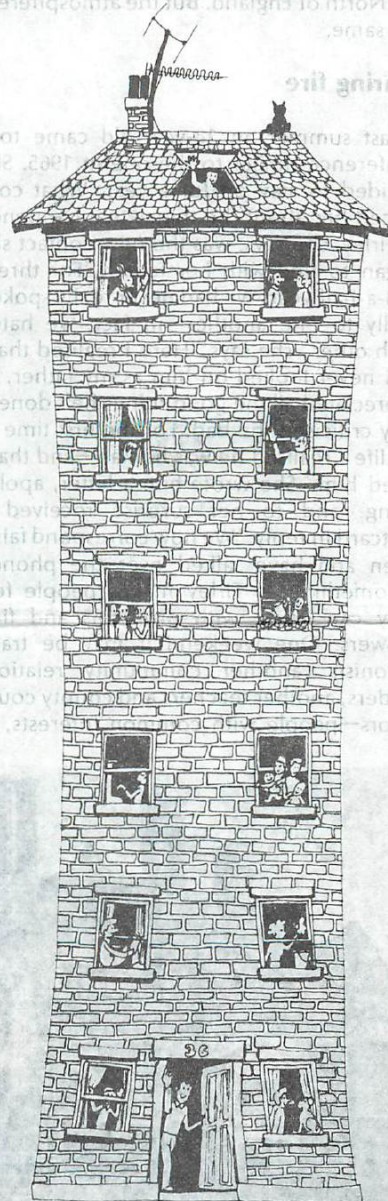
Bryan, a biochemistry PhD, and Anne, a trained teacher, have been in Boston for over two years, and now have a four-month-old daughter, Rebecca. Their rented apartment and living costs, lower in this part of town, are financed entirely by gifts from people who appreciate their work and sense of calling. Although the amounts vary from month to month, the bills have always been paid. A recent addition to the housekeeping fund was a gift of \$60 (£30) from two young

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## BEHIND OPEN DOORS

Special issue on making the most of a home





## THE SECRET OF TIRLEY

More than the rhododendrons and the smell of beeswax, what makes people feel they can come with problems and find answers?

by Virginia Vickers

TIRLEY GARTH has been next best thing to home for me, on and off, since I first came here, for one of those summer conferences, 14 years ago. It was 1965, one of the wettest summers on record. We lived under canvas—rain, mud and all—and loved it. Something in the spirit of the place, the far-sightedness and fun of the people here, their interest in world events and in what I was doing at school, caught my imagination and my heart.

The place has altered a great deal since then. There is now accommodation for 100 people in chalets on the estate surrounding the country house which Irene Prestwich made available to Moral Re-Armament in 1949, and which is now the MRA centre in the North of England. But the atmosphere is the same.

### Roaring fire

Last summer an 18-year-old came to a conference similar to the one in 1965. She decided to stay on for a year. What convinced her about the things that happened at Tirley, she says, was the new contact she began to find with her father. 'For three-and-a-half years we had never really spoken civilly to one another—in fact, we hated each other,' she says. 'Here I realised that I had never looked on him as my father, or appreciated all the good things he's done—only criticised the bad. For the first time in my life I realised he was human—and that I loved him.' She wrote him a letter, apologising, and to her surprise received a postcard in reply. 'We now correspond fairly often and have talked over the phone.'

Something at Tirley makes people feel they can come with problems and find answers. One weekend it may be trade unionists, another community relations leaders, another teachers and county councillors—people with common interests, or

people who would rarely meet. Every month there is one weekend when anyone can come and bring their friends, and in the summer thousands will visit the gardens, while others from many parts of the world will attend conferences or weekends.

It is not just that Tirley is a place which makes you feel at home—although it is. When you walk into the main hall, with its wood-panelled walls, huge bay window, minstrels' gallery and roaring fire, there is that smell of beeswax and wood-smoke which has not changed for decades.

And it is more than the beauty of the surroundings—the Cheshire hills and the Welsh mountains, the rhododendrons and azaleas, the rose bushes and orchards.

The true secret of Tirley is not unique—it is known and practised in many homes in Britain and abroad. It is the acceptance of God's power to direct those who are ready to listen to Him and obey—however imperfect they are. Tirley is doing on a larger scale what many homes and individuals are doing—putting people in touch with God and letting Him take it from there.

