

**FWCC
FRIENDS
WORLD
COMMITTEE
FOR
CONSULTATION**



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FWCC/EMES Annual Report 2009

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Note: The formal annual report and accounts, prepared in accordance with UK charity requirements, are available as a separate document on request from the EMES office.

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What is FWCC?

The Friends World Committee for Consultation was established at the Second World Conference of Friends held at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in 1937. The concept of a world organization to express the sense of world fellowship of Friends arose as an important part of the evolution of the Religious Society of Friends in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This tentative development gained impetus from the 1920 Friends World Conference in London and the Young Friends Gathering in Jordans, England, held in the same year. No other organisation exists which links together Yearly Meetings around the world. Authority within the Religious Society of Friends lies at the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meeting/church level, leaving these groups potentially in isolation. Hence the vision arose of an organisation to keep Friends connected and in touch with each other across the diverse spectrum of the Society

FWCC was established to be a channel of communication among Friends, helping us to explore and nurture our identity as Quakers so that we can discover and be faithful to our true place in the world as a people of God. The current mission statement is: answering God's call to universal love. FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

Representatives appointed by affiliated yearly meetings and groups gather in plenary sessions every 3-5 years. Between plenary sessions, the Central Executive Committee which is broadly representative meets annually to continue FWCC's decision-making processes and to guide staff. The World Office in London is the centre of worldwide communications for Friends and supports the work of the Sections. It also represents Friends with outside international organisations such as the UN.

Europe and Middle East Section

The FWCC Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) was established in 1938 and now consists of 11 Yearly Meetings, several Monthly Meetings and other smaller national groups. Events such as the Annual Meeting, occasional International Family Gatherings, border meetings, seminars, peace and service consultations, the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (in cooperation with the Section of the Americas), and other activities, encourage mutual understanding, leading towards greater involvement of Friends. Two booklets, Meeting the Spirit and

Friendly Advice on Quaker Ways, have been produced and there is a quarterly newsletter, Among Friends. A small Executive Committee, assisted by the Executive Secretary, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. Among many other different interests, the Section also focuses on justice, peace and service issues.

Europe & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) are well-established, cooperating within the Section but remaining fully autonomous.

Some Quaker Addresses in Europe

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Report of the work of the Executive Committee for 2009

The Executive Committee will have held 3 meetings between Annual Meeting 2009 and Annual Meeting 2010, on 24th-27th September 2009, 28th-31st January 2010, and 1st April 2010.

The members who have served as Trustees of the Registered Charity FWCC-EMES in 2009 have been: *Marit Kromberg (Clerk)*, *Neithard Petry (Treasurer)*, *Janet Cameron (Ireland YM)*, *Anneke Spreij (EMEYF)*, *Fritz Renken (Switzerland YM)*, and *Jane Rose (Finland YM)*. *Marisa Johnson (Executive Secretary)*, and also a Trustee, has prepared and attended all meetings.

The Work Plan has been the platform for the work of EMES during 2010. The Executive Secretary's report describes the work in detail. The Executive Committee is particularly pleased about phase 1 of the Website project which was completed in time, at a lower than expected cost, and with a very satisfactory result. The Ministry and Outreach Programme Coordinator's report

supplements this administrative summary. The Executive Committee would like to thank the Executive Secretary and The Ministry and Outreach Coordinator for their faithful service to the work and development of FWCC-EMES. There has been no accident or adverse incident to report.

Policies and Procedures

A full risk assessment has been carried out, and our *Risk management* and *Reserves policies* have been updated. We hope to make the *Handbook of Policies and Procedures* available during phase 2 of the development of our Website. In addition to concluding these long term priorities, we have been working on the revision of FWCC-EMES Constitution as agreed at our AM 2009 (Minute AM 09/15). A draft revision was prepared for circulation to representatives and member Meetings and the comments received have been worked into a revised draft which is presented to this Annual Meeting. We thank the working group and Friend John Phillips for their work, and we thank those who submitted comments.

Section Finances

The financial results for 2009 are expected to be slightly better than budgeted, i.e. the deficit on the core will be less than the GBP 13,000 budgeted. At the end of the year, the balance sheet will show an equity position of £ 40-45,000, which is what we want to have and keep as a minimum reserve. The Accounts for 2009 with the report of the independent examiner will be available as a separate document and will contain the final year-end figures.

Concerning the Ministry and Outreach project the use of funds has so far been less than budgeted. Nonetheless a submission has been made to Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trustees for consideration at their first meeting in 2010, asking for funding to extend the Ministry and Outreach project.

We have agreed that the bequest from Canadian Friend Elizabeth Rossinger to the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage should be invested by Rathbones in low risk ethical funds

Global Change and Climate Matters

During the summer, the Executive Committee agreed by e-mail to endorse the climate statement produced by Britain Yearly Meeting.

