

# Among Friends

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## Bringing together the Family of Friends

It is hard to keep up with events in the world and be unmoved. While some of us long to leave behind one of the coldest winters Northern countries have seen for many years, others are concerned that rainfall has been so low that the Sea of Galilee is below the red line, which means a severe storm could cause the lake to mix, bringing up the saline water at the bottom and making the whole lake like the Dead Sea. We were so saddened by news of the flooding and bushfires in Australia, and of the devastating earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand. News of political unrest in North Africa and the Middle East has brought both hope and concern. It is tempting to feel overwhelmed by all the events and forces that are beyond our control.



*Rachel Bewley-Bateman, Marisa Johnson and Marit Kromberg in Cambridge. Photo by Marisa Johnson*

Throughout the ages people have recognised the intrinsic tragic quality of life – the “ocean of darkness and death” that George Fox wrote about. At the same time, we have also been filled with the awe and wonder of creation, from the largest scale, to the small miracles of life’s tenacity and resilience. We re-discover over and over that “ocean of light and love”, expressed in nature, and in our own creativity and capacity for compassion and service.

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I am filled with gratitude at the loving service that Marit Kromberg, Jane Rose and Fritz Renken have given our Section as Clerk and members of the Executive Committee. I will miss Marit’s extraordinary dedication and hard work, her determination to get things right and abide by the requirements of the law, as well as of love, her encouragement and firmness. Jane’s gentleness, capacity for stillness, faith and loyalty have sustained me in my own service, and Fritz’s good humour, wit, and love of language brought enrichment. Of course these Friends will continue to be part of our family as they pass the care of EMES on to Rachel Bewley-Bateman, Sue Glover Frykman and Jez Smith, all of whom have already demonstrated their willingness to pull their sleeves up and get stuck into the work. I look forward very much to working with them, learning with them, finding out together what love requires of us, and be faithful, because “*The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love*” (Gal. 5:6).

*Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary*

## EMES Companion Programme

**Julia Ryberg** *introduces* the EMES Companion Programme:

The EMES *Ministry & Outreach* programme continues to develop resources for learning and nurture that serve Quaker groups, isolated Friends and enquirers across the Section. What is available so far? One resource is the **Quaker in Europe** online introductory course. Friends and enquirers interact in language-based groups during the 10-week course as they share spiritual journeys, learn about the Quaker way and develop community where face-to-face interaction is often not possible. Also available are the **Visiting Friends** resources that prepare and guide Friends as they travel amongst themselves in various kinds of ministries and intervisitation—on behalf of EMES as well as informally between groups of Friends. Finally, learning documents about Quaker praxis and structures are available and have been used in a residential **Meeting for Learning** with Friends from many European countries.

To complement these *Ministry and Outreach* resources, EMES now launches the **Companion** programme. The process of mentoring and guiding enquirers as they explore the Quaker way often happens quite naturally and informally in Meetings. The Companion programme, however, is primarily a resource for enquirers in areas where there are no established Quaker Meetings. By pairing an enquirer with a Companion, it is an opportunity for enquirers to explore the Quaker way in more depth and in fellowship with an experienced Friend. The programme involves a period of structured communication (by e-mail, letter, Skype, telephone) between an enquirer and a Companion, who has been prepared for this ministry. The enquirer can take further steps by participating in a **Quaker in Europe** online course, attending a residential gathering for learning and fellowship, being visited as appropriate and perhaps continuing the process toward membership.

The EMES **Companion** programme will embody the central experience that being a Quaker is about fellowship and community—that the Spirit is at work “where two or three are gathered”, even when that means interacting via the internet and at a distance. We hope to pair enquirers and Companions so that communication can be done in the enquirer’s language. A list of potential Companions will be kept and drawn upon as need arises and when an appropriate match (considering issues like geography and language) between enquirer and Companion can be made.

A Companion will listen to the enquirer’s spiritual journey and will share her/his own spiritual journey and experience of Friends. A Companion will encourage awareness of the diversity of Quaker experience worldwide, will guide the enquirer to resources and contacts and will help “knit” the enquirer into the wider network of Friends. A Companion should be reasonably experienced in the Quaker way and be committed both to the Quaker way and to the spiritual development of others. Companions will be good listeners both in person and at a distance. If a Companion is linked to a Quaker Meeting, an expression of acknowledgement and support of this ministry will be requested from the Meeting. Companions will be prepared for and supported during their period of ministry.