### Marmaladies

What does it mean for the 30 or so people who live here and give their whole time to the work of MRA without salary? Between us we have worked on every continent—under the Antarctic ice as well as the African sun. We came to Tirley with different interests and opinions, backgrounds and trainings—but with a common desire to find how God can use this place to answer the crises of our countries and the world.

Nigel and Jane Cooper came to live here after their wedding six months ago. He is a physics graduate from New Zealand, she a secretary from Somerset. 'Living here means we can't just go off and pursue our own

plans. We want to put as much enthusiasm and work into corporate projects as our own,' says Jane.

Gaby Kuhn, the Canadian who shares Tirley's secretarial work with Jane, doesn't always find it easy to live with such a variety of people. 'But I've found that you can't leave things simmering on the back burner—you have to sort them out as they arise. The problem in my family was not the things that were said, but the things that went unsaid. Here at Tirley they are said!'

Hundreds of people help to run Tirley. Some bake for the open days in the summer, or for the Christmas parties; some give financial support regularly; others come for a few days to help with the garden, do accounts, arrange flowers, cook and clean. One group are affectionately known as the Marmaladies, for obvious reasons. Those who come to conferences participate in the practical work, as well as the discussions and meetings.

Everyone has something to contribute. Gretel Failenschmidt arrived six months ago unable to speak English. She felt frustrated that she could not take part in discussions. 'I saw many people with different talents which I did not have. Then I realised that I should think what gifts I could bring into the family. Christmas came and I taught everyone how to make straw stars. This made me more open to people. That Christmas I decided to give the Christ child my heart and myself.'



**MALCOLM AND DOUGLAS (right) enjoy our Sunday morning breakfast shift, writes Janet Paine (left). They like nothing better than pushing trolleys, chopping vegetables or cracking eggs as we prepare a meal for 60.**

People ask how family life works in a conference centre. Like many worthwhile things, of course it is a battle. But it is a battle I would like our boys to recognise and win early in life.

Where does the 'me-first' attitude begin and harden? In the cradle and round the kitchen and dining-room table. Can we learn to consider others before ourselves? Can we learn to do it gladly, not because Dad or Mum says so, but because it's right? Can we start to turn a generation and a country towards God again?



## Sailing uncharted seas

by Dr John Lester

AN INDIAN VILLAGER invited me to stay for lunch. I declined. He then called his wife and together they walked on to their small vegetable plot and handed me as many ripe vegetables as I could carry. 'It is our custom,' they said, 'that we should never allow a visitor to go away empty-handed.'

In another village I sat cross-legged with a Gandhian of over 70, while the village elder gave thanks for a new toilet that this old man had built with his own hands. It was the first in that village. How much was he paid? Nothing. What was his job? For 35 years he had built toilets like this in numberless villages. His reward was food and a blanket for the night in every village he went to, and the knowledge that he was doing what he believed he was meant to do.

These men knew some of the qualities of the spirit. Material possessions were few but they were rich.

When we returned to Britain, such contrasts with our own society enhanced for us the knowledge that we live in a materialist society, which has dulled our sensitivity.

The other day, while working in hospital, I talked with one of the porters. 'Do you know,' he said, 'that during the bus strike

**SAM PONO (centre) is one of several South Africans, black and white, who have lived at Tirley and are now back in their country working for new attitudes. With him are Coloured students from Cape Town whom he brought to Tirley last year.**



E Howard

the nurses were provided with transport.'

'And you?' I asked.

'We were told to walk. It is things like that,' he added, 'that make us want to strike to prove that we do matter.'

It is curious that many commentators appear to believe that somewhere along the political spectrum, if only we can find the spot, lies a Solution, while the spiritual dimension of the problems lies untouched because for so many it is uncharted territory.

Our return to Britain convinced my wife and me that the world needs demonstrations of the Christian alternative to materialism, and for this reason we came to live at Tirley Garth.

For us it is a battleship, crewed by a motley and ordinary bunch of sailors, in need

of much improvement, but sailing unashamedly, nonetheless, under the flag of Christ: seeking to obey His orders, seeking to fight His battles, shooting down the fallacies and wrongs which a materialistic age has produced, presenting a joyous, victorious alternative to the drab hopelessness which is the diet of so many.

