



## THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS HOUSE PARTY

Imagine your own period country house celebration with family and friends...

You arrive, your bags are whisked away and there's a roaring log fire burning, champagne on ice and canapés being circulated. Dress up for a formal evening and entertain guests with a dinner party, or relax in your jeans and curl up in front of a movie in your own private cinema. In the morning, you can choose to eat a breakfast provided by the housekeeper or rustle up some bacon and eggs yourself.

The Wow House Company can provide all of this, as well as help to plan a special occasion – with everything from printing invitations, ordering cases of wine, booking chefs, butlers, restaurant tables, taxis and childminders, so there's no need for you to worry about a thing.

To see the range of stunning period houses available around the UK for between eight and 52 guests, visit [thewowhousecompany.com](http://thewowhousecompany.com) (01242 633637).



## Not so wicked stepmother ...

To add a special touch to your home, try *Wicked Stepmother's World* for a seasonal course. The woman in question is Australian Victoria Merrick, who says:

*'I became a stepmother five years ago when I married an Englishman. Abandoning my urban life, I flung myself into one of rural idyll in north Lincolnshire. Wicked Stepmother's World (the name came from my cheeky stepchildren!) is a reflection of my new life and interests. I design the course calendar around the seasons, be it in the garden or kitchen. Within this, there are workshops and courses on rural crafts, the arts, cooking, and body and soul. All tutors excel in their field and a day at Home Farm is both fun and instructive.'*

See [wickedstepmothersworld.co.uk](http://wickedstepmothersworld.co.uk) for details; book for 2007 and take a friend for half the price.

## Faith, hope and charity

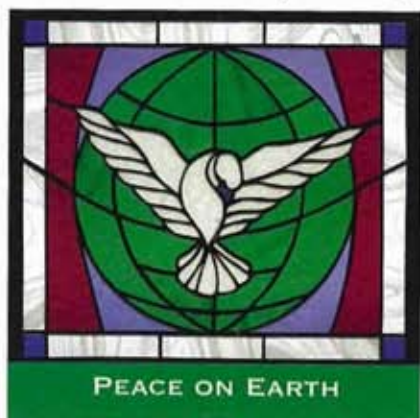


Terry Waite spent five Christmases in captivity. Since his release, the former hostage has devoted his time to humanitarian causes. In 1998 he became President of Emmaus UK, part of the international charity for homeless people.

Terry says: 'I realised that day in and day out, many homeless people endure isolation, fear, boredom and despair. It's a very quick road down and very hard to climb up again.'

There are 13 Emmaus communities across the UK in which previously homeless people live and work. Each community aims to support itself through the business of collecting, restoring and selling donated household goods. Residents can learn other new skills required to make the residential houses self-supporting, including cookery, IT, retail and how to make money from salvage.

If you wish to help, visit [emmaus.org.uk](http://emmaus.org.uk) to find your nearest community. You could donate your unwanted furniture or purchase Christmas presents from its shops. You can also order Christmas cards, based on a stained glass piece (right) made by an Emmaus resident.



## Quintessentially English Christmas shopping

To help in the eternal search for Christmas gifts, *Quintessentially English* (01249 730100) is hosting a shopping weekend on 1-2 December in the National Trust village of Lacock. Here you can take advantage of a 10% discount on the entire range of hand-blended soaps, beauty products, People Tree clothing, and gifts for the home and garden.

To receive an extra 20% off, just present this copy of the magazine. Mulled wine and mince pies will also be on offer, plus free soap samples with purchases over £25.

