

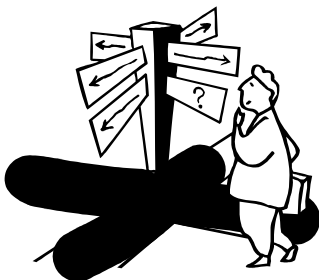
MIH NEWSLETTER

July 2010.

FINAL 3 MONTHS TO SEPT 2010!



This will probably be the final newsletter because as we near closure it becomes painful and difficult to write interesting articles. Gradually the Post-Graduate students, our sustaining bread and butter, are moving out as they either complete their Bristol based activities or move to accommodation ready for next academic year. M.I.H. continues to be in demand, of course, but increasingly for a transient population of short stay students who although very welcome, can not build into the same sense of community that long stay residents generate. The Methodist District is losing something that they should have been proud of, but instead followed another agenda. It would be good to have been able to inform you, our readers, of what and how the money released from MIH funds and property was going to be used for, but it would appear that The District have not yet decided about this. In our last newsletter the Rev'd Ward Jones (Chair of The Bristol District) wrote:



“Anyone with ideas is more than welcome to send their suggestions to either the Synod Secretary, the Revd Carrie Seaton, or the District Policy Committee Secretary, the Revd Peter Mortlock.”

If you have ideas and have not yet responded can I encourage you to do so as a matter of haste. It would be a shame to see MIH money whittled away because no one knows what to do with it!

After much debate within the warden team, we will not be organizing a summer garden party this year. A symbolic “Beating the Retreat” and “Last Post” by the A.T.C. band might have been too poignant and a lot of our long term residents would have moved on anyway. The outing in May was a success, as was the get together in the main lounge afterwards and it is better to end on a high. A vibrant, happy social event is best for the memory. At least for my memory after nearly twelve years service at MIH.

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Thank you for your support over the many years since MIH Bristol opened in 1957. Amazing things have been achieved here and lasting friendships formed that can only contribute to international peace and understanding. Many have also grown in respect for each others' religions and I believe MIH has been a beacon of Christian serving ministry. For this, to God be the Glory!

My wife Sheila and I are proud, and humble, to have had the privilege of serving here in the long line of dedicated and hardworking Wardens who preceded us. Thank you to you all, especially the staff and The Management Committee who have made it all possible.

God bless,

Mark.
(Mark started work at MIH in December 1998)

Closure of MIH.

A> Financial Status Years ending August 2000 to August 2009.

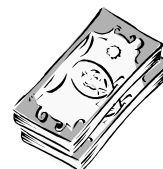
Terminology and style of accounts were changed during this period (2006 / 2007) but a comparison is still possible.



Figures quoted are from signed audited /examined accounts.

	Income Operations	Expenditure Operations	Donations & Interest	Excess (Deficit)	Bank & In reserves.
Year End 2000.	86,919	89,842	7,828	+ 4,905	128,498
Year End 2001.	93,179	93,613	8,411	+ 7,977	133,613
Year End 2002	96, 495	99,497	7,379		
Annex refurbishment		35,465	570	(30,518)	110,365
Year End 2003	102,913	104,463	7,135	+ 5,585	114,931
Year End 2004	108,134	115,370	7,870	+ 634	106,234
Year End 2005	109,883	115,945	9,86	+ 3,799	116,702
Year End 2006	119,247	123,305	21,787	+17,729	136,606
Legacy					
Year End 2007	121,570	127,121	8,386	+ 2835	136,422
Year End 2008	132,284	158,286	9,915	(16,087)	124,737
Legacy spent.					
Year End 2009	138,930	163,195	3,023	(21,242)	107,360
Urgent Outside redecoration					
Overdue Warden's Flat Refurbishment					
Start of sale of property fees.					

Until the decision to close was taken, these figures reflect the quality financial management that MIH has benefited from over the years. The last general appeal for funds was in 1990. Not bad for any Charity and shows the importance of walking by Faith combined with sound Christian stewardship.



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B> The 2007 Review.

There is much speculation and many rumours circulating out in the District Churches, some of it healthy, some less so. To clarify a few historic facts.