Do you know someone who would be an appropriate Companion? Are you interested in serving as a Companion? Would you like to have an EMES Companion? Would you like further information about the **Companion** programme or any of the other *Ministry & Outreach* resources? Please contact Julia Ryberg, *Ministry & Outreach* Coordinator, at [julinaryberg@yahoo.se](mailto:julinaryberg@yahoo.se)

## Changes on EMES Executive Committee

EMES has a new Clerk, Rachel Bewley-Bateman of Ireland Yearly Meeting, who has taken over from Marit Kromberg of Norway Yearly Meeting, whose term of service has come to an end.

Jane Rose of Finland Yearly Meeting and Fritz Renken of Switzerland Yearly Meeting also left the committee, and Sue Glover Frykman of Sweden Yearly Meeting and Jez Smith of Britain Yearly Meeting joined it.

Taking her leave of EMES after six years, Marit reflected on her service: "In 2005, out of the blue, I felt led to tell our Norwegian nominations committee that I felt ready to serve outside Norway. At that time I had no idea that I would be involved in the revision of the FWCC Constitution both at world level and within EMES. Neither did I fully understand how deeply I would come to feel about some of the diverse projects and tasks Friends are involved with all over the planet. It never ceases to amaze me that the total number of Friends is fewer than a half million, all counted. Yet there is so much Quaker activity.

The work has been varied and exciting in many ways, but not overwhelming, as EMES has been blessed with very capable and hard working Executive Secretaries. The previous Executive Secretary, Bronwyn Harwood, had a vision for the future of pastoral care among old and new Friends and seekers in Europe and the Middle East, and it has been particularly rewarding to see her vision unfold in the Ministry and Outreach Programme. Thanks to generous support from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and the work of Marisa Johnson and Julia Ryberg we have been able to implement and develop that programme. Thanks also to JRCT and Marisa's vision and hard work EMES now has a very attractive and serviceable web site. I look forward to leaning back and watching it all grow.

It became clear to me a few years ago that it would not be a good experience for my successor as Clerk of EMES to be plunged into the World Conference of Friends in 2012 as his or her very first experience of the Section's work with FWCC. For this reason I decided to step down before the meeting of the FWCC Central Executive Committee this year. I do not know whether this was the only reason, I may also have felt my age creeping up on me. It has felt absolutely right for me

to have completed my service to EMES and handed over to Rachel Bewley-Bateman."

Rachel introduces herself: "I am very much looking forward to getting to know more European Friends and increasing contact with the world family of Friends. Ireland YM was delighted to welcome Friends from 41 countries to the FWCC Triennial held in Dublin in 2007. I was a member of the Local Arrangements Committee.

Since my childhood I have enjoyed meeting visiting Friends from around the world and learning from them. There is a history of Quaker commitment in my family. Both my parents have also served as Clerks of Ireland Yearly Meeting. I have two sisters: Winnie is Assistant Clerk of Dublin Monthly Meeting Elders and Heather is Clerk of Yearly Meeting's Committee.

I was Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting during the years when we were revising our book of Christian Experience and agreeing the text for our new book, Quaker Life and Practice. I received an MA in Biblical Studies from the National University of Ireland (NUI) in October 2010. The title of my thesis was "Led by the Spirit: Seventeenth Century Quaker Women - their Inspiration and Message."

In the past I attended the Geneva Summer School, worked in France and Switzerland for a year and lived in England for five years, including three years as Assistant Warden of the Friends International Centre, London. My background is in catering and hotel management. I have also studied in Woodbrooke and the Irish School of Ecumenics. My language is English, in the past I have spoken French, plus a little German and Irish. I have recently been learning Biblical Greek and Hebrew. Among other places, I have briefly visited Moscow, Minsk, Bucharest, Berlin, Greece, Norway, Denmark, USA, Canada, and plan to visit Jordan in March.

I am a member of the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations of Britain Yearly Meeting, secretary of the Dublin Council of Churches and represent my meeting in our local Inter-faith group, which will be holding a series of talks on the Lord's Prayer in our Meeting House during the weeks before Easter.

## On the joys and challenges of EMES

*This letter was written by **Jane Rose**, member of EMES Executive Committee from 2006 to 2010, for the Finnish Quaker newsletter, but parts of it may resonate with Friends in Europe as our representatives prepare to meet at Easter in Herzberg.*

I want to share with you something of the European dimension that we have bubbling away under the surface and offering us the potential of gentle nurture, whether we are aware of its presence or not.

