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W. Cameron-Johnson

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Introduction

High above the gently rolling Cheshire plains, a short walk from the High Billinge, one of Cheshire's highest points, stands Tirley Garth. Built early in this century, its fingered chimneys, tall and stark against the horizon, make it look at least two centuries older.

Tirley Garth is built on rock, the hard, red sandstone that lends colour and texture to the local soil. Around it lies an estate whose gardens are famous for their beauty. During May and June thousands come to see the rhododendrons that line the half-mile drive and adorn the lawns. Trees of many shapes and shades add colour to all the seasons. A tiny stream, mostly hidden, runs the length of the 40-acre estate.

From the leaded windows of the house you look south across the rooftops of nearby Utkinton - the Out-Kin-Town or Town of the Strangers - to Beeston Castle and the Peckforton Hills, or westward to the mountains of Wales. You reach Tirley Garth through winding lanes. Though sometimes hard to find, when you enter its timbered hall with oak beams reaching to the second floor, and stand in front of the log fire, questions come to mind. What is Tirley Garth? What is the story behind this remarkable place? Some of that story is told in this small book.

The house was built as a gentleman's country residence in the spacious Edwardian days when men who had made their pile in industry looked to retire to the country. When first the Prestwich family came to Tirley Garth in 1912 they found a partially completed

house standing in a field. Richard Prestwich, a Manchester textile industrialist, put much of his fortune into completing the house and creating and landscaping the magnificent gardens.

Development

In these pages Irene, Richard Prestwich's daughter, writes of their life at Tirley Garth and of the decision she took in the war years to make her home of forty years available for a much wider purpose. Clive Aslet's article in *Country Life* tells of the development of the house and grounds, the architect and architecture.

Others take up the story since then. Among them are young men and women from Britain and elsewhere, an Ethiopian statesman, a Runcorn tanner, a Manchester busman, an Indian author and journalist, an Australian cabinet minister, an English Archbishop. They tell of faith in action in their lives and in the situations in which they live and work. It is a tale as wide as the world and full of adventures as varied as the people who describe them.

Today Tirley Garth is owned by the Tirley Garth Trust, a registered charity.

The contributions in this booklet have been gathered in response to the request from the Trustees, so that the *Tales of Tirley Garth* may reach a wider public. ■

The Editors.



Irene Prestwich

Lady of the House

Tirley Garth was Irene Prestwich's family home. She lived in it for forty years. In this story, drawn from her *Memoir*, she writes of her early life in Manchester, the move to Tirley Garth and the dream which her generosity turned to reality. She died in Tirley in 1974 at the age of 90.

My father, Richard Henry Prestwich, came of a long line of Prestwiches who claimed to be one of the oldest families in Lancashire. He was a man of great charm, popular with his business friends and greatly loved by his employees. Ours was a family business, in the cotton trade, of the old-fashioned type which did much to build up a sound British industry. It was founded by my grandfather, Samuel Prestwich, with his brother John as a partner. My father moved to the commercial end of the work in Manchester.

Deprivation

My mother and he lived in a charming small house and garden in Broughton Park, where my younger sister and I were born. There I can remember sunny days and joyous games, racing round the garden, climbing trees, building houses in the sandpit. But I can also remember signs of poverty and deprivation, the hard conditions of the first industrial revolution. In our neighbouring village, I saw drunkenness in the streets, people begging, men with misshapen legs as the result of years of

struggle from which prosperity was emerging.

I was the third of four daughters. We learned music, painting and drawing. Mother found good books for us to read. She taught us simple Bible stories which I loved. But these were days when men began to throw off the shackles of a religion that in the case of my parents had been more formal than real. Huxley and other philosophers found what they felt to be truth in a reasoned conception of the universe. My parents about this time discarded what they felt to be narrow and unenlightened in their own upbringing and satisfied themselves with more 'up-to-date' and 'progressive' ways to believe and live.

Shadows began to fall for me. A sense of insecurity began to assail me at that early age, and to grow and often to influence my inner life.

About 1885 we moved to a bigger house and garden in Manchester. It was both colder and grander than our earlier home. My father's growing prosperity reflected itself in our lives. My mother, who had always wanted a good education for us, was influential in sending us to the most advanced school she could find - Wycombe Abbey School in Buckinghamshire, where I was a boarder for four years. The life of the school, often in old and tough conditions, was built on a stern discipline which has stood me in good stead many times in my later life.

In 1912 we moved to a large country house in Cheshire. Tirley Garth was

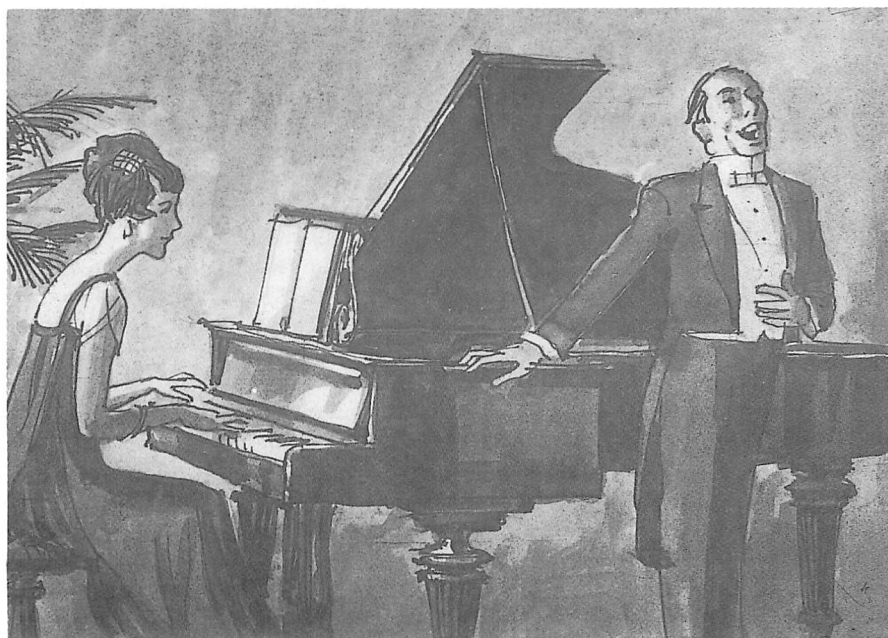
originally built for a director of ICI in Northwich, who was unable to finish it. Another director took it on but became an MP and had to move to London. So the house was kept in abeyance and was in an unfinished condition when we came to look at it. The beauty of its position and the possibility of developing a landscaped garden in its thirty-nine acres decided my father on renting it.

Change in Society

We moved into Tirley Garth in August and began to find a staff to carry its needs. We were then a family of four. My parents were in advancing middle age, but young and strong in spirit. I was already twenty-eight and

my younger sister Lois twenty-six. The development of a beautiful garden was of paramount interest to my parents and sister. I was more interested in the kind of society we would meet. We had lived in Manchester amongst the families of business men. It was a society that had retained good manners and thought for others, and had musical and artistic interests. Now we found ourselves among people absorbed in hunting, bridge-parties, race meetings and gardens, with little time for the obligations and amenities of a quieter social life.

My sister and I hardly fitted into such a life. We learned to ride and hunted a little. My father soon found friends on the golf course. My mother welcomed our many friends who came from



"musical and artistic interests"



many places to visit us. Life took on a new glamour and brightness. And then the first Great War came with a sudden blow. How well I remember that day! The fear of war with Germany had haunted me for years. Now it was here in all its grimness.

My sister and I took on work at the YMCA hut in an Army camp on the Morfa at Conway in North Wales. Life in the thin wooden hut was a test of endurance - extremely hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter. The training in somewhat severe conditions at Wycombe Abbey School had been a good preparation for this! But the hut was transformed by willing helpers; and our spirits were high as we served a

great cause, and also perhaps because we enjoyed freedom from any kind of parental control.

After the first Great War, with its triumphs and tragedies, its heroism and heartbreaks, there followed a somewhat empty period for me. My mother began to think for our neighbours in the village. She put up the War Memorial, a wayside shrine; raised money to build the Women's Institute building; started Baby Welfare, and gave electric light to the school, the first in the village. All this entailed sacrifice; but after all the exigencies of the war, I wanted to enjoy myself. Somehow that kind of social life seemed to have slipped away. I decided to join the church, and my sister



and I, well into our thirties or early forties, were privately baptised and confirmed. But though the services gave me a feeling of greater unity with the church, I began to ask myself what it was doing to win people to new life? For this I saw as its central and essential function.

I had read a good deal about St. Francis. The way he gave himself to bring people to Christ attracted me deeply, and I wanted to do that. There was a woman I knew who drank too much. I tried to help her, but went

about it all the wrong way. Similar efforts with one or two other people were not much more successful.

Then came an event which led to a change in my whole life. At a meeting held by the wife of the Bishop of Chester, my sister heard of the Oxford Group, now known as Moral Re-Armament, and went to a conference they were holding that summer, 1932. She came back so radiant, and gave such a description of the 'changed' people she had met, that I, who was hungering for such a change, decided to go to

the very next meeting I could. So I went to a conference at Southport later that year, led by Dr Frank Buchman, the initiator of this work.

I was greatly struck to meet young men and women giving leadership. They had decided to live by absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and to obey the guidance God gives to people wholly given to Him. They were effective where I had not been. There was something steadfast and faithful about them. So upstairs, in a rather depressing hotel bedroom, I got on my knees and committed myself to this way of life, though I must admit it was without passionate enthusiasm. It was a very simple beginning; but every day since then I have tried to live by those four standards and to follow the guidance of God.

Admission

Before I left that conference, a forthright and far-seeing friend put her finger on a resentment in my life which was like a bad tooth, poisoning everything else. I wrote a letter, admitting my own blame and saying I was very sorry for what I had done. The result was an extraordinary freedom and eagerness to spread this new way of living – new, yet as old as Christianity itself, which can give hope and purpose to the world. In a subsequent Oxford Group house party, in 1934, I first met Dr Buchman.

In a meeting he was leading I rose with trepidation to my feet and spoke about my vision for Cheshire. Looking back, I know that it was at this moment that I began to get the conviction of what God meant me to do with my home and resources.

At a conference in Oxford in 1937 I remember passing through one of

those depressing times when life seems to be rather in a quagmire. Suddenly one morning in my time of quiet, a new light dawned. I was thinking rather idly of our garden at Tirley. Each year in the summer my father used to open it to the public for the Queen's Nursing Fund. It was a beautifully kept garden and in the spring had a superb show of rhododendrons. One year about two thousand people had come to see it. In my mind's eye, I saw those people walking up our drive. Why should not those thousands find the change that I had found? I thought of my home with throngs of people coming with their problems, and going out with God. I walked home on air with a new hope. This was what I was meant to do with my life and my home, to bring change to thousands.

