

EMILY DICKINSON AT TIRLEY GARTH

On Saturday March 10, the Friends of Tirley Garth were given a rare treat: a performance by Edie Campbell of the play she devised and wrote with her husband Jack Lynch about the 19th century American poet, Emily Dickinson.

This Journey of a Portrayal is the product of research, writing and rewriting at intervals over a period of 14 years. Edie Campbell spins together the strands of the poet's life and work with her own story and produces the yarn with which she weaves a beautifully crafted drama. She acts with sparkle and devastating honesty, leaving herself very vulnerable. The audience is enticed into the world of Emily Dickinson, that enigmatic, reclusive woman who loved the power of words, wrote 1,775 poems and had correspondence with 93 people.

An equally appreciative audience from the neighbourhood filed into Tirley's Great Hall the same evening.

Kay Hassell

TIRLEY GARTH

Caux 2001 Planning Meeting
May 9-14

Those wishing to attend please inform Brian Thirlaway at Tirley Garth (email: thirlawayb@aol.com)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

BRIGHTON

The Unitarian Church, New Road
Wednesday, April 18 at 6pm
Michael Henderson will speak at an Inter-Faith Dialogue, hosted by the Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group. All welcome.

Imam Sajid (01273-722 438).

BOURNEMOUTH

Saturday, April 28, 7pm

The play *The Visit* by Adrian Plass, which touched many hearts at Greencoat Place last year, comes to Bournemouth on April 28.

Leone and Frank Beale were planning this occasion when Frank died on January 2. It will be performed in memory of his life, his love for his friends and his vision for the part each person can play in their town or city.

Everyone will be welcome at Richmond Hill United Reformed Church at 7 pm.

A feature in the local press, *Focus on Faith*, is carrying the story, and the timing of the play, following Easter, has caught the imagination of many in our area, from the town centre churches, to those in business and civic life, many of whom were Frank's close friends.

Leone Beale

A VOICE FOR ALL

A delegation of different minority communities in South Wales came to Bangor on March 17 for the sixth *Dialogue on Wales' Role*.

This included Cardiff Councillor Harry Ernest, whose father came from Jamaica in the 1890s; Mrs Anand Jasani, who hosts a weekly BBC Radio Wales programme *A Voice for All*; Mohammed Yusuf from the Somali community, Director of the Welsh Refugee Council; Kevin Simpson, an officer with National Police Training specialising in community relations; and Idrees Khan, a Cardiff businessman and magistrate.

Chaired by the Bishop of Bangor, the Rt Rev Saunders Davies, the dialogue took as its theme, "Making Space for Each Other". The dialogues aim at finding a uniting vision for Wales.

To illustrate how communities in north and south can learn from each other, Bishop Davies told how he had taken a group of residents from Maesgeirchen, a deprived housing estate in Bangor, to the Penrhys estate in the Rhondda. "The example of what Penrhys had achieved through its church-based community centre enriched us and gave new

hope and new ideas," he said.

We looked at relationships, including the current tension between the tourist community in North Wales and farmers. We also sought how to strengthen affinities right across Wales. "Some Welsh people find it difficult to make space for people like me to contribute," said Mrs Jasani. "Whether they can make space for me and others like me, who want to belong, is the question."

Amongst suggestions to help the north feel less marginalised were: occasional meetings of the National Assembly (or at least its main committees) in North Wales; giving greater powers to the North Wales Regional Committee; deliberately locating at least one prestigious new project in North Wales; and substantial investment in improving road and rail transport between north and south.

Later, over a working lunch at the National Assembly, four of us were able to discuss some of these ideas with the Minister of Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language, Jenny Randerson (Liberal Democrat), and with two other Assembly Members from Plaid Cymru and Labour.

Paul Williams

JOURNEYS OF HEALING

“We must stop pointing our finger at Eritrea,” the Ethiopian headmaster declared bravely – against the prevailing tide. “Our school can be a pilot for the thinking and spirit you brought today,” he said, following a school assembly for 650 boarding students from every ethnic group.