Following a proposal from Kees Nieuwerth for setting up an EMES Global Change Group, member Meetings and Groups were invited to appoint

representatives to a Section wide interest group that will be supported with communication tools.

The Executive Secretary has put together the information needed as a baseline for monitoring the EMES environmental footprint, particularly in relation to travel, on an annual basis.

The Amari Play Centre

The Peace and Service Consultation in November 2009 discussed proposals for an outline of a governance structure for the Play Centre, and further work has been carried out in preparation for the Annual Meeting. The matter will be brought before the Annual Meeting in 2010.

Conclusion

In addition to the business described in the report above, we have been concerned that the Executive Committee should have an opportunity to know one another in the things which are eternal. We have considered the way we use our time during Meetings of the Executive Committee, in order that we can really feel the working of God amongst us.

*Marit Kromberg
Clerk*

Report from the Executive Secretary

From Gaza to Copenhagen – during 2009 Friends in Europe and Middle East Section of FWCC have been called to bear witness to our Quaker testimonies, and seek to speak truth to power. My work has focussed on helping connections to be made and information to be shared, always with the hope that Friends would feel upheld and strengthened by being part of a wider Quaker community. We have sought to forge this stronger communication through the use of contemporary tools – the new website, which went completely operational half way through the year, and the google groups of Representatives and of members of the Peace and Service Consultation. Though far from perfect, these tools have enabled a quicker flow of information, and a greater degree of interaction, and we have plans to develop them further to provide facilities for a “members only” section of the website, where more information can be shared and interaction take place.

The crisis in Gaza provided an opportunity to test our ability to share information quickly and frequently, and also to unite in praying for all victims

and upholding the work for peace and justice of Friends and others in the region.

Once again, **travelling among Friends** took up a substantial part of time, and EMES resources. This year, for the first time, we have attempted to account not only for the financial resources that have been expended, but also for the environmental impact of our activities. We have collected and analysed information about all EMES-related travel, and attempted to measure the carbon emissions incurred. This work, we hope, will give us a baseline from which to monitor future trends and developments. For 2009, we have recorded a total of 141 journeys (59 flights, 62 train journeys, 4 sea crossings and 16 car journeys), which totalled 99,629 km, using an estimated 23,718 Tonnes of CO₂. The 59 flights represented 96% of the consumption, and out of these just 4.5 visits (to Beirut, Tblisi twice by two people at the time, and Israel-Palestine) accounted for 46%. The shortest flights were London-Belfast and Oulu-Helsinki, at just over 500 km. Of the 62 train journeys, which covered 12,232 km, half were short trips from Cambridge to London. Of the remainder, the longest trip was Delft to Cambridge, measuring 573 km. 13 journeys undertaken by train were longer than 350 km. The total emissions attributable to train travel were 334.5 kg, or 1.4% of total emissions.

My first trip for the year was to Beirut in January to visit Brummana Monthly Meeting, where I enjoyed wonderful hospitality from Friends. I learned a great deal about the delicate and nuanced role of religion in the social and political life of Lebanon, and appreciated the particular history and heritage of local Quakers, as well as the pressures that they are under in a still far from stable country.

In March I travelled to Oregon for the Section of the Americas annual meeting and the **Central Executive Committee** meeting. I was introduced to Friends' Churches in the programmed tradition and witnessed the struggles and determination of Friends to reach out to each other in faith, and with integrity, seeking their common roots and shared work in the present, without denying the very real differences that have evolved over time in our different traditions.

Michael Eccles and Marjory Farquharson visited Georgia at the beginning of the year, whilst Bronwyn Harwood, my immediate predecessor, travelled on behalf of EMES to Moscow to visit Friends there. She also took part in the

Europe and Middle East Young Friends gathering in Damascus and visited Brummana Monthly Meeting.

Our Annual Meeting of representatives took place in Moyallon, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland. This was a time of reflection and fellowship, as well as good stewardship of our small organisation. The theme we chose to explore *Reflecting on the Inwards and Outwards Movements of the Spirit – Listening Spirituality* drew from the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38.

The first of the **Yearly Meetings** I attended in 2009 was Netherlands YM, in May, when I was accompanied by Valerie Joy, Secretary of the FWCC Asia West Pacific Section. In June I attended the Nordic Yearly Meeting in Kungälv, a wonderful opportunity to meet Friends from four Yearly Meetings – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. In July I joined Friends in Ireland for their residential Yearly Meeting in Dublin before going to Britain Yearly Meeting's first ever combined residential Yearly Meeting and Summer Gathering in York. In August it was the turn of France Yearly Meeting, and later in October, German Yearly Meeting.

Switzerland Yearly Meeting is the only one I am yet to visit, although in June I had the opportunity to visit Friends in Bern, when I was in the country for a **Church and Peace Conference**, and to look at the venue for our 2011 Annual Meeting.