When I told my parents of the vision I had for Tirley Garth, all my father said was, "You cannot afford it!" But God kept before me the certainty that one day it would happen. I began to see that my own possessions, and my relationship with my father, needed to be wholly open to God's guidance. My father had been so generous and had thought things out for his daughters. I knew that in his will he had provided for us. But though I was then over forty, I still felt more or less under his surveillance. I had not accepted my responsibility for what was mine.

God's guidance might cut across everything my father wanted; and I feared to go against him. Would it not be ingratitude to go against his wishes? It was the hardest decision. But by this time the guidance of God was the most precious thing in my life; I made my decision, and was set free from a wrong dependence.

I was soon put to the test. My father, suspecting that the revolutionary change in my life might affect what I did with my resources, asked me to promise that I would never spend my capital and would leave all my property to the family. I said I could not promise to do either of those things. Little could I then have foreseen the future and what Tirley could mean to a country in desperate need. But I cannot be grateful enough for the freedom that came with my decision to be guided by God and not by my father. I had many encounters with him through subsequent decisions I had to make, but nothing broke my relationship with him or my mother.

My mother died in 1938, and my father in 1940.

The second great war broke out in September 1939. My sister and I heard it announced over the radio, and we knelt down and prayed. We bought gas masks and I prepared one room as a gas-protected chamber. I put away the thought of using Tirley for Moral Re-Armament, thinking that no one would

want to move here in this time of crisis. I wondered whether I should take another, smaller house nearby and invite some girls to come and live there out of range of German weapons. Puzzled about what to do, I went to London to consult those responsible for the work of Moral Re-Armament in Britain. As we talked, the idea dawned on me, "Why not let us use Tirley as long as we have it?" Many organisations and businesses were being compelled by the war to move their administrative headquarters out of London. Could not Tirley Garth make such an arrangement possible for this vital work? Within a week, desks, beds and furniture began to arrive; and we were making our first attempt to transform the home into a training centre for Moral Re-Armament.

It was not altogether an easy transition for me, in spite of my warm welcome for it. I had to learn, not without some doubt and difficulty, to trust people who had given their lives to God's service to carry out the practical work of the house as part of their duty.

Mary Craven of Utkinton worked at Tirley Garth from the day she came as a fourteen-year-old pantry-maid till she retired, sixty years later Her pantry shone, her floors were scrubbed and polished daily; her teas, served with sparkling silver tea-pots, wafer-thin sliced bread and round pats of fresh butter, were works of art. Once she went with Miss Prestwich to take part in a world assembly of Moral Re-Armament in Switzerland. When she came home, she said: "It was like a dream to me. We had so much to get through in such a short time - my head was busting! But it is a wonderful place. I spoke on the platform. I said I should like to be one of them what would help clean Britain up. And I think it wants cleaning up - more than ever now."

By September 1940, people began to flock to this home, as a centre of new life and hope in the midst of the devastation of war. The beautiful garden, which for a time had been left in abeyance, became an excellent market garden, cared for by seven girls who dug the soil, tended the produce and drove the lorry to sell it in Chester and Liverpool markets in the early morning. Scores of servicemen came here on their leave. Many found fresh hope and a vision of the world for which they were fighting.

During those days, and through the nights, we took turns to sit in the porch and 'spot' planes. On November 28, 1940, one of the many air-raids took place on Liverpool and Manchester. We women were all sent to sleep in the cellar. (I would much rather have died in my bed!) We could hear a terrific row as the planes passed overhead. We were blacked out. That night thirty-six incendiary bombs fell in our garden – one on the terrace within six feet of the house, and one on the roof. The men rushed to put them out.

Next day was the 21st birthday of one of the girls who worked in the vegetable garden; and round her cake, the bases of twenty-one incendiary bombs made excellent candlesticks. So what might have been a tragedy was turned into joyous occasion.

The *Church of England Newspaper*, in a wartime editorial on the work of Moral Re-Armament, wrote of "the daily work and conviction of those who know that through and beyond our present troubles, the vision of a world remade through the Cross of Christ is not illusory but real; that whatever it costs, it must come." Such was the

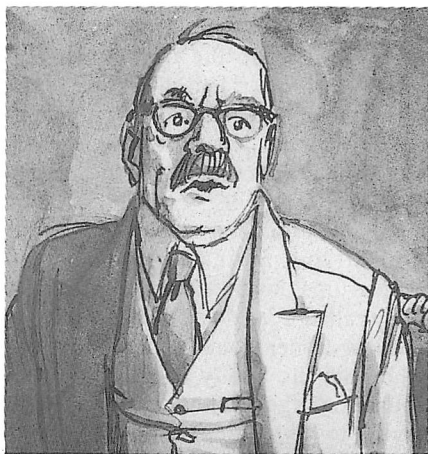
vision that kept us going at Tirley through the war.

The war ended in September 1945 with the explosion of the atom bomb on Hiroshima. What kind of a world, with these tremendous new powers, were we going to build?

And what to do with Tirley Garth? Seeing how it had been used during the war, I decided that its work must continue. I took a look at my finances and realised that, with the capital my father had left me, I might have a chance of buying the property outright. Unfortunately the figure I was prepared to pay was only half what the owners, ICI, wanted.

But I invited one of the directors to lunch and gave him the full picture of how I saw Tirley could be used. Finally, I made my offer. He almost choked! He said it was completely unrealistic, but agreed to mention it to his fellow directors.

In the event, they offered only a small reduction in the price; I realised



"He almost choked!"

nearly all my capital, and created a Trust to buy Tirley Garth so that it could be used for the work of Moral Re-Armament. This left me with a very small income. But I was supremely happy. My dream was beginning to come true, and it would be permanent.

New life! That was what the world was needing after a second world war. Could we help to bring it here at Tirley? Delegations from Japan and India began to visit us. From Africa, as country after country moved from colonial rule to independence, important groups came here.

From the mining areas of Britain, miners who were finding a new spirit in their homes and pits began to flock to this house. How little I used to think about the coal-miners, or the workers in my father's cotton mill! Now I was glad to share my home with them. Some of them said to me, "We never expected to come into a place like this, or to find a home in it as we do."

'It's our country Jack'

At Tirley, music and drama sprang up. Those were the days when that dreadful phrase, "I'm all right, Jack!", was on many lips. It was a symptom of the selfishness which has since been seen as the core of many of our industrial and economic ills. At Tirley a young company produced a musical review dramatising their determination to counter this downward trend in Britain. They called it *It's Our Country, Jack!*. A dockers' leader from the port of Bristol, who with his family had found a profound change of heart, invited this review to his union headquarters. From there it went to Switzerland; and combining with fresh music and drama from

other countries, it developed into the European review *Anything to Declare?*. This in turn went through India, Malaysia, Australia, Iran, Malta and back to Europe.

Ever-increasing numbers of people visiting Tirley necessitated an extension of accommodation. A large dining hall was added on the north side of the entrance court, with a passage connecting it with the old building. Here we are able to seat 120 to 150 guests. There is new bedroom accommodation in wooden buildings in the grounds, skilfully placed so that the views are unimpaired. Army huts were purchased, taken to pieces, stacked on lorries and brought to Tirley. Two valued friends, as a memorial to their father, turned one of these huts into a beautifully furnished chalet on the hill above our bottom lodge.

Today at many weekend conferences, students, teachers, civic leaders and men and women from both sides of industry pour into Tirley. Wrong relationships are put right and a way has opened out in many difficult situations. All this is a deep satisfaction to me, because Tirley was built up on the fruits of industry. Without the mill-hands and the miners, my father could not have developed such a home, nor could I have give it for Moral Re-Armament without his bounty to me.

Here in this lovely countryside, we are surrounded by twenty million people in industrial cities like Manchester and Liverpool to the north, Stoke and Crewe to the south, Wrexham to the west, Sheffield and other Yorkshire cities to the east. Management, my side of industry, has enjoyed the fruits of industry and yet has not always been willing to share with those who helped to produce them. These are deep lessons to



learn, but they have borne fruit in the friendships that have grown up here between the men and women of the docks and factories around us. They can make 'British made' again mean 'best made', and can carry a militant spirit for what is right beyond these shores to a waiting world.

As I look back over the years at the age of eighty-seven, I think of my dearly-loved country and where she is heading today. It was by the homely virtues of honesty and courage, sacrifice and unselfishness that she became great. Are we forgetting these things in the deteriorating trends and self-seeking of

"The care I received at Tirley, and the beauty of the place, opened my heart so that I could hear God speak to me. What had been bothering me was a relationship with a boy. God was telling me, 'It is wrong to exploit each other. You should not go on with it.' Facing this, I found forgiveness. I love Tirley, talking with people, talking with Him.."

Amina Dikedi, artist and designer, Nigeria.

modern life? The ordinary man and woman of this country helped to win great battles for freedom. The Battle of Britain was fought and won by men who were little more than boys, and by women who tramped to work under a rain of bombs. Such a people as these will yet respond to an even greater and more urgent call today – to bring our country and the world under the all-wise, all-embracing Authority of God.

Already we see it happening as men and women have gone out from Tirley to Africa, Europe, India,

Australia, America, as well as to the cities of Britain and all parts of the continent – to bring the light of God's moral laws and His great purposes to all the world. I cannot be grateful enough that He showed me, step by step, how I and my home could have a part, and how thousands of people, young and old, would come here to find and further His plan. To bring God's life and direction for everyone who enters its doors has been, and is, our purpose for Tirley Garth. ■



How Tirley Garth was Built

Clive Aslet traces the inspiration of the Edwardian architect Mallows in the creation of Tirley Garth. It was his *magnum opus*. In collaboration with his colleague and friend T.H. Mawson, Mallows put his genius also into the design of the gardens.