With Australians David Mills and Chris Lancaster, we were invited by our Ethiopian team of 10 young professionals who met with us each evening after work. They arranged a full week of dates, including a radio interview, school and orphanage visits and individual talks.

The Architects Club of Addis Ababa hosted a discussion on “honesty and integrity in professional life”, which the ICF video on Sarajevo vividly illustrated with regard to journalism. We were able to link up friends from 30 years ago with the younger group now taking responsibility for MRA in Ethiopia.

We were fortunate to find former ambassador, Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, about to leave on one of his long bus “journeys of healing” through Somalia to facilitate communication and trust between divided elements. “My personal experience of reconciliation,” he said, “always proves the most effective weapon.”

We encountered stark evidence, in the numbers of Somali and Sudanese refugees in Addis, of the human cost of insensitive colonial frontiers in relation to current conflicts, and felt the moral imperative of addressing

such wounds of history and supporting local peace initiatives.

Our week in Nairobi focused on the economic and social divide which MRA’s *Clean Kenya Campaign* is tackling with Christian, Muslim and Hindu leaders. Small task forces of committed young people, from among the 30 who briefed us, travel the country at weekends to share their convictions and vision.

Forestry worker Joseph Wainaina’s experience of bereavement when twice made homeless in tribal clashes in the Rift Valley in the ’90s, and his costly decision to forgive, is forging a unique spirit of healing in that area. A young businessman took us to the village home which he, his wife and two children share with eight orphan street kids rescued from the city slums – something, he told us, arising from his fellowship with settler farmer, the late Alan Knight.

Two outstanding senior men are also making a difference in Kenya. Bedan Mbugwa, editor-in-chief of the national paper *The People*, which proclaims its code as “fair, frank and fearless”, has been twice imprisoned for this stand and is widely respected. James Mageria (Caux ’98) co-ordinates the interfaith Committee on Constitutional Reform. Both work closely with local lawyer and MRA Secretary, Joseph Karanja.

**Jim Baynard-Smith &
Mike Carpenter**

MEXICO

Mexico lies between the Latin South and Anglo-Saxon North America, with indigenous people the bulk of the population. Ismar Villavicencio and I were there during a stand-off in Mexico City between President Fox’s Government and Zapatistas - led by Sub-Comandante Marcos from the impoverished South East State of Chiapas - which was world news.

In Monterrey our group from seven countries, meeting for an MRA Americas Consultation, were guests of the new Catholic University. For three years here, a group of students and former students have been committed to exploring the principles and practice of MRA.

Ary Kahan, a leading businessman, emphasised that our international group had come at a crucial moment in the country’s history. A young Mexican woman, Rene Salinas, read to the group her letter appealing to President Fox and Sub-Comandante Marcos to listen to each other, as we were learning to do - a personal gesture from one concerned Mexican.

Later, in Mexico City, a former Mayor told us of his concern that leaders of business and industry had no real understanding of a social conscience. If that could change, it would be a big step towards bringing the country together, he said. Plans were made there and then for an event which might initiate the process of change.

Tom Jones

MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

Our fifth visit to Moldova coincided with a general election for the 101-seat Parliament. The MRA team had visited each of the party offices (23 in all) with a *Think & vote* campaign questionnaire asking for their aims and objectives. The results were printed in a 24-page pamphlet which they distributed in the streets, colleges and student hostels. They all felt it had been a valuable exercise which now gives them an opportunity to go and meet the new deputies.

MRA, registered as an NGO in Moldova, has the name *Civilizatia Noua*. A weekly meeting on Sundays takes place in the new office.

For the last three months Bhavesh Patel from Manchester has been with the growing MRA team. Other programmes they have in mind are for schools in September and for business ethics to be taught at university level. They have been preparing the first session of the Caux summer conference *Freedom, Responsibility & Leadership*.

One objective of our visit was to invite Moldovans and Ukrainians for this session. In both countries we found great interest in the conference theme, especially when we pointed out that these issues are as relevant for us in the west as for them. It is likely that two MPs and six or more academics from these countries will attend with the many from other parts of Europe and the rest of the world.