Community starts with ourselves of course, and this is a discussion we are dialoguing more openly about at the moment, wondering what the shape and nature of our community of Friends is here in Finland, and what it could be if we dared to open ourselves more to each other and to the Leadings of the Spirit. Outside our own small widely spread circle there is another: that of Friends in Europe, officially Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation. In my experience EMES is, in a real sense, one gateway to our world-wide family.

I have lived in Finland close to quarter of a century, and during that time some of the most important experiences in my Quaker life have been through EMES. At a time when I felt very isolated spiritually the annual meeting of EMES representatives became my Quaker family for 6 years, offering me sustenance and a chance for growth. Our family attended a European Q family gathering in 2001 which was a nurturing and challenging experience: meeting with other families, children, parents and others without children, from all over Europe and having the opportunity for sharing and discussion. Being able to go as an EMES representative to the Triennial in New Hampshire USA is an experience which is deeply rooted inside me and still producing flowers. I am almost at the end of four years service on the executive committee of EMES which has been illuminating and challenging and has offered a way of perhaps offering something back to our section, while at the same time enabling me to be more active within our own group of Friends in Finland-in the sense of having the confidence to Listen and the confidence to Speak.

What I have written so far is from the perspective of personal development, but the other side of the coin is that any of us who are representatives to EMES are bridge people: what we receive should come back through us to our local meetings. Many times in recent years representatives (not only in Finland) have felt challenged and disturbed by this responsibility. The representative is only one person (or at the most two); so the main challenge is to find how to bring back what has been received in a way that can be accessed, shared and really disseminated into the heart of a local meeting so it too feels the fire and warmth and even pain of the Light. How can we make the bridge a vibrant and living path? We, as representatives, need to come back to Friends who actively want to receive our message, who are open to our interpretation of what we have experienced, and who have perhaps helped us in our preparation for going and are waiting for what will come back with us.

In Finland, as the years go by, we have in our group more than one person who has had the chance to be our representative to EMES annual meeting. We who have been there can perhaps help and support dissemination of the Light which may come back through our current representatives. We can help them to share their dialogue with us- whether in the form of a report or in more active way, such as planning the theme for our own Yearly Meeting Gatherings. We can also be aware how much others, outside Finland care for us: many executive secretaries have visited us over the years, and their legacy is indeed in the heart of many in Finland. We have also benefitted from having had visiting Friends from other YMs who are ready and willing, primarily to Listen, to Love and also to Share from their own journeys as well as accompany us on ours. All these connections have the potential to be enriching both on a personal as well as a community level. Neither must we forget that through dialogue we in Finland can share our experiences, joys, sorrows and seeking with a much wider Loving Community of Friends and our voice is welcomed.

## William Penn honoured in Saumur

**Edward Dommen** writes:

Saumur is a town of about 30'000 inhabitants on the River Loire in France. In the 17th century it housed a particularly distinguished Protestant academy (i.e. university), which was closed and demolished at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. It had drawn students from far and wide, William Penn among them from 1662 to 1664: that is where he did most of his undergraduate studies.

The Saumur authorities intend to name a square after its famous alumnus in May 2011. On Friday 20 May there will be an academic colloquium, open to the public, on the theme «What did William Penn learn at Saumur?», followed in the evening by a concert of music from Penn's time. On Saturday 21 May there will be public presentations and debates culminating in the naming ceremony.

The ideas Penn acquired at Saumur undoubtedly helped shape his later writings and activities, and as a result the political ideals of democracy on both sides of the Atlantic.



*William Penn Square, being renovated to receive its new name. It is enclosed between the Protestant church and the old city walls. Photo Edward Dommen*

Among the most distinguished teachers at the Academy was Moïse Amyraut (1596 - 1664). Penn not only studied under him, he probably also lodged in his house. Amyraut was a keen defender of religious tolerance, and well regarded in that respect by French catholic authorities of the time. Penn was already alert to the issue: one of the reasons for his expulsion from Oxford University, where he was studying before, was that he frequented John Owen, a professor dismissed for advocating tolerant humanism. Penn not only inscribed tolerance in the constitution of Pennsylvania, but he did so in a way which paved the way to the ideas of separating of Church and State. The idea of education for everyone, boys and girls alike, was rooted in the Reformation from the day - literally - of its adoption in Geneva; it is likely that Penn discovered it at Saumur, perhaps along with the importance of teaching professional skills to all. A single electoral role with an equal vote for all men is rooted in the Protestant ideals current at Saumur. One wonders how far Penn might have acquired at Saumur his view that the role of prison is to reform, not only to punish. And that list is only illustrative (as well as speculative).