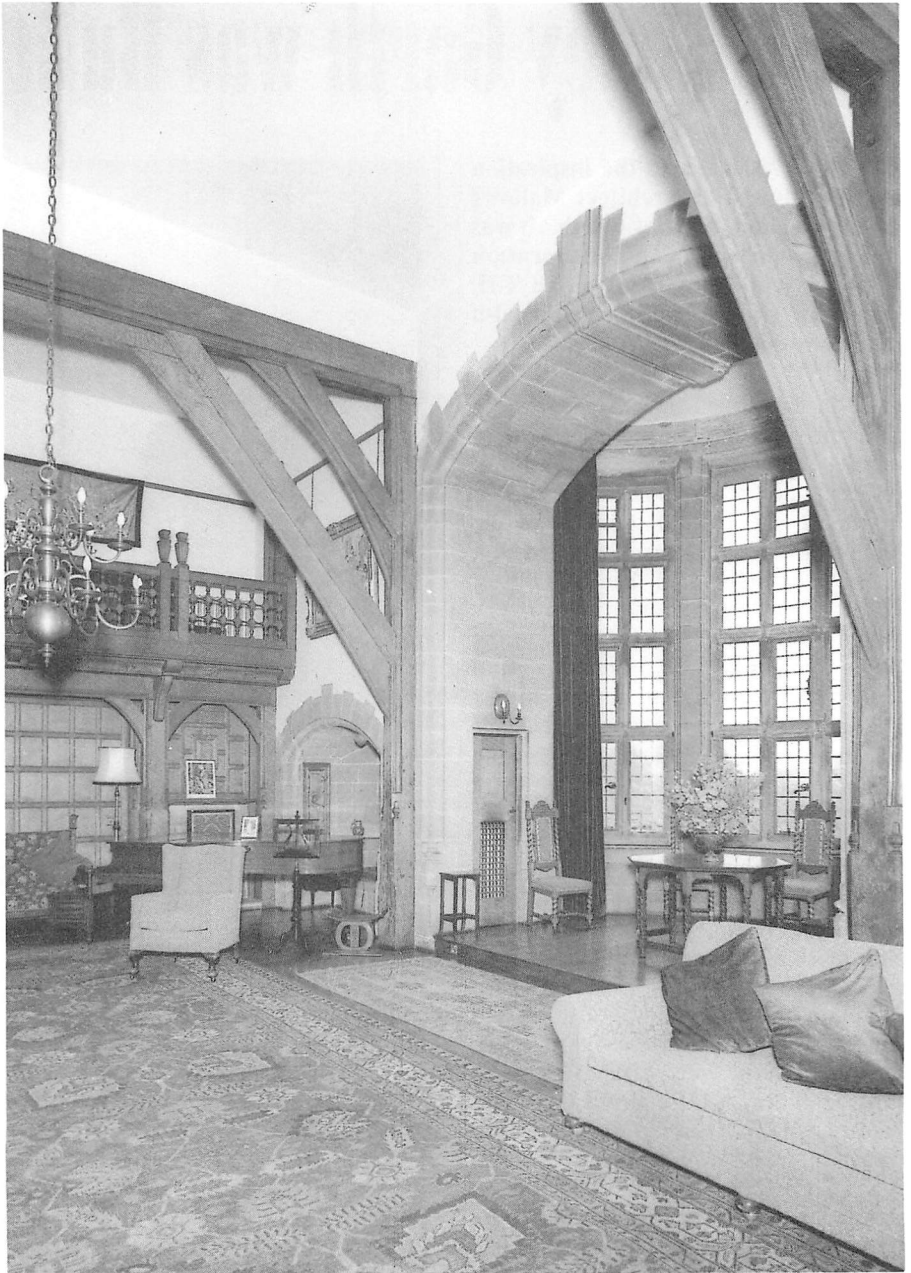
In Edwardian times, Tirley Garth, Cheshire, was the ideal 'smaller' country house. Although it conveys a sense of power, interest and sheer bulk on the garden front, part of the skill of the architect, C.E. Mallows, was to make it seem more substantial than it really is. The site was chosen for its superb view south across the Cheshire plain to the hills crowned by Beeston and Peckforton Castles, and comprised just 40 acres. The quota of main ground-floor rooms – business room, drawing room, main hall, study and dining room – was by no means excessive, although the idea of economy seems to have been belied in the generous use of space in the corridors, vestibules and the cloister garth itself, suggesting comfortable images of relaxed family life.

Mallows belongs to the sensitive tradition of house-building that became established in the quarter century before the First World War. Tirley Garth was originally designed for Bryan Leesmith, a director of Brunner Mond, which became one of the founding companies of ICI in 1927. But there is little in the house, with its spacious but not over-large rooms, to suggest that it was built for an industrialist – the Edwardian new



rich were more reticent than had been their Victorian counterparts.

For the style, Mallows showed several touches of quiet inventiveness, but it was not his object to be self-assertively original. The house, with its rough-cast walls dressed in a red Cheshire stone that was quarried on site, settles peacefully into the landscape, to which it is further grappled by the dazzling garden design – a triumph of collaboration between Mallows and his friend, T.H. Mawson.



The Great Hall

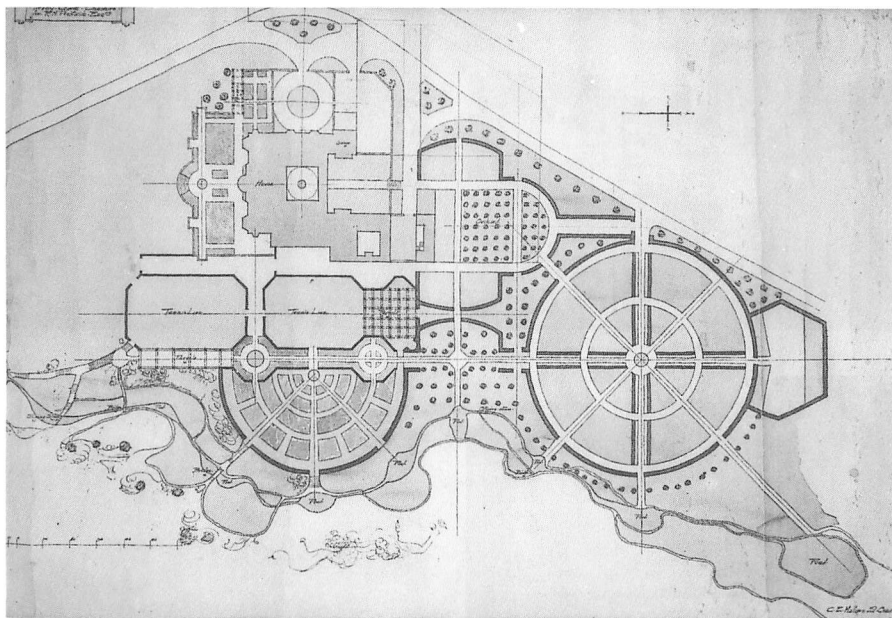
As a brilliant perspectivist, Mallows was much in demand. He was most at home with country houses; and Tirley Garth was his *magnum opus*.

Work Halted

The house was designed in 1906 but not completed until after 1912. Progress can be traced in the series of drawings from Mallows' office at the Royal Institute of British Architects' drawing collection. The first scale drawings, dated June 1, 1906, show a stone house, but otherwise recognisably like that built. In June Mallows drew two further schemes, showing a much simpler building than the final design. The facades still lacked the tall chimneys, springing from the eaves rather than the roof-ridge, which give the present garden front much of its vigour.

Building was under way in 1907, but the next year Leesmith – with a certain *folie de grandeur* – called for a major revision. Then almost at once he seems to have taken fright at his own extravagance – or perhaps the money ran out – because work came to an abrupt halt, and Leesmith managed to sell the unfinished building to another director of Brunner Mond. The other director became a member of Parliament and moved to London, and at some stage the house was acquired by the Brunner Mond company.

It had still not been completed when it was leased to R.H. Prestwich in 1912. Prestwich managed the family textile firm of S. & J. Prestwich, which owned the Pandora Mills outside Manchester. His brother invented a waterproof yarn, and exclusive rights for this and other Prestwich yarns and



The original garden plan



fabrics were acquired by the expanding firm of Burberrys, whose gabardine raincoats were the ideal thing for grousemoors. In due course, Prestwich became Burberrys' chairman; and was one of half a dozen Manchester magnates for whom Mawson was laying out gardens in a spirit of friendly rivalry.

The move from Manchester projected the Prestwiches into a different social world. But on the whole they preferred to live quietly, and this is reflected in their new home.

The bold massing, asymmetry and rough-cut of the entrance gives into the garth, with its cloister walk around the four sides of the square. From here, an entrance for family and guests opened into a hall – surprisingly small for the size of the house – in the main block, and another for servants gave into the kitchen corridor. The garth is evidence of the growing regard for sunshine and fresh air, seen also in the so-called 'sun-trap' houses of the late 1890s and 1900s; not only did it provide a place to walk on wet days and a pleasant sense of being half indoors and half out, but its flat roof became a terrace for the first-floor corridor, which had doors for access. In the same spirit all the main rooms and most of the bedrooms face south.

Inside, the plan shows that the house was conceived for family life rather than big house parties and entertaining. There was no 'gentlemen's domain'; (smoking rooms had gone out in many houses, partly because Edward VII's example had domesticated the habit). Although there was a drawing room, the main room of the house is the comfortably sized, two-storey living hall, in which the family could spend the day in each other's company.

The living hall is entered by one of a pair of identical arches. But generally, Mallows was not one for architectural games; his strengths were undemonstrative, and the living hall, panelled in English oak, shows them at their best. The room is simple and not overpoweringly large, but there is sufficient drama to make it an architectural experience. The great mullioned semi-circular bay takes over a third of the south wall, and the unornamented double roof braces – an unusual and striking arrangement – are unexpectedly massive. A difference in the wood shows that the lower brace was added later. But its purpose was not to support Tirley's great roof of Derbyshire limestone; a slight shrinkage in the wood shows that, despite appearances, the lower braces are decorative rather than functional.

At the west end of the room is an inglenook for intimate chats. It has its own little window to the garden, and beautifully finished cupboards built into the stone.

The garden plan is signed by Mallows, but Mawson says he collabo-





A pair of identical arches

rated. Not only is the garden a *tour de force* of geometry, but it superbly takes advantage of a hillside site, with a circular vegetable garden – exactly describing an acre – at the top, two lawns on different levels near the house, and a semi-circular rose garden to the east. The steeply shelving land that goes down to the stream is planted with rhododendrons, and there are sweeping lawns in front of the south elevation.

Mr Prestwich died in 1940. His lease from ICI had been for the length of his life and a year. Miss Irene Prestwich established a trust to buy Tirley Garth for use by Moral Re-Armament, and she continued to live in

the house until her death in 1974. The new buildings necessary to accommodate up to 120 conference guests have been sited with exceptional tact, and the family part of the house has been virtually unaltered. By dint of enthusiasm and a dedicated supply of voluntary labour, the main lines of the garden have been maintained - a feat that deserves congratulation. ■

This excerpt from Mr Aslet's article, which appeared in "Country Life" March 18, 1982, is reproduced by kind permission of the publishers.

Reluctant Guest



Ron Peacock

"I'm not going in there!" It was a leader of the Manchester bus-men who was speaking. His mates called him a 'boot and clogger boy', and elected him to fight for their rights. He and his wife were standing outside the front door of Tirley Garth....