Miles Paine

THE ARTIST'S TASK

Artists from a wide variety of disciplines, plus those who appreciate their work, gave an enthusiastic reception to Hugh Steadman Williams' *Theology of encouragement for the artist* at a Greencoat Forum in London in March. In a talk interspersed with three musical interludes, Williams pinpointed creation, communication and love as aspects of the divine image which artists were called to reflect. "When we create and communicate with love we are acting in the image of God," he said. "Art needs no other justification."

Williams concluded with a quotation from the first letter of St John: "It was there from the beginning; we have heard it, we have seen it with our own eyes, we have looked

upon it and felt it with our own hands: our theme is the Word which gives life." He went on, "The supreme task of the artist is to be that bridge between earth and heaven...so that in generations to come people will say, 'We have heard it - through music, through poetry; we have seen it - through painting, sculpture, photography or film; we have felt it - through ceramics, textiles or carving'."

An animated discussion ensued, ranging over such issues as: the ghetto-isation of Christian artists; the role of anger and ugliness in art; and the effect on listeners of the context in which music is performed.

Mary Lean

RICHMOND REPORT

A 'concise' National Forum was held on Saturday, March 24, in Greencoat Place, where 60 gathered. The focus of the day was a report back from the International Consultation held in Richmond, USA. Five of the seven from the UK who were there - Mike Lowe, Krish Raval, Elisabeth Tooms, Laura Trevelyan and I - took the group through the key aspects of the time.

Those who had gone were keen to express that Richmond was part of a process that we hope to continue in the UK. Discussions on the name, on the 'Richmond Affirmations' and on other elements of the Consultation will continue - and any feedback is welcome. The five said we would be

happy to visit teams in other parts of the country to discuss any of these issues in more depth.

Jacqui Daukes expressed her pleasure, having read the 'Richmond Affirmations': "Finally there is a document that I feel able to show my friends." Kristen Cibelli added: "They provide a platform upon which many people here and around the world can stand together. It is unifying and open without being watered down."

For a full copy of the report on Richmond, please contact Mike Lowe at 17 Edinburgh Road, Kidlington, OX5 2JF (email: mike@oxford.mra.org.uk).

Fiona Leggat

STALKING THE LAND - 18th March 2001

Smoke from the pyres drift slowly and cling,
Affecting our spirits, postponing the spring -
Or will it be cancelled outright?
The mud on the stricken tracks oozes and boils,
And settles in ruts iridescent with oils,
And freezes grotesque in the night.
Where all should be bursting with life, we have death.
Where all should be hope, only sorrow.
Today it is happening to somebody else.
Will it be us tomorrow?

Unnatural silences lie on the land,
With fields that are haunted. The footpaths are banned
And even the roads fallen still.
With contact discouraged most people stay home
And the news of each outbreak is passed on by phone
As the virus finds victims at will.
The petty restrictions just get in the way
As you spray down your wheel arches, third time today.
You hope that it's helping, though no-one can say,
To avert what may hit you tomorrow.

And all round the country the neighbours report
And gossip and blame but above all support
Where the pain or the fear is too great.
And government task forces meet through the night,
And impose drastic measures, and pray they are right.
If we find that they're not, it's too late.
And alone in the silence when all's done and said
Stands a farmer whose life work is smouldering and dead,
A family whose world has been turned on its head.
Thank God, there is always tomorrow.

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(On March 12th foot and mouth disease was confirmed on a neighbouring farm. By the 16th it had spread to three others. On the 20th it was found in our own animals at Whitbourne. CFE)

HILLS OF THE EAST

Recently I was invited to Bombay for the International Naval Review *Bridges of Friendship*, having served in the Indian Navy during the war. Junior officer I may have been then, but superior was my attitude. I longed to return and attempt to repay in some measure for those years.

I did have the privilege of returning with Frank Buchman in 1952 (225 of us from 25 countries). At the end of our tour, I volunteered to stay on and spent many years there, happy to serve and work alongside my Indian colleagues.

As I was not clear whether to accept this new invitation, in view of my age, I decided to ask God for a sign. The next day I opened *A New Day* and read: "Launch out... Leave thy country and go to a land I will show you... I will lead you into the hills of the East..." What could be clearer! My wife and I went to the travel agent, to discover there was a special offer for senior citizens, ending that very day!