In 1693 William Penn published *An essay towards the present and future peace of Europe, by the establishment of an European Diet, Parliament or Estates*. A French version was published shortly after (*Essai d'un projet pour rendre la paix de l'Europe solide et durable...*). The translation is probably Penn's own - his fluency in French undoubtedly being another fruit of his stay in Saumur.

Why not take the opportunity and join in the celebrations over the weekend 20-22 May? Saumur is a good base for visiting the châteaux de la Loire; indeed its own fairy-tale castle is one of the most picturesque of them. The region is famous for its wines; the Amyraut family still counts among its growers.

For more information, feel free to contact: Edward Dommen, +4122 774 1884 [e2dommen@worldcom.ch](mailto:e2dommen@worldcom.ch)

## Love in Action in Dzerzhinsk

**Daphne Sanders**, Clerk of Friends House Moscow, describes a visit to Foster Parent School in Dzerzhinsk which took place in October 2010:

The Foster Parent School is a new project which Friends House Moscow has been able to fund as a consequence of a grant from the Radley Trust. It is a path-finding project because fostering did not happen in Soviet times so its practice is at an early stage of development.

A group of five of us, connected with Friends House Moscow in different ways, travelled due east of Moscow, a 5-6 hour train ride, to Dzerzhinsk, to meet Nina Kamina, the project coordinator, and responsible for a succession of innovative projects funded by FHM over the years. I knew she was a retired head of the local police department dealing with youth crime and child protection, and I was much drawn by the notion that she had spent many years working in a system, and after retirement had found ways to make life better for the children caught up in that system: that seemed to represent an ideal of FHM's aspirations to support the development of civil society.

Dzerzhinsk was a closed city in the days of the Soviet Union, as chemical weapons were manufactured there. The consequence is severe environmental pollution and a life expectancy of approximately 48 years according to Wikipedia. None of this was visible to us, however: we saw a shabby, pleasant enough city with wide, birch-lined streets. We were told there was full employment, to the extent that there were migrant workers from Korea and Vietnam.



*Psychologist. Photo: Daphne Sanders*

Nina welcomed us with great warmth. She had planned a full day for us. First call was the Centre for Psychological, Medical and Social Support for Children and



*Foster parent and Nina Photo: Daphne Sanders*

Teenagers, a service within the Education Department, unique in the region, accommodated spaciouly by British standards in a typical Soviet era building. This service was relevant to FHM as Nina employed some of the staff on a sessional basis in her projects. Irena Lagunova the Director, and some of her colleagues told us about their work. They were established in 1993 on the initiative of psychologists and now have eight pedagogical psychologists and seven social teachers, who can eventually qualify as pedagogical psychologists. They work with children and their families, individually and in groups. Most children are referred by schools, but they accept self-referrals as well. The child population is 48000 and referral rates are very high. They also do preventive work with teenagers, on alcohol and gender attitudes. All staff are women because the salaries are regarded as too modest for men. We were impressed by the evident professionalism of the staff, and by their motivation to help children. They are fully aware of the challenges which face foster carers. Foster families could self-refer like other families but tend not to. They proudly showed us two rooms that had been newly fitted out with child-friendly décor and equipment.

The afternoon we spent at the дума (local council) with Svetlana Vershinina, Head of the Department of Fostering and Adoption. In fact the service does more than this as it also identifies children who may need care, registers them, and if needs be removes them from their families. They look after 2000 'orphans', although only about 220 are orphans in our sense of the word, and the rest have one or more parents. Approximately 645

children are in foster care, the rest in children's homes. They monitor 600 other families where the situation is 'not good'. Attempts are made to rehabilitate children with parents: in the past year 5 families have managed this. Staffing consists of eight child protection workers, all university graduates with additional training. Every 2 years they have to be recertified professionally. Svetlana spoke of them in similar terms to how I used to speak of social workers in the services for children I managed over the years. She said they had far too much work but they were completely dedicated and worked long hours to do their best for the children. They are all women because the salaries are modest. I did a quick calculation based on my experience and worked out that Svetlana would have had 80 social workers to do the same job in Britain.