It is true that it is in reality a training centre, a conference centre, even just a building. But to us it is one of God's treasured weapons in his struggle for the allegiance of mankind, and as such it is open to all who want to fight that battle.

It is a relief to know that the hundreds who come through its doors do so not because of those of us who live there, but because of the God we attempt to serve.

## Engineer's accounts

by Miles Paine

THREE YEARS AGO, after a long absence in Asia, we returned to Britain and were invited to come and live at Tirley Garth. Douglas had just been born. Malcolm was then three years old. For the next 15 years at least it would be our responsibility to provide for our children. The little assured income we had would not go far with the rocketing prices we discovered immediately we left London airport.

We had no home of our own, but Janet's parents generously welcomed us into theirs for a spell. While there we tried to seek God's will for our family at this juncture of our lives. Should I return to a paid job as a chartered industrial engineer, which I had left some eight years previously? Was it fair to entrust my family's lives as well as my own to God's provision?

If we accepted the invitation to live at Tirley Garth there would, of course, be no salary and we would be expected to contribute towards our keep. We would also be responsible along with others living at Tirley to see that the bills of about £6,500 each month were paid. And of this sum only £2,200 was assured—the income from 121 tax-recoverable covenants, investments and certain regular gifts.

After some weeks the thought came clearly to us, independently, to accept the invitation. 'Malcolm and Douglas may not always have all that you would like them to

have, but they will have everything they need.'

These have been rich years for ourselves and I think for our children also. In the maintenance of the buildings and estate, there has been no shortage of opportunity to put to good use the engineering training and experience gained earlier in life. And we have developed a teamwork and fellowship with many from all backgrounds in Britain and beyond. Some of these have come here for a weekend, some for a year or longer. And through it all there has been the opportunity to pursue what I feel called to do—to work alongside men on the shop floor and in the boardroom who want to apply God's ways in their daily work.

## Which way to the future?

**LAST SUMMER 150 young people from 27 countries came to Tirley Garth. One wrote later: 'Anyone who takes a stand for anything at school lets himself in for sarcasm, cynicism and downright meanness. But I have found with the help of God I can withstand things that would normally make me crack.'**

**This summer's youth programme—Which way to the future?—will take place from 20—29 July. The organisers write: 'The 21st century is around the corner. We are interested in getting the world going in a sane direction. This is a chance to look at ourselves and the world, where change is needed and what we can do about it.'**



Joe Hodgson (centre) with trade union colleagues.

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## Confrontation with the world's needs

by Joe Hodgson

**YOU WOULD HARDLY** believe that less than a dozen miles from Tirley Garth's rural quiet are huge oil refineries, a steel works, an aerospace complex, docks and car assembly lines. Within one-and-a-half hours' car journey live over half the population of Britain.

From all over this area come men and women who have decided to give a creative leadership in their industries. To stand for what they believe is right, rather than go with the crowd, is a constant drain on moral and physical resources, and as a senior shop steward in British Leyland said, 'We come here because we need our batteries charging.'

CONFRONTATION contd p3



# Motive for moving

by Margaret Burton,  
a retired GP

MY PARENTS lived in a lovely seaside village in North Wales for over 20 years. I kept on the home after they died. Then about two years ago I began to wonder if it was time to move. For some time I had felt that there should be a Moral Re-Armament base in Bangor, the university city and hospital centre for the area. As no one else seemed to feel they should go there, I began to think that was where I should be.

I talked the idea over with many friends, some of whom encouraged me and others who did not, but my conviction persisted. One week I was on my own, and I thought the whole thing through again. What were my motives? Older women sometimes have

a drive to see themselves as central and significant to some situation. Was that operating?

When Monday dawned I was convinced that God wanted me in Bangor, so my cousin and I set off to look for a house I could afford. Several friends came to see the place we chose and discussed the pros and cons. But to me it felt like home and I believed it was a gift from God.