We met many old friends – some had been students when we lived in Bombay 30 years ago and now hold responsible positions.

After the Review we spent two weeks at the MRA conference centre at Panchgani. The growth in trees and shrubs was breathtaking, and the growth in the people we met was an inspiration. Four young people who have completed their degree in social science take major responsibility at the conference centre and their enthusiasm is infectious. Some who serve in the

background have been there for many years.

One of the monthly seminars for industry took place while we were there. The difference in people from the day they arrived, reserved and apprehensive, to the day they left, radiant, outgoing and determined to come again, was truly amazing. It was a joy to see them serving the meals and washing up – something they do not do at home.

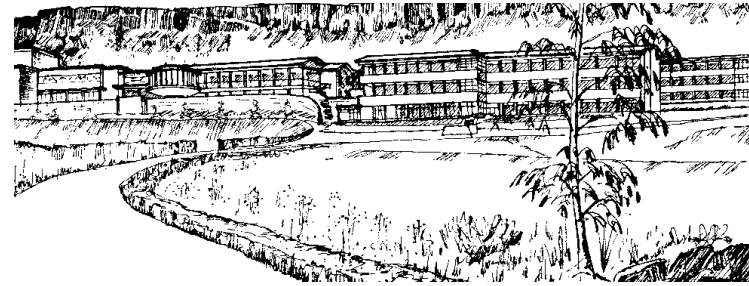
One who came to a recent conference was Mr Vittal, Vigilance Commissioner for India, responsible for clearing up corruption which is unfortunately widespread. He was so impressed that he wrote to all government offices throughout the country, banks, insurance companies and local governments, urging them to send employees to Asia Plateau for training. More than 200 replies have been received, and information and possible conference dates have been sent to more than 90 who expressed interest. This could have a far-reaching impact on the country.

John Faber

FARMERS IN INDIA

The Farmers' Dialogue in Panchgani drew 100 Indian and 42 other farmers from 12 countries. The latter started with two days visiting farms at Satara and Baramati.

The internationally known scientist Dr M S Swaminathan opened with a wide-ranging speech (published as a Dialogue pamphlet). It covered India's agricultural achievement and major questions of technology and environment, the



World Trade Organisation, sustainable farming, and the foundation stone of happy, farming families. He immediately responded to the atmosphere and, as he spoke, we all felt there were shared common beliefs.

Leonard Rakotondrazaka from Madagascar underlined the themes of aims and motive. "I would emphasise that a technical package is not sufficient," he said. "Transparency and a deeper sense of morality, honesty and love are fundamental in transforming people... There is a link between debt, lack of economic growth and conflict. A significant cause of conflict in Africa is the struggle for survival in a situation of scarce resources. Hence the struggle for state power."

One of the host team commented on the zest and vigour of the Dialogue. Some of the many farmers from Maharashtra met before parting to plan new teamwork on a state-wide basis, while Shailendra Mahato, whose home village is now in the new state of Jharkhand (formerly a part of Bihar), told how his change towards a bitter political rival had brought huge development in agriculture and education.

A strong group from Jharkhand expressed determination to help their new state begin in the right spirit. Many

new initiatives are germinating.

Pat Evans & Jim Wigan

WEEKEND RETREAT

A new series of weekend retreats, called *Initiatives for growth*, started at the end of February in Tirley Garth. Two participants write:

"An absolutely fantastic weekend... a wonderful sense of fellowship and friendship, creativity, reflection, inspiration and rest... Most of the group had never met before but it took no time at all for everyone to be talking on a deep level. Tirley is an amazing place... (Darren Hildrow)

"I call them 'les instants précieux', because they're rare and hard to generate. Something special happened that weekend in Tirley Garth. Personally I won't forget the lessons." (Dev Saint Auguste)

The next *Initiatives for growth* weekend is on April 21/22. It will be an opportunity to experience the power of sharing silence. There are about a dozen places. Please book by contacting us.

Alan Channer & Mary Winstanley Channer (email: mwinlangu@aol.com)