Svetlana is a former head teacher, and she and Nina have known one another for many years, partly because they both served on the commission which is the body which authorises the removal of children from their parents. In Soviet times there was a Family Code, last amended in 2008, and still followed. Once again I had a sense of recognition with these two women: passionate about serving children, highly competent and authoritative, in the same way as many I have known working in the public sector over the years in Britain. I succumbed to envy that there they were in their 60's and still collaborating, utilising the fruits of years of shared experience in serving a community. In Britain by contrast our addiction to restructuring public services has meant that we have thrown away much of this social capital in our communities.

Our next encounter was with two foster mothers who had been part of Nina's last project My New Family. It



*Refurbished room Photo: Daphne Sanders*

had been evident that children fostered with relatives often presented with behaviour foster carers found hard to manage and relationships in the whole family were adversely affected, with the threat of additional family breakdown. The project invited carers and children to a series of groups which helped them have insight into their experiences and how to handle them; in the process they also provided emotional support. Tatiana and Nina Ivanovna told us their stories, expressing gratitude for the help they had received, and their particular warmth towards Nina Kamina who had phoned them up and invited them, overcoming their anxieties about doing something so unusual, namely mentioning their worries outside the family.

That evening the second meeting of the new group in the Foster Parent School took place and we met them briefly and had the chance to say a few words to them. We were pleased to note that couples were attending not simply mothers. This project is working with foster carers at the application stage, so preparing them in advance of a child being placed, and also giving them the opportunity to find out if fostering is really for them.

Once upon a time I used the term 'talking therapies' to Natasha and Sergei, who work at Friends House Moscow. They laughed and said did I mean sitting round the kitchen table with your friends as that was the only talking therapy in Russia. I think this helps to explain the enthusiasm we encountered in Dzerzhinsk: they are doing something new, something potent, something with a great force for good in children's lives. Talking to professional helpers about emotional problems is new, and feels risky. It only begins to happen where there is trust. Nina Kamina evidently inspires trust.



*Svetlana Photo: Daphne Sanders*

## Europe and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF)

**John Nicholls**, EMEYF Secretary *writes:*

I am pleased to be writing to you, Friends from across the Section and elsewhere, as the new EMEYF Secretary as of October 2010. I thank my predecessor Joe Casey for his hard work in handing the job over to me, which has helped me greatly during these first few months in the post. I'd like to tell you here a little about our Annual Meeting last November and share some thoughts on the upcoming joint Spring Gathering.

Shortly after I began, I had the task of making the final preparations for the EMEYF Annual Meeting. After the weekend was over, despite feeling rather exhausted, I was pleased to have been introduced to a new community of Friends and I look forward to working with them for the rest of my time as Secretary. Here are a few reflections on the weekend:

From 12th-14th November 2010, thirteen Young Friends gathered at Quäkerhaus in Bad Pyrmont, Germany for the EMEYF Annual Meeting. We were warmly welcomed by Leonie Glahn, whose hospitality provided a friendly spark for our time together. Our gathering included both experienced EMEYF members and new faces, and thus spanned the full age range that EMEYF caters for. We heard reports from our post holders and representatives and dealt with the difficult matter of our finances for the coming year. Our mealtimes offered space for shared fellowship, as did a walk in the surrounding area on the Saturday afternoon.

We left with a renewed sense of optimism ahead of the joint Spring Gathering in Switzerland in April. During both our worship and business we faced the challenge of our changing financial situation with discernment and leading, addressing the parts of our witness that is important and reaffirming our need for a strong worshipping community that serves all young Friends across EMES who need it. The sense of community



*At the Annual Meeting 2010*

and friendship that shaped our weekend helped us to move forward in a positive light, aware and unafraid of the challenges and difficult choices we might have to take. Since then, we have been pleased to hear that our grant application to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust has been successful. We are grateful for this contribution that will help secure EMEYF financially for the coming years.