Ron and Rosalyn Peacock had come there for a trades unionists' gathering. Ron was an AUEW convenor for the bus-men of ten depots and a District Committee man for the whole of Greater Manchester. Howe, an area officer of the sheetmetalworkers, had driven them to Tirley. Ron trusted

Howe. They had worked together in tough negotiations with management. So when Howe offered to drive him to a gathering to celebrate the recent election of Terry Duffy as national AUEW President, Ron accepted – only a bit surprised when Howe said, "Bring your wife." Wives and union celebrations in Ron's experience did not always go together.

Cross the threshold

Now, looking at the big house in its 40-acre estate, Ron suspected a capitalist trap. "I'm not going in there!" he said again. Howe had been to Tirley Garth before, and tried to persuade him. Rosalyn reminded him that he had accepted an invitation and that they were under obligation. Reluctantly, and with his guard well up, Ron crossed the threshold.

Once inside among other trade unionists, Ron felt more at home. There was a big log fire burning in the main hall, in warm contrast to the October day outside. Over lunch they talked with a dockers' leader from Bristol. "He was more experienced and more militant than myself," Ron recalls. "He talked about ideas that were new to me, and what the dockers had achieved through applying them."

In the hall afterwards, Bert Allen, a former Engineering Union District President from Birmingham, told of his long association with Terry Duffy, and of his high hopes for the union now

Duffy had been elected President. Someone spoke about Tirley Garth and how a lady had made it available for this sort of gathering, in obedience to something referred to as 'guidance'. "Letting God tell you what to do," it was explained. Howe introduced Ron, and called on him to say a few words.

On the way home to Manchester in the car, Ron was notably silent. "I thought he must be ill," Rosalyn says. But he was pondering all he had seen and heard that day. It had been a different kind of celebration from any that he had known previously; "plenty of food for thought and no booze." He was surprised how readily at ease he found himself with such a wide range of people. But Ron realised also that he had been presented with a challenge. "Was I big enough to accept that challenge?" he asked himself. Surely this was the true trade union spirit he longed to bring his fellow-workers.

The following morning back at work he told his union colleagues that he had decided to try a new approach in

the negotiations with management. Then, at the meeting, Ron suggested starting afresh, "with both sides putting all their cards on the table". "I don't understand what you are talking about," was the manager's first response. But from that day something began to develop between them. "The bitterness was drained from our two opposing roles," is how Ron later described it. "We began to work for the benefit of all." Five years later, when Ron was suddenly taken ill, one of the first letters he received was from this same manager, appreciating "the proper working relationship", and saying he now realised that trades unionists often worked under pressures as tough as those that management had to contend with.

The day Ron went to Tirley Garth not only altered a personal relationship between him and his manager; it brought many benefits to both busmen and management, and to the city of Manchester, in the years that followed. "I've never regretted it," Ron says. ■

"The great idea of Frank Buchman, MRA's founder, was to show that the teaching of Jesus Christ is not just a private affair but has the great force to change the whole structure of the social orders of economics, of political ideas, if we combine the changing of structures with a change of heart.

"Wherever Moral Re-Armament is active there emerges a new world - in small circles first, but the activity shows how great the force is... If I consider the information which comes to me from all over the world, I see changes which are visible and social effects which are tangible."

His Eminence Franz Cardinal Koenig, former Archbishop of Vienna, who visited Tirley Garth in 1985

Director who called in the Union



John Nowell with a foreman and shop steward

John Nowell, Executive Director and General Manager of a tannery in Runcorn, lived for many years in Northwich. Now retired, he remains the longest-serving member of Tirley Garth's board of trustees. Conferences and conversations in Tirley were a source of new ideas for industry, which he applied, and which are described in this article by Donald Simpson.

Some of the sixty Birmingham shop-stewards were beginning to yawn as the boss of a Runcorn tannery started speaking. The room was stuffy and it was a Sunday afternoon. But then his wife and children took up the story, then his chief shop-steward and the area union official - and they all came to the same conclusion. Everyone was now wide awake, because they had been presented with a complete case-history of

'revolutionary teamwork'.

The tanner in question was John Nowell. Born in British Honduras and brought up in Plymouth and Stockport, Nowell didn't plan to be a tanner; he had studied classics. But through some educational mix-up his plan for professional life fell through. He started work among the greasy hides and smelly pits of the local tannery, for ten shillings a week. After learning all the basic processes ("you need a sure sense of tread and a poor sense of smell"), he was transferred to sales where, by visiting shoe factories all over the country and asking what they wanted, he greatly increased the British sales of the supple 'American' leather which had become fashionable.

During World War II Nowell became Director and General Manager of the Camden Tannery in Runcorn, producing sole-leather. But there was war inside the tannery too. It was an anti-union shop. Nowell had a "profound distrust" of the chief shop-steward. He refused to negotiate. It took several months for the district union official to get a date. Wages were agreed individually. And everyone was afraid of the boss. In '43 there was a strike.

'For Sinners Only'

There was also deadlock in the Nowell home. "A fragile bridge of politeness" linked John and his wife, Margaret. They and their three children lived in separate worlds. John's sister had given him a book entitled *For Sinners Only*. He was not amused. After all, he was a local preacher. But when he read it he got the shock of his life. In the light of conventional Christian standards, he had felt free to

blame everyone else; the absolute demands of Jesus of Nazareth put the spotlight on him. His bluff was called. An honest apology to Margaret and the children began to restore family life.

But the problems in the tannery persisted. Finally Margaret said with that devastating wifely directness, "John, why don't you be as honest with the men as you were with me? It worked at home. Why not in the tannery?" John was livid. But he knew the truth when he heard it.

He assembled the workforce and told them they would be working on a new basis. "Tom," he said, "I have not trusted you and have given you no reason to trust me. I'm sorry about that. I want to operate on a basis of complete honesty, on the basis of what's right, not who's right." Tom was sceptical. However when John called in the union and asked them to go through the wage rates, he alarmed the directors but convinced the workforce that he meant business. Finally a works council was created, long before they were fashionable, with an equal number of workers and staff elected by ballot in each department. This became the focus of the new partnership.

Things moved quickly. In the piece work operations, where weekly earnings varied widely, a guaranteed wage was agreed which gave a sense of security. Absenteeism went down, and as morale rose, so did productivity, in some cases as much as 25 per cent. Now workers could speak to the boss without fear of victimisation. One worker said, "When management began to take an interest in us, we began to take an interest in the leather." A woman worker, in tears on retirement, explained, "I've been so bloody happy."

"From then on," says Nowell, "we never lost a pound of production or an hour's work, and attained our maximum output."

Camden Tannery gained a reputation. An ex-commissar from Eastern Europe said, "Here I see my boyhood's dreams fulfilled. These men are free. I can see it in their faces."

Pre-conceived ideas

It was with this solid background of domestic and industrial teamwork that Nowell took responsibility for the wider leather industry. He became President of the Association of Cut-sole Manufacturers, served on the executive of the British Leather Federation and was for twenty-one years Chairman of the Leather Institute. They were years of crisis, as sole-leather was being replaced by synthetics. His colleagues acknowledge Nowell's courageous leadership. The industry began to diversify into leather clothing. And of course, 'leather gear', fashionable even with our ancestors, is definitely 'in' again.

I asked John Nowell, now in his middle-nineties, about his revolutionary concept. He replied, "We hamper our progress because we persist in our preconceived ideas of socialism and capitalism and we are unwilling to let them go. We managers have assumed the right to have the last word as something inherent in the position. The moment I accept teamwork, which means a voluntary restriction on my personal rights of action and ownership, I have begun to create something far beyond socialism or capitalism. It is not the teamwork of those who agree, but of those who disagree, who clash and change. The new dialectic, if you like.

"I have to be willing to accept correction from my children, on the basis of what is right, and also from the workers. When I as a boss deliberately renounced my power to control, in order to find out, with others concerned, what was right, then this power of change operated and problems which seemed incapable of solution were resolved." ■

*Reprinted by permission of
"The Industrial Pioneer".*

"Tirley Garth is a landmark in my life. It reminds me of my contract with God in the battle for my nation – my decision to stick with this task no matter what happens to us, or what is going to happen. It is a place where people serve each other. I watched them; and I thought; Could God be calling me like that – to serve like that in Nigeria?"

Christine Okonkwo, secretary, Nigeria.



Birchbank Chalet

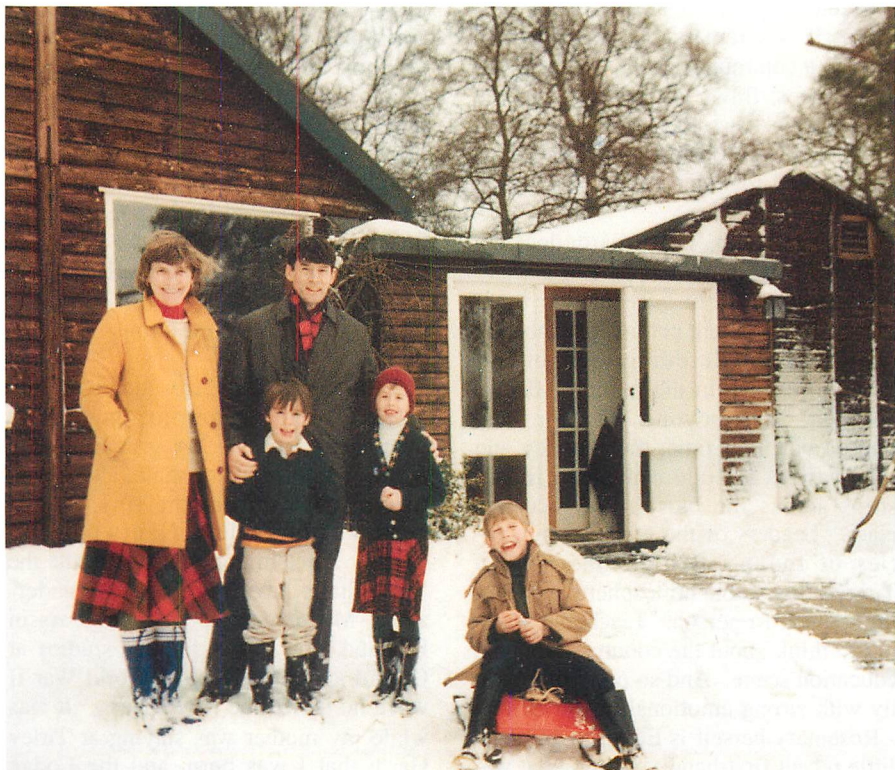
Chalet bedroom



An Australian Family

Peter Thwaites came to Tirley Garth from Sydney, Australia, with his English-born wife Rosemary and their three children. He writes of the music, drama, football and fun of the Utkinton school; of family life shared with others in the big house, and of the weather, the magic of field and footpath and the "pinky-brown mud" they came to love in this corner of Cheshire.