The **International Planning Committee of the World Conference** held its first meeting in Woodbrooke in June, when the theme and initial arrangements were discerned. There was a real sense of excitement at these emerging leadings, and we all look forward to the work in the next couple of years which will culminate in the World Conference in Kenya in August 2012.

I was in Brussels in March and October for **QCEA** Council meetings, the latter of which was combined with celebrations for its 30th anniversary. It was lovely to learn more of the history of this now venerable European institution, and meet some of the people involved in setting it up. We also held a Meeting for Worship to give thanks for the life of Marianne Boelsma-Sudinger, a founder member.

The Peace and Service Consultation took place in Kortenberg, Belgium, in November, and took its theme from Micah 4:4 – “And everyone ‘neath their vine and fig tree shall leave in peace and unafraid”. In meditation, songs and

dance we explored the emerging themes of: fruitfulness, support, protection, steadfastness, faithfulness.

We followed with trepidation as the world seemed to gather in Copenhagen in December for the **Global Change Summit**. Perhaps expectations of what could realistically be achieved were always too high – there is a recognition that the journey is far from over, and that we need to seek together meaningful ways of bearing witness to our testimonies of peace, justice and simplicity. We have formed a Global Change Group within the Section, and hope that this will provide a focus for greater sharing of ideas and action, and a connection to the work led by World Office through their Cluster Consultations.

Four issues of **Among Friends** were published during the year, and they complement the more frequent news coverage we can now offer through the website.

We welcomed seven new **International Members** – two in Gran Canaria, one in Israel and four in Georgia.

The end of the year seemed to bring loss and sorrow to Friends in the Section – in quick succession we received the sad news of the death of our Friends Olga Dolgina in St. Petersburg , Birgit Rancken in Finland , Lore Horn in Berlin and Berit Collett in Norway. We give thanks for the grace of God as shown in their lives, and that, in sharing in the shock and pain of their families and f/Friends, we discover our own identity as a community.

*Marisa Johnson
Executive Secretary*

Ministry and Outreach Development

Since the last Annual Gathering, work has continued in the three areas of the programme: the on-line project in conjunction with Woodbrooke, the Visiting Friends programme and relationships with other Quaker organisations. The current funding ends in October 2010, and we have applied for further funding from JRCT.

The *Quaker in Europe on-line course* has been run in Hungarian and twice each in Finnish, French, Norwegian and Czech. During the spring of 2010 it is planned to run in Russian, Dutch and Danish. The course in English has

attracted Friends and enquirers from all over Europe and the Middle East, and beyond. Translations continue to be worked on into other languages. The facilitation training course has been run three times, and increasing numbers of Friends and enquirers are getting involved in the project either as facilitators or participants. An evaluation of the project so far is being undertaken in cooperation with Woodbrooke.

The **Visiting Friends programme** continues to be developed as we discern the needs of Friends and Meetings around the Section. It is proving to be a more complex development process than we had anticipated. Many Meetings, both established and new, recognise their needs for growth and development while also being aware of challenges of various kinds. There are different forms and contexts for travelling in the ministry as well as a variety of needs for nurture, healing and learning in the Meetings across the Section; there are Friends willing to serve and Friends who may not yet be aware of their special gifts. The choice of the theme of Eldership for the 2010 Annual Gathering; the idea of incorporating spiritual accompaniment into the programme; and plans for a Meeting for Learning in June at Svartbäcken, Sweden, about the facilitation of Quaker practices such as Worship Sharing and Meetings for Clearness, are examples of how the Ministry & Outreach programme is developing. Resources for Friends travelling in various contexts are available on-line. There are Advices & Queries for Friends who travel in various kinds of ministry, checklists for visitors and host Meetings, counsel about financial issues when travelling, as well as a document about Unity and Diversity among Friends in the Section. These are available on the Woodbrooke Moodle website: <http://moodle.woodbrooke.org.uk> under *Miscellaneous Courses* and then the *Visiting Friends Development* forum.

Marisa Johnson and I have both travelled as staff. An important journey for me was to Israel and Palestine in June, in conjunction with the QCEA Study Tour there. My first journey to that part of the world and insight into the deep-seated conflict there left me reeling with questions about prejudice, justice, advocacy, faith, responsibility—on both personal and corporate levels. It gave me some insight into the situation for Friends in Ramallah. It informed my address to Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering in July and a number of speaking and writing engagements. I am immensely thankful for this opportunity.

In conjunction with delivering a Woodbrooke-on-the-Road in Tbilisi, I valued re-connecting with the Meeting two years after it became a recognised Meeting

and to conduct interviews for International Membership. We have also encouraged and made possible travels of others on behalf of EMES to Moscow, Tbilisi, and to the Central European Gathering. Travels in 2010 will include visiting new groups, worshipping in the Quaker way, in Vilnius and perhaps in Linz.