Looking ahead to the Spring Gathering, our hope is that it will provide an excellent opportunity for young and older Friends to share experiences, ideas and perspectives to take forward as participants in the European Quaker community. Additionally, we encourage Young Friends to consider participating in our upcoming activities! Our next event after the Spring Gathering will be our Annual Meeting 2011 at Quaker House Brussels from 18th-20th November. I would be very happy to hear from you if you are looking for more information. Remember you can always contact the EMEYF Secretary on: [emeyf@qcea.org](mailto:emeyf@qcea.org)

I hope to hear from you, and looking forward to gathering with some of you soon in Herzberg!

## QCEA: Working for Peace in the Middle East

**Jean Zaru** calls Friends to Action – **QCEA** responds:

In October 2010, the Quaker Council for European Affairs – jointly with Quaker Peace and Social Witness – hosted a conference under the title: *Working for Peace in the Middle East: What can Quakers do?* Some 100 Friends from 11 countries came to Brussels to meet, to hear from each other and our speakers, to discuss issues and possible responses and to share what can be very strong emotional responses to the situation in Palestine and Israel.

‘Do not be pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian. Be pro-justice, for the occupation is destroying both Palestinians and Israelis’, Jean Zaru urged us. She also reminded us that silence can be part of keeping an unjust situation in place. Quoting Martin Luther King, she said: ‘More and more I feel that the people of ill-will have used time much more effectively than the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people’.

With those words ringing in our ears, and having heard on the first evening of the conference – first hand, from Christian Berger, the Representative of the European Union (West Bank, Gaza Strip, UNRWA) based in East Jerusalem, - about the work the European Union is doing in Palestine and Israel, and the work it is trying to do, and the constraints and frustrations it works under, conference participants then spent much of Saturday in a range of workshops on:

- Arms and security, and Israel’s involvement in EU security research
- Freedom of Movement and the Right to Enter
- Quaker activity in the region
- Settlement and supermarket products and Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions
- The Economic role of the EU in the region
- The experience of the Ecumenical Accompaniers
- The work and support of Israeli and Jewish NGOs

In addition, we offered two workshops based on a more active form of participation in the form of drama and music. On Saturday evening we enjoyed a concert by singer/song-writer David Ferrard ([http://davidferrard.com/fr\\_home.cfm](http://davidferrard.com/fr_home.cfm)) and a performance of some of the work done by the drama workshop – a welcome

opportunity to relax and engage with the theme in other ways.

The call to action was reaffirmed by both Jean and others on Sunday morning during a session of feedback from workshops, receiving a conference synthesis <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/Conference2010/docspack/QCEA-QPSW%202010%20Conference%20Synthesis.pdf> and a moving Meeting for Worship. We all left the conference reenergised and committed to redoubling our efforts.

QCEA has continued actively to work on a number of strands of our Palestine/Israel work programme <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/middle%20east/index.htm>; one of the new initiatives which came out of the conference for us is the establishment of an Action Alert Network. Friends can join our electronic alert list and will be sent – regularly and no more than once a month – an alert to take some targeted action. The action alerts so far have been:

- Support for a Written Declaration in the European Parliament relating to the labelling of Settlement Products
- A campaign to write to targeted and identified decision-makers about the use of Administrative Detention against young people and children under 18 years of age by the government of Israel
- A campaign to ask the EU High Representative to protest against the introduction into Israeli law of a bill that criminalises political engagement (the particular bill targets the boycott movement but could be a model for other restrictions of the democratic space).

Each Action Alert is focused on a specific issue, identifies the decision-makers most likely to be able to do something, and sets out a specific request for specific actions with a request for a response. Friends participating are asked to let QCEA know the responses they get so we can monitor this and follow up.

If you want to join the Action Alert list, please contact John Nicholls ([johnicholls@qcea.org](mailto:johnicholls@qcea.org)) and provide him with your name and e-mail address. Please specify whether you would like only Palestine/Israel related alerts or if you would also want to receive alerts on other areas of QCEA work.

## News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

The *Quaker in Europe* project is in its fourth year. It is an opportunity for groups of Friends and enquirers to interact for 10 weeks in an online introductory course about the Quaker way. Thanks to much work by Friends across Europe, the course has been translated into a number of languages, making it possible for participants to use their own language as they interact with each other and learn. It uses Moodle as a virtual learning environment. *Quaker in Europe* is a cooperative project between Woodbrooke and EMES (Europe and Middle East Section) of world family of Friends. The project is also dependent upon the Friends who have been equipped to serve as facilitators of the course.

It is time to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the project so far. We will be contacting translators, facilitators and participants to find out how the course might be improved, adapted and/or complemented by other e-learning resources.