Visitors to Tirley Garth often comment on the 'atmosphere'. This may be partly because Tirley, while functioning as a conference and study centre, is also a home. It is 'home' to a network of people around Britain who are working to bring faith alive in many practical situations. That network, MRA, and the hundreds of people who work actively with it are rather like a large, open-ended spiritual family.



The Thwaites family at Tirley

For Rosemary and myself and our three children, Tirley Garth has been home in an even simpler sense. From 1984 to 1987 we were one of the half-dozen families actually residing in the various buildings of the estate, whose presence helps to create the home atmosphere. It was a life-style requiring perhaps a little more openness and readiness to co-ordinate with others than one is called on to produce in the average suburban home. Yet it is a chapter in our lives that all five now look back on with gratitude and happy nostalgia. We feel a permanent bond with those other families and friends who shared the big home with us, all of us participating in different ways in its activities and running. It is a remarkable experience to live in a community where, with all our differences, flaws and failings, people are trying to base their lives on finding God's will and obeying it. Challenges surmounted together create a sense of comradeship.

Like a heart, Tirley Garth does not exist in isolation, but is part of a wider circulatory system. Residence there meant that we were continually meeting dedicated people doing their bit for peaceful change in the fabric of British society – and beyond. People who poured out their time, their money and their careers to build committed friendships across the barriers of race and class. Leaders of the ethnic communities of today's Britain, meeting in Tirley's hospitable atmosphere and talking, person to person. Teachers gathering to think about the country's troubled education scene. And so on. For a family with strong emotional ties to Britain - Rosemary herself is English - but with little recent first-hand knowledge, it was

a wonderful education in Britain of the '80s through people committed to the country's future.

Every home has its neighbours and its neighbourhood. Living at Tirley also meant getting to know that particular corner of Cheshire with all the magic of a country that has been continually settled and farmed over centuries. At the end of our stay there I was suddenly discovering views I had never noticed, paths and corners I had not known were there. A special memory is of a June afternoon's walk across fields around Utkinton, equipped with gum-boots and an umbrella, enjoying in delightful variety the shifts of weather that accompanied the shifts of scenery. For this Australian the English climate, with its seasons and subtleties, has its own strong attraction. Writing from the blues and golds of Sydney where we live, we remember with affection the ubiquitous pinky-brown Cheshire mud, its colour reflected in the sandstone of farm buildings and inns, in Chester's Cathedral and ancient city wall.

My first home

Curiously, our thirty months living at Tirley were a return to some of my own earlier roots. My grandmother's family name of Wettenhall (also given to me) comes from the tiny village between Tarporley, Nantwich and Crewe. Since migrating to Australia the Wettenhalls have multiplied considerably. My parents spent nine years in England, due to my father's studies at Oxford and the advent of World War II when he joined the Royal Navy. It was while my mother was staying at Tirley Garth that I was born, and the Lodge

became my first home. It was also very nearly my last, as my first act was to roll off an armchair and burn my arm severely. Mrs Nicholson, our hostess at the Lodge, who went for help on that occasion, is still a close friend today. She lives now at Little Budworth and recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Her signature is in my christening Bible along with those of many other friends who were at Tirley Garth in those days.

Returning after forty years, it was our children as much as anything else who helped us feel part of this neighbourhood once more. The three of them made up 10 per cent of the membership of the marvellous little school in Utkinton which is like a heart to the vil-

lage. We met their friends and their friends' parents, their teachers and the other voluntary helpers at the school. Rosemary helped once a week as a drama teacher, and produced two Christmas plays. Then there were the Cubs and Brownies in Tarporley and all the families involved there. Tirley Garth's magnificent garden played its part, containing as it did various corners that were exciting to play in as well as a football pitch that was popular in the neighbourhood. In such simple ways we were fortunate to meet many local people, and a number became good friends. So our life at Tirley Garth was a complete life, and we all enjoyed it thoroughly. ■

*"Irene Prestwich gave Tirley as a gift to the world.
Its impact in my country, Australia, has been very deep indeed.
The purpose of Tirley Garth is to be a centre of statesmanship
for the ordinary man and woman, a permanent inspiration for
social and moral sanity, and for intelligent action.*

*Intelligent statesmanship is never the arrogance of
self-sufficiency without God. If Tirley fulfils its mission, it will
be a training-ground for giving God right of way personally,
nationally and internationally."*

***The Hon. Kim Beazley, Australian Minister for Education
from 1972 to 1975, speaking at the opening of the new wing
at Tirley Garth, June 1976***

From India, with Gratitude

Russi Lala, Indian author and journalist, tells of a visit to Tirley with his wife Freny and of their meeting with Irene Prestwich, and of one unforgettable experience.

When my wife, Freny, and I landed in Tirley at Easter time in 1975 a host of golden daffodils looked up at us. Unlike myself, who had come worn with toil and care, they seemed to be at leisure with themselves. That night from the library I collected after many years a copy of Hazlitt's Essays and turned to an old favourite *On Going a Journey*. I did not realise that in the months to follow I too was to go on a journey even though it was not a day-long walk through the English countryside. It was to be a journey of creative writing. At Tirley I found peace and quiet conducive to thinking, and I started my first book.

In the weeks that followed, the company at Tirley over lunch and dinner was stimulating. Among others there was a senior gentleman who gave us the benefit of his Oxford education and was as elegant at the dinner table as on the platform. An authority on Handel's music occasionally regaled us at the piano. Streams of young people flowed in at Youth Conferences. Two impressive delegations of young men and women came from Egypt, sent by their authorities in a student exchange. Race Relations Officers, the Police, men of industry gathered to confer. Men and women from Asia and Africa imbibed at

Tirley the finest of the heritage of the West. Whatever their background, in this gracious environment, both natural and human, many discovered values they could hold to and which in turn could hold them through sun and shadow. As they bade farewell, some left behind them their anger, their hatred and bitterness against a person or a community or a country. They went away refreshed to face the world. I too found something fresh one evening around Christmas time.

Argued with God

A couple of years earlier I had taken a certain decision according to my light, the consequences of which pained a few people. Others were also involved in the decision-making. I had two defences. One, that I was not solely responsible; two, that I had not taken the decision for any selfish motive of my own. Nonetheless, praying before bedtime, a thought came to me: "Take one hundred per cent responsibility." I argued with God like the Jewish character in *Fiddler on the Roof*. I told God I would take "ten per cent responsibility. Okay, fifteen per cent." But the thought of a hundred per cent did not leave me. When I accepted a hundred per cent responsibility the burden of the past rolled away.

As for the selflessness of my decision, the inner voice clearly said that the decision was not born of love but out of fear and "what is not born out of love is



not born out of God". This thought in the years to follow has, I believe, saved me from a lot of mistakes. Doubtless, the experience was a gift of God, but it was given to me at Tirley Garth. And so, though about 5,000 miles away, Tirley lives on for me. So does the memory of a wonderful lady who made it all possible.

We got to know Irene Prestwich in 1969 when we spent three months at Tirley. Over a cup of tea she enjoyed telling my wife her experiences, and it was then that my wife suggested she put down in writing the high points of her life. So her *Memoir* was born.

We saw Irene again once more before she died. She was in her eighties. There was an ethereal quality to her. Fragile was her body but the beauty of her spirit shone through those brown eyes that were interested in everything; and you sensed that above all they were interested in you.

She loved Britain and wanted the best for her. She felt that with her wide Commonwealth contacts, Britain was meant to be a mother of these newly independent lands. She wanted Britain to give – as she herself had given – not just her home and her comforts but her heart to people from distant shores.

When the Roman Empire fell and Europe was seething with unrest and anarchy, the faith and culture of Europe was repositied in Christian monasteries. In that gathering gloom they were islands of light and, when the situation settled, there flowed from these islands the faith, the learning and a way of life that fashioned a great civilisation. To my wife and myself Tirley represents a centre from which the light of a future society is already spreading. May God bless the soul of a British lady whose generosity and vision had made so much possible. We remember her, above all, as a friend. ■

Faith in Ethiopia

"I found the strength to go back home without fear of any man," an Ethiopian statesman writes of his first visit to Tirley Garth. Before his second visit in 1987 he was imprisoned for seven years. Now once more he has returned to his country "to share the sufferings of his people".

Dejazmatch Gebreyohannes Tesfamariam was a Minister of State under Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. He became senior Provincial Councillor, and an adviser to the Governor-General of Eritrea. As a politician, his mind was chiefly concerned with the war in his country. Eritrea had been a colony of Italy for sixty years and had in many ways developed differently from the rest of

Ethiopia. After the defeat of the Italians in World War II, the United Nations ruled that Eritrea should be given Federal status as part of Ethiopia, with internal self-government. In 1962 the Emperor overthrew this arrangement and made Eritrea part of the unitary government of Ethiopia, administered by a Governor-General appointed by himself. Immediately a large number of Eritreans broke away, took up arms and began to fight for a separate state. This war is still going on.

Dejazmatch Gebreyohannes Tesfamariam writes: In Europe in 1971 and 1972, I saw the world force of Moral Re-Armament in action. I wanted them to intervene to bring a solution to the war and to speak to the Emperor. A friend challenged me: "Why do you



Gebreyohannes Tesfamariam and his wife

ask MRA to do what you are not prepared to do yourself?" All that night I could not sleep. Finally I took a decision with God that I would no longer be merely a diplomat and a courtier, but would speak the truth fearlessly, even to the Emperor.

I came to visit Tirley Garth. There, in a fellowship of people from many nations, and in many quiet walks in the Cheshire countryside, I found the strength from God to go back home without any fear of any man.

On my return to Asmara, I called a meeting of all the leaders, told them of my stand, and challenged them to join me in following the guidance of God. Shortly afterwards, I was summoned to Addis Ababa, the capital, to attend a meeting called by the Emperor. I arrived to find a full meeting of the Supreme Council, including Cabinet Ministers and Generals. They were discussing how to crush the rebellion in Eritrea. I found that they had already taken a decision that the army should be reinforced and that a big offensive with increased fire-power should be launched. I said, "Your Majesty, this is not the way to win the hearts and minds of my people in Eritrea. It will only make them hate you. I urge that you should open negotiations for a peaceful settlement instead." There was a silence, and the Emperor adjourned the meeting. My friends warned me privately, "You will be put in prison for contradicting the Emperor."

In fact, the Emperor did not imprison me; but the offensive was launched. Many lives were lost; the guerrillas were not defeated, and the war continued.