The independent review of Bristol MIH was carried out in the later months of 2007. It had the following questions as its brief:

“1.Terms of reference and membership of the Review Group

- 1.1 The review was commissioned by the Bristol Methodist District Policy Committee which resolved in June 2006: “Methodist International House: It was agreed to set up a group to review the work and future of this project.”
- 1.2 The major questions which the Group was asked to address, notified to us by the Secretary of the Policy Committee, were as follows:
1. Is the work financially viable?
 2. Could the substantial resources that are invested in the work be better utilised?
 3. Does it need to be an exclusively Methodist piece of work or could it be done in some form of partnership?
 4. What are the Methodist links among the residents?
 5. Is there a certain expectation in the World Church of what an International House should provide?
 6. Have other housing provisions overtaken the need for MIH?”

Despite the slight bias to the terms of reference, the review group carried out a fair and accurate assessment of the work of MIH. The review was in favour of MIH continuing, but with certain issues being addressed. These included long term financial planning (funding); the quality of The Warden’s Accommodation; levels of staffing and the need to expand the number of people who could be accommodated. As options were limited at Rodney House, a new site could be investigated. The review group was particularly concerned about the Governance and the need to clarify and modify this to meet changes in Charity Law. Quote: “This is inconsistent with the Charity Commission’s current expectations of good practice, published and promoted very heavily in the past few years;”

The review made a number of helpful comments, observations and raised important issues to be addressed. It also stated about closure, “In our view this approach should only be pursued if other possibilities are deemed untenable.”

The District duly decided that closure was the correct path to follow. I hope this ends unnecessary rumour and misinformation.

Warden Manager June 2010.



No clergy motorcycle tricks

M.I.H. Life Continues

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This final year has been one of contrasts, as you can image. The atmosphere in the house generally has been as ever, residents sharing conversations with each other. For example, a number cooked an impromptu meal the last week-end before a number of long term residents left to write up their dissertations at home, a recent trend which the Internet has made possible. The house then refilled with summer placements, until the start of September will be working as normal.

As Mark says, the May outing was the biggest yet, with forty four people on the coach. We enjoyed the walk along the river bank and a few games of volley ball and foot ball before the ‘heavens opened’ attacking everyone with hail stones. These were in sufficient numbers that they were a couple of inches deep where the wipers had cleared them to allow the drivers to see. Not only were we grateful to the Gibbs Family and the Moral Trust for inviting and funding the annual event over many years, but this year in particular, for the Turner’s coach driver, who not only had to negotiate the narrow lanes but do so with a constantly steaming up windscreen, caused by the wet clothes of the passengers. Pauline said that fellow bus passengers on her way home in Bristol were looking at the wet floor that was developing around her.

Now to the future. In no particular order; Judit will have the financial pressures of being a mother eased somewhat; Pauline wants to visit West Africa; Daouda wants to attend English lessons, Zsuzsanna want to start to work in Nursery Care, Steven is looking at several possibilities, Teresa currently works in a family looking after their children out of school, and David has started a research job. Therefore the long notice of the pending closure of M.I.H. has allowed staff to forward plan, and the redundancy money gives them the opportunity to do something worthwhile.

For Mark, unemployment beckons initially, living in the house in Milton Keynes we last lived in twenty years ago, a complete refurbishment will be required. After a holiday in November a temporary Christmas job, then???????? For Sheila, the prospects of having Peter living at home after July 2011, until the Local Authority assesses his needs and provides accordingly. (They will not accept responsibility for him until he leaves College.) We would then have to stay close by.

Alternatively, before we leave, Bristol will accept responsibility for Peter’s care as an adult. Yes, he is now eighteen, and has a sister living locally. We will refurbish the house as the tenants of fourteen years have had to be evicted, before re-letting it out and returning to working in a Retreat Centre, wherever that may be.

If you want to keep in contact with Mark and I please e mail us at stubeymum@tiscali.co.uk and we will add you to our personal address book and let you know exactly what The Lord has planned for us.

Sheila.

(Sheila started work at MIH in December 1998)

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Brambles



Dear all,

A few weeks ago I was able to find some time during my period on duty to pick up a few tools and head out to the MIH garden. Early summer is a time when growth quickly gets out of control, and it was time to enter into battle with the brambles and other plants intent on eating into the paths and communal patios. Over the decades a great deal of love has gone into that garden and, if recent weeks are anything to go by, a great deal of appreciation has been given to it by residents of MIH. On that particular afternoon I could sympathize with this. Under shade of a big old copper beech tree, with blackbirds leaping about in the bushes and only the quiet hum of Bristol traffic, that garden was a haven.