At present the course is being run a third time in Czech and a fourth time in French. It has also run in Norwegian, Finnish, Russian, German, Dutch, Hungarian and English. Translations are underway in other languages: Georgian, Spanish, Esperanto and Danish.

If you are interested in learning more about the *Quaker in Europe* on-line course, please contact Julia Ryberg, European Project Coordinator by emailing [julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk)

**Woodbrooke welcomed Sandra Berry, new director, to post in December.** Sandra has moved to Birmingham from Colchester where she was an active member of Southern East Anglia Area Meeting. Over the last thirteen years Sandra served on a number of committees within the meeting, most recently as Clerk of Area Meeting Trustees. Now three months into the role, Sandra said that she was enjoying the opportunities and challenges that working for Woodbrooke had given her. She said she was looking forward to the exciting prospects for Woodbrooke in the coming years.

The **Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies** (CPQS) based at Woodbrooke and the University of Birmingham are pleased to welcome Betty Hagglund to the team as Project Development Officer. Betty will be working to make the extraordinary research work that has been done for degrees more widely known among Friends, the

wider academic world and other relevant groups. The Centre currently has 25 M.Phil/PhD students around the world working on different aspects of Quakerism past and present. For more information visit [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/CPQS](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/CPQS)

In addition to Betty Hagglund, **two new tutors have joined the Programmes Team.** Maud Grainger joined Woodbrooke in January as Tutor: Faith in Action. Maud previously worked for Birmingham Friends of the Earth, where she ran the Faith and Climate Change programme. Maud will work with Pam Lunn on Good Lives and take responsibility for our work on Testimony and Faith at Work in the World. Gill Stewart joined Woodbrooke in February as Tutor for Quaker roles, replacing Leonora Wilson who retired in January. Gill has a wide range of educational experience working with adults and young people and is currently undertaking Woodbrooke's Equipping for Ministry Programme.

Woodbrooke is going **on-the-road to Europe** this summer. Tim Peat Ashworth and Alex Wildwood will be visiting North West Germany in June to run *Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light*. Lizz Roe will be visiting Litomysl, Czech Republic in June to run *Let Your Life Speak*. Woodbrooke has also been approached by Friends in Switzerland and Germany to run further events later this year. To find out more about Woodbrooke visiting your meeting, contact Lizz Roe, the Senior Programme Leader who coordinates all the on-the-road activity by emailing [lizz.roe@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:lizz.roe@woodbrooke.org.uk)

Stay with Friends when you come to the UK. Did you know that you can visit Woodbrooke as a residential guest without attending a course? Bed & breakfast, half board and full board are offered. Use the Centre as a base for a visit to the Midlands, or as a tranquil space in which to take time out for a personal retreat. Woodbrooke is easily accessed by air, road and rail. Please visit our website for more information.

*Thinking of attending a course? Catchpool Fund bursaries are readily available if financial help is needed. Contact Julia Ryberg, European Project Co-ordinator, for information on the Catchpool Fund at [julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk) or +46 (0) 175-715 30. See [www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk) for general information and to request a course brochure.*

# Herzlich willkommen - welkom - bienvenue - welcome!

## Border Meeting For Friends from Europe

This years Quaker border meeting in the Benelux/Germany area will take place in Sittard, in the south of the Netherlands. We invite you to join us for the

**Border Meeting** For Friends from Europe

**16-18 September 2011**

Is everything divine? Spinoza and the Quakers

Speaker: Herman De Dijn, professor of philosophy, Leuven

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Dit jaar zal de Quaker grensbijeenkomst in de regio Benelux/Duitsland plaatsvinden in Sittard, Limburg (NL). We nodigen jullie uit voor de

**Grensbijeenkomst** voor Vrienden uit Europa

**16-18 september 2011**

Is alles goddelijk? Spinoza en de Quakers

Spreker: Herman De Dijn, professor in de wijsbegeerte, Leuven

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À Sittard (Pay-Bas), Nous vous invitons à la

**Réunion transfrontalière** des Amis de l'Europe

**16 - 18 septembre 2011**

Tout devin? Spinoza et les Amis

Orateur: Herman De Dijn, professeur du philosophie, Leeuven

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Das Grenztreffen in der Region Benelux/Deutschland findet dieses Jahr in Sittard statt (Süd-Niederlande).