Then came the revolution. The Emperor was overthrown. Fifty-seven

of the leaders of the old Ethiopia were shot in November 1974, including the Governor-General of Eritrea. Next year the leaders of the Revolutionary Council called me to ask for my views on the solution to the problems of Eritrea. I gave them the same answer as I had given the Emperor. They said they would consider my proposals. But a few days later I was arrested and imprisoned.

I was kept in prison for seven years. We were allowed no books except, at first, a Bible; and then that was taken away and Marxist literature substituted. The prison did not feed us, but my wife or one of my family was allowed to send in one meal a day, if they could.

God gave me strength to care for the other men in prison, to settle quarrels, to listen to their problems. Several found a new life, without bitterness. This is what kept me alive. During that time my chief prayer was that God would allow me to live, to be able to come out and meet the world family of Moral Re-Armament once again. God has answered my prayers, and I cannot express what a joy it has been to revisit Tirley Garth with my wife.

Now I am returning home to Ethiopia. Conditions there will be very tough. But I must share the sufferings of my people. The war has gone on for twenty-six years. It is beginning to be recognised that neither side can win. There is a suggestion that negotiations should be started. It is my hope and prayer that I may be able to help in the process of a peaceful settlement. But no negotiations can succeed without a new spirit and without a change in men. I am committed to that way; and I ask for your prayers and support. ■

Talking about the future

Three young Englishmen, of different backgrounds, speak of their experiences and their hopes, in interviews at Tirley Garth with Henry Macnicol.

1. North and South

Ian and Warren had been playing football with some of the local lads, on the pitch down the hill from the big house at Tirley Garth. The moment we sat down, I began to understand how different they were from each other, though they were evidently good friends. Ian comes from a one-parent family in Yorkshire and lives in Bradford. Warren is from Newbury, in London's commuter belt. Both are students, Ian of engineering management, Warren of politics.

Warren regards you with sharp eyes behind his spectacles, as he talks thoughtfully of the way the world needs to change. Ian sits silent and then speaks in short bursts, with Yorkshire bluntness, wit and deep feelings.

They talked to me in turn.

"Besides my own home," said Warren, "Tirley Garth is where I feel most at home. It's the friendship here that draws me." He had come to take part in a Study Course and found himself with a group of thirty of his contemporaries. "I didn't know anyone," he said. "But that first evening I met people willing to listen as well as to talk. They were interested in my ideas as well as their own.

"I still don't know why I came to Tirley," he said. That surprised me, for he seemed the kind of young man who knows precisely what he wants to do. A master in his school, teaching Current Affairs to the sixth form, had invited him. But that had happened before, and Warren had always said No, although the terms of the invitation intrigued him. "A week with Moral Re-Armament," it said, "for those who want to understand the forces that run the world and to have a part in changing them."

"I didn't like the world," he said. "Since I was 13 or 14 I had started to look at the problems. There was no trust. Everyone always tried to start with the symptoms – nuclear weapons, apartheid, the Palestinians needing a homeland. But the root was always mistrust between two sets of people – classes, nations, races. My study of history and sociology put me in touch with Karl Marx's ideas. They interested me. But his concept of the class conflict I did not like; violence brings more problems than it solves."

Then he had failed to get the results in his A-levels that he wanted. So he decided to repeat the year. In the middle of this year he came to Tirley Garth.

Ian spoke up. He had come first to help out on one of the Open Days in the Tirley gardens. He liked the people he met, and was invited back for a week. "I wasn't concerned with anything about the world," he said. "But there's a friendship in this house where every-



Warren and Ian

body is thought of as equal. It's the atmosphere of the place. I'd felt the magic of it; so the thought of spending a week here appealed to me." So he too had come to a Study Course. "The football was good fun," he said, "but for me the thing that meant most came from the speakers. They were telling things about themselves which people don't talk about usually, mistakes they had made, where they'd gone wrong. They were genuine, saying what they were learning."

He had heard a Norwegian speak of his time in a Nazi prison camp. "He said he had found a faith in there - where they had no weapons left. It struck me, how he had gone through so much suffering and come through with no bitterness." Then there was a con-venor of shop-stewards from the Midlands car factory. He had come straight from the assembly-line to meet these young men and women; and went back next morning to his job. "He told us of his horrible childhood which drove him to Marxism. Then he said he was finding something better to help society. I didn't understand much about all that.

But something struck me again, when he talked about men sitting silent at union meetings when they ought to speak up. "Silence presumes agreement," he said.

"I was a very shy person," Ian said. I had said absolutely nothing in those meetings. What that shop-steward said got me thinking."

I asked him about his family. "My dad was in the army in Germany," he said. "My mum was only eighteen when they married. I was born in Hanover, fourteen months later. Then we moved around a bit, and came back to Wakefield. My mum's folk had a farm near there, in Hebden Bridge. Dad went off to Cyprus in the army for two years. When he came back, my parents agreed on a divorce.

"I was the quiet one in the family," he went on. "I always felt an outsider, aside from anybody else, different. I was smaller than the others." He had found two things he was good at - mathematics ("I was the only one who got 100 per cent in all the tests") and chess (he had played for the Yorkshire County team). "But the thing I was

really interested in was football." Not so much playing – "I was really awful though I loved it" – but a passionate fan, first of Leeds United, now of Halifax Town.

More and more, he was keeping himself to himself. His mother had her hands full looking after his brother who by this time was "a bit of a tear-away". So Ian lived in a world of his own. "I didn't even have girls in my world."

He did ask one girl out. When there was a school party to the continent, Ian sat next to her on the bus. "But when we got home she said she was finished with me. I didn't think I was disappointed. I just bottled it all up."

It was at this stage in his life that Ian found himself at Tirley Garth, listening and thinking. "Here were these people who had suffered, and I hadn't. It didn't seem fair." A friend asked him, "Perhaps you're bitter about something?" It had never struck him before. "Was I bitter? I realised that something had gone wrong at home; and I had not done anything about it; that was my fault. I hadn't tried to get in touch with Dad. Then, when people asked me 'What does your father do?', I would just say, 'I haven't got a father.' It wasn't right."

At the last meeting of the Study Course, Ian spoke. "I told them I was wrong in my relationship with my father, and I'd write to him." When he got home, he did so. And as he wrote, he felt the pain of all that he and his brother had missed. "I had almost cut off the space for my Dad in my heart," he said. "I told him I was sorry."

There was no reply. Then came the Saturday of the big fire at the Bradford City football ground. Ian had men-

tioned in his letter that he often watched football; and that evening his Dad rang, from the pub where he was working, to see if Ian was all right. Then at 11.30 pm he rang again. They talked for half an hour. Ian said, "I love you, you know." His Dad said, "Are you sure?" Ian burst into tears.

After that, his Dad moved suddenly to Southampton, leaving no address. Ian lost touch again. "Then one day," he said, "feeling desperate, I burst out, 'Come on, God! If You mean us to get together, what's going on?'" Within minutes it struck him that he could send a letter to the Social Security people in Southampton to forward to his Dad. A few days later, his father rang.

At last they met again, Ian, his Dad and his brother. As he went by train to Southampton, Ian wasn't sure he'd recognise them. But when he saw them, he put his arms round both of them.

Different upbringing

Warren sat listening to this story.

Quietly, though with equal frankness, he told me of his own very different upbringing. "We were a close family, very middle-class, reasonably well-off." His father came from a hard, working class background; his mother had to go to work at fourteen, when her own parents separated.

Warren caught his love of history and current affairs from his father; and once the family had visited Morocco. There he had his first sight of such poverty - "corrugated iron roofs, reaching right to the horizon - and shacks we wouldn't put a dog in. These things stick in your mind," he said.

That experience, and respect for his father's views, inspire Warren's political

thinking today. "I want to see the British Labour Party recover its goal," he says. He went, with the Study Course, from Tirley to see Liverpool. They saw the shells of the burnt-out houses in Toxteth, and the space on the docks where Tate and Lyle had imported sugar. They saw the 'new British', from China, Africa and the West Indies, in the Liverpool streets. They visited the two Cathedrals and heard how the Catholic Archbishop and the Anglican Bishop were working together. They walked through the newly developed area of the Albert Docks, with its shops, museum and recreation centre. "I saw the hope in the people who live there; they believe in their city."

Back in the quiet of Tirley Garth he heard people speak of the value of taking time to think, to listen to your conscience, to seek God. "It all sounded very good," he told me. "Then one morning I got up at 5.30 am and decided I'd try this thing. I sat down and wrote a lot of thoughts. I thought about a quarrel I'd had with a friend. It was more a matter of honesty than anything; we'd kept going as if nothing had happened between us, but it had. I decided to put that right."

The day before had been New Year's Day. He had promised to phone his mother, but forgot to do so until just before midnight. He rang, and found her waiting for his call. "How selfish it was of me!" he said. "This all struck me when I was quiet and listened to my conscience. So there might be a God, and He might speak to you – it all began to make sense. 'All right, God,' I said. 'You've got six weeks to convince me!' I dug out a Bible I'd been given at my christening. Before, I'd only looked at the pictures. I started going through

the New Testament, and found I understood it. By the end of six weeks I knew there was a God, and He had a plan for me. I was so busy, I needed that guidance every day. Thoughts came about my work. But also supporting thoughts - the odd thing written down that lifts your spirits and explains something."

When Warren re-sat his A-level exams, he got a B in History, instead of the E he had got before. "That's what got me into University," he said. "It was partly due to my having accepted purity in my life. I'd always got on well with girls; I didn't play around. I enjoyed their friendship; and I always had, and still have, enormous respect for my mother. But pornographic magazines attracted me as much as anyone; and I decided to cut them out.

"I almost think of God as a great Football Manager, the only One who knows how everything connects. He grabs people and helps them when they need support. He tells you where to go; He's in a position to do that. More than anything else, He's a Guide who cares for those He guides, with a world plan to fit into. I came to Tirley looking for the thing I had not found in Marxism. It's the spirit of communication between God and the individual. It's not enough to think only about changing systems. God cares for you as an individual, whoever you may be. If we'll open our hearts to His plan, He will live in all the things we do - even in politics!"

Ian took this up. "God?" he said. "When I came to Tirley I knew there was a God; but that was about all. God is not very popular at the moment. When I started to follow the ideas He gave me, and stopped drinking, for instance, I had to defend what I was try-

ing to do. I had to be ready to be different from anybody else.

"I still was not satisfied. I had to move to a job I knew I could not do. And I still had these feelings about girls. I'd heard of people meeting 'the right girl', and I began to think there might be a 'right girl' for me. But there was something wanting.