MIH as whole, it should be recognized, is, and has long been, a haven. A new city, a new culture and the pressures of academia could easily become profoundly disorientating for someone away from

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home for an extended period (especially if it is for the first time). But MIH offers a community from which to engage with all these things without becoming too overwhelmed. As part of the warden team I would like to take credit for creating this community, but in reality I suspect we're the facilitators mostly. It is the residents who create the feel of the place, and they should be given credit this summer for continuing to make the place what it is. Despite the imminent closure, social events are still taking place, music from the lounge piano still carries around the house in the evenings, and rooms are continuing to be filled (although sadly people wanting to stay post-September are now being turned away – twice in the space in a couple of hours last time I was on duty).

Working in the garden that day a few weeks ago offered mixed emotions. Once closure takes place it is likely that it will be left to become overgrown for a presently unclear period of time. Ultimately the brambles will defeat us. But it is incumbent upon the warden team, as well as the MIH residents, to make the effort to keep this institution at its very best until the last possible moment. The pressure is upon us. But a partial comfort is this: this pressure is very small compared to that facing those who took the decision to close MIH. There is, and will continue to be, *intense* pressure to demonstrate that the money created by selling MIH is used sustainably to seriously good ends. As I am not privy to the 'big picture' I cannot rule out this possibility. But in the very near future it will need to be shown in clear, definitive, and utterly unambiguous terms that the money went somewhere *very* worthwhile. Compared to that pressure the job of the MIH staff will be a 'walk in the park'. Or at least a walk in the (if I may say so myself) now excellently de-brambled MIH garden.

Dave

[Dave started work at MIH in May 2009]



Staff Comments:

Hello to All,

It is lovely to be back at MIH after a break of 12 months! Lili is a wonderful little girl and being a mum, although challenging at times, is not something I'd pass on if I had to go back in time. Thanks to my colleagues for welcoming me back the kind way they did and for helping me find my way back into dealing with the fantastically varied tasks that await one when one turns up for duty. Especially varied they are these days due to the particular changes that MIH goes through these final months. Varied, however, has work here has always been - as all past and present employees will surely agree. And it is the suspended permanence of variability of each day that will make these final months a little more bearable for me, I think. It's been an honour being part of MIH going on six years now and it feels good to think that not only has MIH been a part of my life all these years but perhaps I have also been part of its life. It's definitely 'got under my skin' as Mark likes to say, and there it'll stay.

Judit

{Judit started work at MIH in November 2004}

Now that the exam period is over the residents of MIH are able to relax a little, enjoying the sunshine and the World Cup with its friendly rivalry between nations. Summer is usually the time when the Warden Team repaints the building, carries out repairs and generally plans for the future, but of course there is no need for that this year. Despite this there remains much to keep us busy, and an important element of the mood within the team now is pride at what we and our predecessors have achieved at MIH, coupled with a MIH Bristol 1957 to September 2010. A serving Ministry to the Glory of God.



determination to maintain until the very end the high standards that our residents have come to expect of us. It has been a privilege to work here alongside such committed colleagues and under a supportive management committee, and to have played a small part in contributing to the proud history of MIH.

Beneath this pride and determination, though, there also exist more negative emotions of despondency, frustration and embarrassment. We are despondent at losing our jobs, of course (and Mark and Sheila their home) but, when the dust has settled, we are well aware that the worst effect of the closure of MIH will be to deny future generations of international visitors the chance to study and build friendships in this unique environment. Our frustration stems from the fact that we are still unable adequately to explain either to ourselves or the residents why this is happening. And embarrassment is what we feel on behalf of those who have single-mindedly engineered the closure of MIH without once coming to the door to explain it to us, and who have (to put the most charitable interpretation on events) seemingly made very little effort to counteract the false rumours and misleading information that have arisen as a result.

But that is a matter for their consciences. All that we can and will do until the end of September is to work as hard as possible to ensure that MIH bows out with dignity.