Wir laden euch ein zum

**Quäker-Grenztreffen** für Freunde aus Europa

**16 - 18 September 2011**

Ist alle göttlich? Spinoza und die Quäker

Sprecher: Herman De Dijn, Professor der Philosophie, Leeuven

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Contact/Kontakt: Martin Touwen, [grensbijeenkomst@gmail.com](mailto:grensbijeenkomst@gmail.com) <http://grenztreffen.be/exp>

### **Quaker Youth Pilgrimage Leaders Wanted** **Mid July - Mid August 2012 In Europe**

The pilgrimage brings together 28 young Friends from America, Europe and the Middle East, to explore their spiritual lives and Quakerism, while travelling together for four weeks in community with a team of 4 leaders.

- Do you enjoy working and being with 16-18 year olds?
- Could you support these young people in exploring and sharing their spiritual journeys, learning and valuing our different Quaker roots and traditions, developing their leadership using your knowledge of Quakerism?
- Would you enjoy participating in building community together with them?
- Could you be the leader we are looking for or do you know someone who could be?

For detailed information and an application form (or if interested in being a pilgrim) please contact: Rachel Miller, 11 Garth Brow, Kendal, LA9 5NN, UK Tel: +44 (0)1539 737010 Email: [qyp.emes@gmail.com](mailto:qyp.emes@gmail.com)

## Diary Dates 2011

More dates for 2011 and beyond are available on the website: [www.fwccemes.org](http://www.fwccemes.org). Please send items for inclusion in the diary to Marisa Johnson at [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org).

### 27-27 March 2011: Denmark Yearly Meeting

**1-3 April 2011: Grentztreffen in Lindenberg Im Schwarzwald/Black Forest.** Thema: Die Bergpredigt als Licht; Brigitte Seger [seger.brigitte@sunrise.ch](mailto:seger.brigitte@sunrise.ch)

**1-7 April 2011: FWCC Asia West Pacific Triennial: Manila.** Information from Valerie.joy1@optusnet.net.au

**21-24 April 2011: EMES & EMEYF Joint gathering: Herzberg, near Aarau, Switzerland.** Information from [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org)

**28 April – 1 May 2011: Ireland Yearly Meeting.** King Hospital School, Dublin. Information from [office@quakers-in-ireland.ie](mailto:office@quakers-in-ireland.ie)

**13-15 May 2011 Netherlands Yearly Meeting, Woodbrookershuis, Barchem, The Netherlands.** Information from [secretariaat@dequakers.nl](mailto:secretariaat@dequakers.nl)

**19-22 May 2011: Commemorating William Penn in Saumur.** Information from Ed Dommen [e2dommen@worldcom.ch](mailto:e2dommen@worldcom.ch)

**2-5 June 2011: Central European Gathering on Litomyšl in Eastern Bohemia, Czech Republic.** Information from Pavel Marusinec [pavel.marusinec@email.cz](mailto:pavel.marusinec@email.cz)

**2-5 June 2011: Sweden Yearly Meeting at Svartbäcken.** Information from [kvakargarden@kvakare.se](mailto:kvakargarden@kvakare.se)

**10-13 June 2011: Switzerland Yearly Meeting.** Information from Rorie Nazareth [rorie\\_nazareth@bluewin.ch](mailto:rorie_nazareth@bluewin.ch)

**30 June – 3 July 2011: Norway Yearly Meeting.** Information from [kveker@kveker.org](mailto:kveker@kveker.org)

**14-18 July 2011: France Yearly Meeting, at Foix.** Information from [assembleedefrance@gmail.com](mailto:assembleedefrance@gmail.com)

**30 July – 6 August 2011: Britain Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering, Canterbury.** Information from Karl Gibbs [yng@quaker.org.uk](mailto:yng@quaker.org.uk)

**16-18 September 2011: Border Meeting for Friends from Europe.** Information from Martin Touwen [grensbijkomst@gmail.com](mailto:grensbijskomst@gmail.com) and see page 11.

**13-16 October 2011: German Yearly Meeting, Bad Pyrmont**

**11-13 November 2011: EMES Peace and Service Consultation, Kortenberg, Belgium**

Among Friends is the newsletter of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation. We want Among Friends to reflect the diversity of Quaker life and experience across the Section and welcome articles, photos and news of forthcoming events.

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**Deadline for Among Friends 121: 1 July 2011**