"Then one day I went to a church. I knew I had to give it all to God properly. I knelt in front of the Cross and prayed: 'Please, God, help me to get rid of all this.' Genuinely and really, I meant it. As soon as I had done that, I knew I felt at peace.

"That was when I began to think, 'Maybe I can do something in God's strength.' I began to thrust my ideas forward. I'd been leading two lives: happy at Tirley, lost in the world. I joined the two lives together. This changed me quite a lot. One of my friends said to me. 'I wouldn't recognise you!'"

Warren summed up. "I want to bring people to Tirley in the hope that they'll find what I've found. We young people need to become a team we can rely on to support each other in the years ahead, doing whatever we do. The essence will be to share our thoughts and ideas. We must not try and limit it. Our aim is to serve God, to obey Him and spread His love. Our sphere is not just Europe; it's the whole world."

2. *Money and Motive*

At first glance, Peter strikes one as a typical representative of up-and-coming Britain. Head prefect of his public school and an Oxford graduate, now in a job where his work takes him around the world, his "career plan" is bright

with opportunity. He talked in down-to-earth, no-nonsense terms of his priorities. Quite obviously, he relishes his work.

Naturally, we discussed money. "The media tell us that your contemporaries are mostly out for money," I said. "Is that fair? Or is it a caricature?"

"It's not a caricature," he replied. "Making money is regarded as a good aim, almost a virtue. In some interviews, when they ask you, 'What are you after in life?', the 'right answer' is 'money'. Most people are not particularly bothered about this focus on life."

"In spite of all this," he went on. "many of my contemporaries seem to be living in what Thoreau described as 'a state of quiet desperation'. Obviously, this affects all they do. Family life suffers, and that is fundamental. But it also affects business.

"In the absence of moral and spiritual values, money becomes *the* value. There is no answer to the drive for greed, without a greater commitment to something better. What's needed is a humble acknowledgement of something quite other as your goal in life."

He told me that he himself had realised this before he began to get ahead in business. "But I had not acknowledged or realised how strong the pull of money is. The more you have, the more you want." How did he handle this? "Part of the answer," he said, "was to make a conscious, considered decision to give money away on a regular basis."

He told me that he and an old friend had talked these matters through to a conclusion at a Tirley Garth conference. They decided that as far as they were concerned – "and with God's help", said

Peter – their responsibility would not end with their own careers, but would include the way Britain goes during their life-time.

Talking of Britain and her role in the world, he turned to the crisis of Third World debt. Along with unemployment and poverty, he said, this made "a shocking situation as evil in our day as slavery once was". What was needed was what has been called "an ethic for survival, reaching out for a new world".

"What I'm after," Peter said, "is a world-wide network of like-minded younger men and women who are determined to end these evils in our generation. It can be done," he told me, "as Wilberforce ended the entrenched evil of the slave trade. That was not done by one man; around Wilberforce there was a team of people - they were nicknamed 'the Clapham Sect' - who kept at it together for life. If even a few of us make a commitment and hold to it, we could see real changes in our life-time." ■

Beyond Colour

Meryl Horn, a Pretoria housewife and mother, writes of an encounter at Tirley with a black nationalist from her country - and how he set her free from fear.

Spring at Tirley Garth! What an experience for a South African girl like me, from the sub-tropical climate of the city of Durban. To see new life coming up out of the cold, sometimes snow-covered earth - snowdrops, lilies of the valley, daffodils - a tremendous excitement.

Tirley Garth also meant a new life and direction for me. While I was there, a group of black and white South Africans visited this conference centre. With them was Dr William Nkomo, a black medical doctor from Pretoria and a leader of his people. He had recently had an ugly experience. He was hit in the face by a white policeman because he had driven the wrong way down a one-way street. As a result he had been partially blinded.

I was asked, along with several

others, to join Dr Nkomo at a table for a meal. I was terrified. What would he say to me, a white South African? To make matters worse, I was placed right next to him.

I said nothing throughout the meal. At the end, Dr Nkomo turned to me, most sensitively. I felt in him an inner freedom and a care which could only come from Christ. He said, "The answer for South Africa will come from people like you who are willing to fight hard, and are not afraid."

I was amazed. He did not know me at all, and yet he knew that my life was full of fears. He saw beyond the colour of my skin, and beyond the hurt and humiliation that he had suffered, and cared enough to point my life in God's direction.

This experience turned a key in my heart and gave me wider perspectives on my country. Dr Nkomo died of heart failure a year later. I consider it a privilege to continue friendship with his children and grandchildren. ■

To Build the New Africa

The sunshine and heat of Nigeria seem a long way from Tirley Garth, especially in an English winter of fogs and frost. Yet there is a strong link between the two places. One who has forged that link is Isaac Amata. He lives in Lagos. For the past thirty years and more, he has devoted time and talents to work for the moral and spiritual strength of his country. Through the struggle for independence from British rule, through coups, counter-coups and civil war, he has kept at his task. He writes of what Tirley Garth has meant to him as he has done so.

My first visit to Tirley Garth was in the winter of 1966. The serene and majestic atmosphere that greeted us in the spacious grounds was breath-taking. Then, as our car stopped in front of the massive stone building which I thought was a castle, a smartly-dressed, small but gracious lady came forward to bid us welcome. No airs about her, she was simply cheerful and radiant. I was to learn later that she was Miss Irene Prestwich, and that Tirley Garth had been her family home until her generosity made it available for its present use. What a warm welcome it was for me, an African, in the chilly weather of January in Northern England!

I had been invited to participate in a week-end conference. There were people from different parts of Britain and from different backgrounds. Apart from the national and international

issues that we dealt with, it was a conducive atmosphere for creating friendships that cut across all barriers of race, class or beliefs. For instance, I met a South African of Asian origin who became a close and faithful friend for the next four years that I lived in Britain.

I was so captivated by Tirley Garth on that first visit that between 1966 and 1970 I revisited the place six or seven times to participate in different programmes. At Easter I found myself among a group of young men and women from Ulster, both Protestants and Catholics, who were learning together "how to turn enemies into friends", through accepting the challenge of the Cross in their own lives. That, especially, was both a challenge and an inspiration to me, as my own country had just passed through a bitter and destructive civil war which had created many deep wounds, hates and hurts in the hearts of millions of people.

Bigger dimension

Seven years later, Tirley Garth took on a bigger dimension for me. In the summer of 1977, prompted by one of the Moslem leaders of Nigeria, my brother and I took a delegation of six young Nigerians to the Moral Re-Armament conference at Caux in Switzerland. From there we were all invited to Britain by a young British secretary who had earlier spent six months with us in Nigeria. To start us



Africans at Tirley

off on our tour of Britain she had arranged to take us straight from Heathrow airport on the six-hour drive to Tirley Garth.

The peaceful surroundings gave us time and space to sit down, meditate and come to decisions, after all that we had heard and seen at Caux. The assembly there had been like a big supermarket where we bought all the goods that excited us and threw them into the shopping bag. But in Tirley Garth we found the time to arrange the goods in proper shelves and decide how to use them. Yet beyond that, Tirley Garth itself was for us a living sermon on sacrifice and effectiveness.

Eight of us made that initial visit. The following year we were twenty-three. Today it has almost become a custom that whenever Nigerians consider attending the summer conference at

Caux, they allow for enough time and money to include a visit to Tirley Garth. The delegations, which initially consisted mainly of students and younger people, have now expanded to include business men and other senior people.

One year the Emir of Kano, vice-president of the Muslim League of Nigeria, visited Tirley Garth with an entourage. Another time a senior business man, whose daughter had visited Tirley as a student, followed his daughter's lead and came there. He said afterwards, "I often go to Britain to do business or have a holiday. Each time I return home feeling empty inside. But going to Tirley has enriched me spiritually and given me a different view of Britain." The following year, he took a delegation of seven other business men from his town to Caux and to Tirley Garth. Three Anglican Bishops from

Nigeria have also been there with different delegations. What is happening with the Nigerians is also happening to other African nationals. A new Pan-Africanism, built on a moral and spiritual foundation, is growing up from our meetings in Tirley Garth. Nigerians find themselves meeting and sharing experiences, aspirations and plans with Africans from other countries like Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

In 1981, shortly after the riots in some of Britain's major cities, a team from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe set off from Tirley Garth to visit Manchester and

Liverpool. Others went to Sheffield, Coventry and Bristol. They conferred with Lord Mayors, Chief Constables, civic and church dignitaries, trades union organisations, and with families in their homes.

The nucleus of a Pan-African striking force is now training to launch a moral and spiritual campaign across Africa; and in that training Tirley Garth is playing a part. I thank God, as an African, that there is such a place in Britain, where we can find the inspiration to bring to birth the new Africa of the twenty-first century. ■



"There is an enormous range of expertise available here. Moral Re-Armament manages to mobilise experience, and is able to call upon a group of people who will go anywhere and do anything, if they are called by God to do it. I regard that as a very important part of the Christian life. They have a range of contacts way outside the Church.

When I was in Liverpool there were people associated with the MRA who were working in the front line to try and bring reconciliation in some of the labour disputes there. That, I think, is a very important aspect of the Church's work. 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.'

Nothing less than that seems to me to be the programme of the Christian Church, and indeed of Moral Re-Armament."

**Lord Blanch, former Archbishop of York,
chairing a public meeting of 700 on
Whitsunday, June 1984,
at Tirley Garth.**

Healing

Many pictures deck the walls of Tirley Garth - from the great, dramatic canvas of "The Conversion of St Paul" which looks down upon the big hall, to a collection of A W Rich's delicate English watercolours. There are a number of portraits; among them, on the top floor, a robust photograph of a British trades unionist, Joe Hodgson, taken on his wedding-day. He and his American bride, Karen, had only one month of happy married life before Joe suddenly died. Karen writes from Minneapolis of her visits to his old home in Tirley.

I came to Tirley as a bride and a widow. Here I found healing for my grief. I began to know Joe better through countless friends of his who came here. His association with this place went back many years. It had become his home; and now it became mine.

The kitchen looked out over the rolling hills. While preparing mountains of green beans, tomatoes, plums and apples from the bountiful gardens of Tirley, one person after another would express how much Joe had meant to them. There, among the pots and pans, I heard how Joe would scrub them shining clean. It was indicative of his life of service; everything he did was immaculate, often making things ready for others to use.

He knew so many trades unionists all over the world. For our wedding, he had sent out 600 invitations - many of them to his trades union friends. Now I

met some of these men and their wives at Tirley. One after another would tell me how much Joe had done for them. "Joe saved our marriage," said one. "You could always talk things over with Joe." A very close friend said to me, "To our family, Joe was like the crown jewels are to Britain: priceless and irreplaceable." A young man told me he had begun to know his own country better because Joe took him to visit the homes of the miners in the coalfields round Tirley.