I moved in nearly a year ago, and the house has been used by many people, as I had hoped. Now it can be a base for the cast and company of the play *Columba*, which has been invited to Bangor Cathedral by the Archbishop of Wales, the Dean of Bangor and the Principal of the Teachers' Training College. The Dean says of the play, 'The Christian message does not date. St Columba and his contemporaries have something to say to us today.'

# Through their doors

**GORDON MARTIN spent Christmas at the MRA centre in Montreal, Canada. He writes of the kaleidoscope of people who visited the home while he was there:**

A PASTOR FROM ZAIRE, with his wife and children, on their way home, Vietnamese refugees now living in Montreal, Canadian Indian Chiefs and activists, came and went through the doors. Four young missionaries from Utah and California came to see a slide show on family life. An Armenian computer expert from Lebanon, two Parsees from Bombay and a family from Iraq came on other occasions. New Year's Day was celebrated with a lunch party for 24, and the talk was mainly in French.

# SHOCKING PROFESSION



by Judy Lean

MY DEAREST FRIENDS AND RELATIONS, be their spectacles never so rosy, would not say I was a good housewife. My ideal is to have a home that is always neat and welcoming for anyone who drops in, but all too often the unexpected visitor meets me cringing with embarrassment at the state of the sitting-room.

People these days are as shocked to hear

that I am a housewife as if I had said I was a chorus girl in Victorian times. It makes me want to invent some fascinating profession. 'Well actually,' I would like to say, 'I am a sky-diver—in the time I have free from motorcycle racing, that is.'

## People's Lib

The truth is, however, that I do find most of my life interesting. Neither my husband nor I believe a woman's place is in the kitchen willy-nilly, but at the moment, anyway, we have decided that I should not have a salaried job.

We are both out to change society and work out what can be done to meet the needs of people in rich and poor countries. When we got married, we reckoned we could work out our commitments more effectively together than each on our own. And now while he puts in long hours at his demanding job, I can be the freewheeling

member of the partnership.

I haven't got it worked out as well as I should yet, and there is always that pile of ironing waiting to be done, but I can see the people, go to the places that the tied-down breadwinner hasn't a chance of doing. It does mean that, the state of the sitting-room notwithstanding, we can have open house with greater ease than if we were both out working, particularly as neither of us is especially good at being organised.

Of course I sometimes find the chores a bore and there were times when I used to feel hard done by and banged the pots in frustration. But I have found that housewifery is fulfilling, even if you are not the type, if you have something outside your four walls for which to live. Of course, it's not the same for everybody. There is a sort of People's Lib, I think, in the idea that God has a unique purpose for each of us and that we can seek His guidance for our overall aims and daily duties. It certainly beats sky-diving.

## CONFRONTATION contd from p4

They come to take stock, to learn from mistakes, plan action and develop their strategies. These often emerge through the honesty that comes when God's direction is sought in quiet. 'When I faced up to where I had to change,' says Patrick O'Kane, a young construction worker, 'I lost my resentment against the building site manager. I realised then that wrong attitudes—on both sides—could be changed.' From that point has flowed a series of initiatives in many areas of British industry, aimed, he says, 'at restoring the Christian basis, and the deep concern for the less well-off, that characterised many of the founders of the British labour movement'. He and other trade unionists are now

launching a campaign in the Midlands, spearheaded by a play about Keir Hardie, 'father' of the Labour Party.

These men bring their friends to Tirley Garth—and their enemies. One Sunday a militant trade unionist found himself in the presence of two men he had fought in earlier union elections. A third he had helped to remove from the chairmanship of a District Committee which he had held for 15 years. But attitudes had shifted in these men since. And they all felt the need for action to answer the serious situation in the country. On this basis they planned together.

Leaders of industry confer here with people they would normally meet only in confrontations. So often the concept they

find at Tirley Garth—that industry should be the generator of the wealth and resources so desperately needed by the world's poor—lifts them above wrangling to honest, constructive talk. As one AUEW Convenor said, 'It is this global concept you have that is so impressive. On this basis we can get an alternative to the strife in industry.'

This man talked about a regional election he was engaged in, and said, 'I have been offered a management job. I'd determined that if I lost in the election I would finish with the union and take that job. After listening today I've decided that this is the patch of earth on which I've been placed, and even if I lose the election I'll stay and work on to apply these ideas.'

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