Steven
Deputy Warden
{Steven started work at MIH in January 2009}

Hello to all,
My passage at MIH has given me much assistance and learning, especially I have appreciated the versatility of the team of cleaning which gives us a experience. With its nearing closing, it is a family which I will miss. The good environment, team and especially Mark and Sheila. This is why I request so that God grants each one of us a particular grace for its future: That God blesses all the personnel of MIH. AMEN.

PAULINE
{Pauline started work at MIH in March 2004 and has been a cornerstone of the Domestic team ever since.}



The MIH wasn't just my first workplace in the UK and wasn't just my first serious workplace in my entire life but the MIH was a safety net for me, my third home, a place where I've met good people every day.

"The first" is always important and the MIH will always be "the first" for me. Where I first spoke English, where I had my first tea with milk, the first place where I realized how important it is to use the yellow triangle (at least one), the first place where I got to know different cultures without traveling, where I first felt I am not only a co-worker or just a member of staff but I am also a friend and where I can help and where I always get help. I will remember all of this after October and I hope everybody can find some nice memories which they can put away with their clothes in their luggage when they finally move out.

Zsuzsanna.
{Zsuzsanna started work at MIH in July 2008}



staff changes

In June we welcomed Judit back to work after her maternity leave.

At the beginning of July we sadly had to say goodbye and “Thank You” to Karoly, who had provided Judit’s maternity cover. He has been useful as a member of The Warden Team and we hope that he will keep in touch.

The rest of us are just doing our best while we wait for redundancy. At the time of printing, we are all waiting to learn what the Lord has planned for us next, but at least the redundancy payment should give a slight cushion once we become unemployed. The team is grateful to The Management Committee who have tried to do their best for us.

Letters:

On advice, I have withdrawn an angry letter received for publication. The letter was a friend of former Management Committee Members who had been encouraged to resign over their opposition to District plans to close MIH in 2008 before Synod was allowed to vote on the issue.

These plans seem to date back to at least 2005, as recently reported in the Methodist Recorder (April 1st 2010) and Victoria Magazine June 2010 whereby money from MIH would go to help keep Wesley College open. What annoyed our writer was ‘hearing Rev’d Ward Jones on the BBC Radio Bristol News at 8am Sunday 27th June.

The article was about conference and Wesley College. Rev’d Jones said:

“we have hard choices to make. We should not sell the family silver without a second thought.”

An argument the District apparently dismissed regarding MIH.

Mark.

1>. Dear Mark,

It’s been a long time since we last talked! I am Felipe..., a student who spent 3 excellent months with you from September to December 2008, I hope you remember me.

I am writing you because I have to take an exam near Bristol on 12 July. ...I believe there is no better place in Bristol for me to stay than your cozy house.,,,

All the best, Felipe. (Spain)



2>. Just a little card to say... THANK YOU in a really big way!

To Mark & all your staff at Methodist International House. I’ve enjoyed visiting you every year. Good luck in your future ventures. Advance Fire Systems (Fire Extinguishers)

The once Grand MIH Ministry: Thank God for a Mission Accomplished

MIH London (2): Inverness Terrace & Harrington Gardens. Now M.I.C. Euston.

MIH Birmingham: Oakfield Road, Selly Park Merged and now called Wesley House.

MIH Bristol: Clifton Down Road

Truncated End Sept. 2010.

MIH Hull: Westbourne Avenue.

Still Exists.

MIH Leeds: Hyde Park

GONE.

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MIH Liverpool (2): Mount Pleasant & Princess Park	BOTH GONE.
MIH Manchester: Victoria Park	<u>Still Exists.</u>
MIH Newcastle: Ellison Place	GONE.
MIH Nottingham`	GONE.
MIH South Wales: Penarth Glamorgan.	GONE.
MIH Southampton: Archers Road	GONE.
MIH York: Burton Croft	GONE.

If you have missed our previous Newsletters you can read them on www.mihbristol.co.uk

In July 2000 Aditya (India) wrote a poem about MIH Bristol, which we published in full in a Newsletter at that time. For now his first two lines and his last two lines are reproduced.

**“Home to Home’
I lived in this house and now the House Lives in Me.
I leave this House But the House doesn’t leave me!**

.....

**Absent Bodies, Present Souls
Echo in the Spirit of this Home.”**



GOODBYE