I like to go back to Tirley when I can. A few years ago, after my father died, I went with my mother for three weeks. We were given the best room in the house. I was able to be of help in the kitchen, and my mother was recovering from a small stroke. There was time for long walks in the countryside, and long talks with people. My mother's wisdom and experience were useful. People came for talks over breakfast, lunch, tea or supper.

Sometimes, when I felt I was not equipped for what lay ahead, Joe used to say to me, "My love is eternal." I was not sure I understood at the time. Now I do and I believe it. I want to carry on Joe's work.

One of Joe's friends was an Irish trades union leader, a former Labour Party Chairman. On the wall of his home in Belfast was a verse Joe copied and kept by him as a guide:

*"Love ever gives,
Forgives, outlives;
And while it lives it gives.*

*Love ever stands,
With open hands,
For this is love's prerogative
To give, and give, and give."* ■

Confront or Cure?

*at home and in
our inner cities*

Patrick and Margaret O'Kane, with their baby, live in Coventry, where Patrick is a building worker. At a recent Tirley Garth conference, senior police officers and representatives of all the racial groups from many British cities, met each other. Patrick and Margaret spoke to them.

Patrick: I was brought up in the English working classes; my parents are Catholics from Northern Ireland. I absorbed an English culture different from the culture of my parents. Many frustrations and feelings are inside of me.

Margaret: Patrick and I are very different. We come from different ethnic minorities. He is a Northern Irish Catholic; I'm a Scots Protestant. He's one of twelve children; I'm an only child. He can get up and speak to a meeting very easily; I find it very difficult. He likes to move about; I like to sit!

Patrick: Looking at Northern Ireland and British industry, I see what confrontation has done. There are no winners in the long term. The attitudes we have created in our industry are now going on to our streets. We have taught our youngsters that if you want to get anything done you confront. They can't go on strike, so it starts with sticks and stones, and goes on to petrol bombs. We could have a situation in our English cities similar to Belfast. There is a dif-

ference between conflict and confrontation. Conflict is inevitable. In some ways it is healthy, because that is how we grow. But our response to conflict can be either negative, which means confrontation, or creative.

Negative response

Where does this creativity come from? I think it is locked up inside us, and we have to ask ourselves why we sometimes do not find it. Instead we go down the road of the negative response, because of hatreds and bitterness and fear and wrong living in ourselves. When I came first to Tirley Garth twelve years ago, I had to face a challenge. Am I part of the answer, or am I part of the problem?

When I looked at that honestly, as a British shop steward, I knew I was part of the problem. I had lived in Australia, drinking too much and making many mistakes. I decided that if I wanted the world to be different, then I needed to be different. There were certain things I could put right.

I wrote to a bank in Melbourne, telling them I had put a foot through their plate-glass window in a drunken rage; and I sent them some money to pay for it. I paid back my income tax to the Australian government - I had left the country with no intention of doing that. After much heart-searching, I



Patrick O'Kane speaking at Tirley

wrote to the Commissioner of Police in Melbourne and confessed that I had been one of a group responsible for mugging a man whom we met in a night-club.

The hardest thing of all was to be honest with my father. I was twenty-two at the time, and I thought it was inevitable that old people stayed together and young people stayed together. We called it the "generation gap". But when I shared with him the mistakes I had made in my life, he told me some of the things which had happened to him. We found that the generation gap was really an honesty gap, because it disappeared when we got honest.

I have seen similar things happen

in British industry when people become honest with themselves and make the necessary changes; then they can build the bridge to those they are divided from. Whole factories have been saved by this.

Margaret: In spite of our different backgrounds, Patrick and I do have one or two things in common. One is that we are both very independent individuals. Another is that before we were married we had both decided that we would make decisions in our lives by obeying the voice inside us which we believe comes from God.

We don't have many arguments. But three weeks after we got married we had one. It was about money. We had

just opened a joint bank account; and soon we discovered that we were overdrawn. This led to a rather prolonged silence, and a long walk. We considered going back to separate accounts; but this made us very unhappy, because we realised that we would be starting a list of things that we could no longer talk about; and once started, that list would rapidly grow. So we realised that we would just have to make the effort to talk things over more, and not hide anything.

The family is a laboratory for society. There you can practise helping the other person grow to his full potential. To my surprise, I discovered that Patrick needed encouragement; so I decided that I should never do anything to make

him feel small. We could still be honest about a need for change, or how we'd been hurt, but do it to build the other up, and not to pull down. This is an art we need now in our cities and industries, and in our countries. So while we are still learning it close at hand, we must practise it far and wide.

Patrick: The challenge now is in the cities, these English cities. The world is interdependent, and we have the challenge of all the world living in our cities. If we say we can't make it work, then we are saying that the world can't work. But if we can make the creative response in our inner cities, then we can build a new kind of society and offer it to the world. ■

"The forces of evil are active, organised and clever; but it is God who is at the helm of history and, as it were, holds the ace of trumps. Anyone who is familiar with the Hallelujah Chorus in Messiah will know the words, 'The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.'

Those whose sole preoccupation has been with this world, with the 'brotherhood of man' but without the 'Fatherhood of God', have mostly succeeded in sowing a crop, not of genuine human brotherhood, but of dragon's teeth. On the other hand, the pioneers whose eyes were most constantly fixed on eternity - St Paul, St Benedict, St Francis, John Wesley and Frank Buchman - were also the men whose influence in redirecting the course of the world's history has been the most effective, the most constructive and the most enduring."

Paul Petrocokino, composer and writer, who lived in the Lodge at Tirley Garth from 1973 till his death in 1985

What keeps Tirley going?

Christopher Evans, a Tirley Garth Trustee who lives on the estate, answers a question many people ask.

It took nearly all Irene Prestwich's capital to buy the freehold of Tirley Garth. She could not endow it. But she did believe firmly that "where God guides, He provides", and, in common with all the work of Moral Re-Armament, this has become the principle on which Tirley is financed.

At first glance the phrase has an other-worldly quality, conjuring up images of manna from heaven. In fact, while it certainly has its miraculous side, it is a realistic if demanding proposition proved at Tirley over the last forty years.

Much of the emphasis is on God's provision - and a breakfast-time visitor to Tirley may well find those living there praying about some urgent financial need, as well as planning the activities of the day ahead.

As important, however, is "where God guides...". If Tirley is used with energy and imagination to respond to the needs of society and of individuals; if the spirit and atmosphere people find there is of a quality that helps them in turn to find God's guidance; then there will be growing numbers who feel grateful to Tirley, who share a commitment to its aims, and who want to enable its work to continue.

Over the years this has been the case. There is an army of such people across Britain and abroad. Some give money under covenant to help with

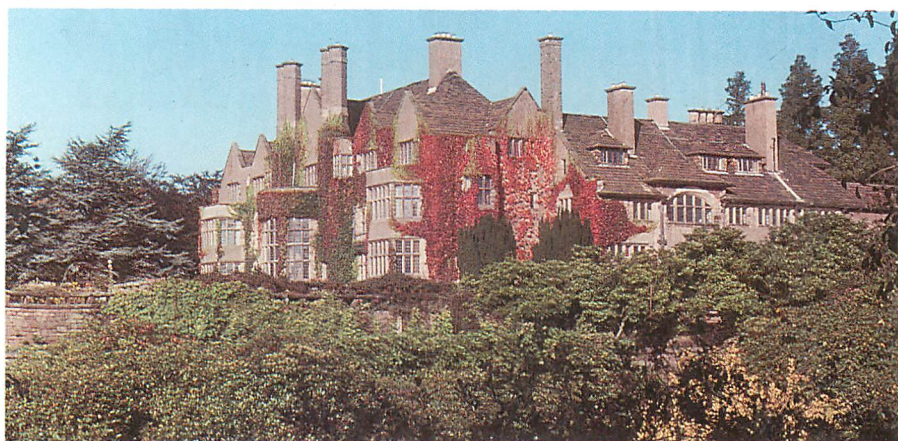
expenses or send donations from time to time. Some give their services in one capacity or another. Some attend and bring others to meetings and conferences. Many do all of these things.

Each of them seeks to take moral responsibility for the situations they find themselves in. Often this leads to initiatives in which the facilities of Tirley are called upon. Thus one weekend may see a meeting of immigrant community leaders with police, and the next employers with trade unionists. To another may come a group from the medical professions seeking for new ways forward amid the difficulties of providing health care, or a delegation of Arab students amazed and attracted by evidence of vibrant faith in a country they had thought was spiritually dead.

The accounts

What do the accounts look like based on this principle? You would search in vain for heavy expenditure on salaries. There is a small, dedicated staff of local people employed to look after the house and grounds. But apart from them everyone, both part time and full time, works unpaid out of conviction, from accounting and flower arranging to conference organisation. You would also find no invoice file. No one is presented with a bill at Tirley, though all are invited to contribute according to their means.

You would see, if you did not already know, that a place of Tirley's



size and quality is not cheap to run and maintain. In 1987 it cost some £12,000 per month. In a typical month this can be divided roughly into three parts:

- £4000 comes from covenants, regular gifts or grants and income from investments. This amount is thus more or less 'assured' in advance.
- £4000 may be contributed by those who live at Tirley or who visit or attend conferences during the month.
- £4000 has to come from other sources, mostly donations, which cannot normally be predicted or counted on in advance.

"Just in time" stories abound of donations arriving in the mail on the day a large bill had to be paid, and the like. Many donors, even of quite large sums, are by no means well off, and their sacrifice is all the more appreciated.

Not long ago a Grade 1 teacher with a young family and his wife wrote. "We believe those involved in education should be in the forefront of trying to change the whole atmosphere of society. Our experiences of Tirley lead us to believe that it has a real part in that process." They enclosed a covenant for a

generous monthly sum.

It is rare at Tirley to start a month with enough income assured to cover known outgoings. Yet for forty years the bills have been paid.

Looking ahead, there is much to be done. From Northern Ireland to South Africa, in the environment and in our own technology itself, issues arise which defy solution by expertise alone. Yet there is a God who holds all of human history in his hand, and who loves men and women one by one. It may take some faith to believe that on the road back to Him we will find how to ease and solve our tangled problems; but it takes far more faith to believe we will solve them anywhere else. And the evidence for it is mounting.

Down the street and across the continents, new voices are calling for standards of behaviour and citizenship that are in effect God's. Fresh ways to respond to these calls are constantly needed, as are more people to carry them out. Tirley Garth will remain at the service of anyone committed, in the words of the old prayer, to "Thy will be done" in Britain and the world. ■