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THE TYRONE GUTHRIE CENTRE, ANNAGHMAKERRIG, IRELAND

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In *Contact 23* Stephen Montague wrote about the MacDowell Colony for Creative Artists in New Hampshire, USA, and bemoaned the fact that there was no such centre in Britain. I can report, however, that exactly such an establishment opened its doors in Ireland in October 1981. I was one of those invited to visit it during the summer of 1981 to try out the facilities, and I give here some details that *Contact* readers may find of interest.

When Sir Tyrone Guthrie the theatre and opera director died in 1971, he left his family home in Ireland for use as an artists' community. The bequest was so complicated that it is only ten years later that the project has come to fruition. Administered jointly by the Arts Councils of Southern and Northern Ireland through a board of directors, the comfortable 19th-century house has been renovated to provide eleven study-bedrooms, most with bathrooms *en suite*. There is also a fully fitted-out artist's studio and a large music room with adjoining composer's bedroom. Downstairs Guthrie's pleasant library and drawing-room have been left much as they were, and there is a large modern kitchen and dining room. All the residents' rooms have a work-table, a generous selection of Guthrie's books, double doors for privacy, and a spectacular view of the lake in front of the house and the pine forests that surround the estate.

As I found during my residency, one can work in peace all day long. Breakfast and a simple lunch may be concocted by the artists themselves at any time they like, but at Guthrie's wish everyone gathers for the evening meal, and may choose to continue to talk after it. If the creative urge flags during the day there are all those books, while outside there are boating and swimming in the lake and plenty of walks in the forests. Newbliss, the nearest little village, is three miles away. (Dublin and Belfast are each about 80 miles from the area, and Monaghan itself is quite easily reached by public transport.)

Guthrie wanted a mix of creative artists, and when I was there writers, artists, and a composer were in residence. Performing artists are also welcome and at least one theatre group has been to the Centre. While residents are mainly drawn from Ireland, places may be given to creative artists and performers from further afield if the board of directors likes the project put forward, and indeed a leavening of local talent with that from elsewhere is something Guthrie would have relished. Residences of between about three weeks and three months are envisaged, and residents are expected, if they are able, to contribute to the day-by-day costs of living at the Centre.

Further details are available from the resident director, Bernard Loughlin, The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Newbliss, County Monaghan, Ireland.