Julia Ryberg
Ministry and Outreach Co-ordinator

Amari Play Centre, Ramallah

One Supervisor, one main teacher and two assistant teachers are running the Play Centre five days a week from Sunday – Thursday from 7:30 – 13:30.

In addition to the curriculum books used to teach 5-year old children, storytelling and arts activities form a quite a big part of the daily schedule. There are concepts that are taught through songs and drawings, coloring and painting.

Books, stationery are provided free of charge for the children of the Play Centre, in addition to milk three times a week and sandwiches twice a week. For special occasions like Eid El Fit, Eid Al Adha and Christmas, children receive small presents in celebration.

Parents' meetings are held at the beginning of each session and when there are special topics to be discussed. Through the United Nations Relief and Work Agency's social work department, we run special sessions for mothers to address certain issues, like child behaviour at school and at home. A specialized social worker work meets twice a month with the mothers to discuss their concerns with regard to their children's behaviour and performance.

Our teachers received training with the "Right to Play" organization. The aim of the training is to teach the teachers the skills of teaching through play using different objects, from household material, eating material and many other objects in the surroundings. A kit of tools is also provided for the Play Centre which the teachers can use as a teaching resource. Staff training is on top of the agenda of the Play Centre and we are looking for any available resources to enable the teachers to take part in such training.

We are in the process of designing a brochure with help from Friends working at the Friends School. The brochure will be finished in January 2010.

In spring, picnics are treats for the children, with outings to places near and around Ramallah to spend a day in the fields playing, eating together. Sometimes a few mothers are invited to join in and help the teachers with the kids.

Most of our purchases like cleaning material, stationery, bread and some food are bought from shops in the Refugee Camp which is appreciated as a gesture of support on our part.

We maintain close relations and coordination with UNRWA's (United National Relief and Work Agency) school for Girls in the Refugee Camp, in terms of public holidays and summer holidays. We also cooperate with the Camp Director on information and procedures for the children and their parents. We also have good relations with the neighbours of the Play Centre. The community is very helpful and appreciates the service the Play Centre is providing for their children. The Amari Play Centre is one of 2 centres in the Amari Refugee Camp that provides early childhood Education and there is a big demand on our Centre because we provide the best education for free.

Parents are always welcome in the centre and they come to check on their children and sometimes participate in the sessions.

The Play Centre operates from 1 September – 31 May, a total of nine months a year. In celebration of Christians and Muslim feast days the Centre is closed for the days set by the National Authority and in line with the Camp and schools holidays.

Donations and support are always welcome to ensure the ongoing service that we provide to the refugee community in the Amari Refugee Camp.

*Muna Khleifi
Supervisor*

Church and Peace

The AGM of Church and Peace was held at the Mennonite Theological Seminary at Bienenberg in Switzerland from 11th to 14th June 2009.

Beginning 1949 Robert M. Ziegler, the then director of the Brethren Voluntary Service and a member of the joint committee of the (North American) Peace Churches called a meeting at Geneva. Its aim was to *'form a committee in*

Europe with representatives of Mennonites and Quakers with the purpose of developing a community of peace churches'. At the same time the meeting was a response to the invitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to participate in the post-war dialogue on the theology of war and peace. After this first meeting the movement that later became known as C&P gradually developed, beginning with British Quakers and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) becoming members.

At this meeting Church and Peace therefore celebrated its 60 th anniversary, the theme was: *"Guide our feet into the way of peace: 60 years peace witness and ecumenical dialogue"*.

And ecumenical it is C&P! Amongst its members are both Catholic and Protestant communities, Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans, Orthodox, Mennonites, Brethren, Quakers as well as IFOR- and Eirene-branches in several countries. The membership list also includes the Seminary at Bienenberg itself. As well as FWCC-EMES some 'larger' continental Yearly Meetings e.g. German YM and Switzerland YM are also members in their own right.

C&P works through a number of regional groups: the French-speaking region (including France and part of Switzerland), Britain and Ireland (including the London Mennonite Centre and the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship) the Dutch-speaking region (including Netherlands and part of Belgium), the German-speaking region (including Germany, Austria and part of Switzerland) and the South-East Europe region. It is the latter region that is prominently present at the AGM: many young people engaging in peace education and reconciliation projects in the Balkan states until recently troubled by civil wars. Very impressive and encouraging for the rest of us! They also organised two large interreligious peace conferences recently and a third one is planned for 2010. They expressed their hope that their theme: *"Renouncing violence: the path of co-existence"* *'will be heard in every corner of the region'....*

At this meeting C&P also discussed in-depth the position taken by the WCC on the so-called Resolution to Protect (R2P) by the UN. This would condone the use of deadly violence whilst protecting people threatened by civil war and ethnic violence within (failing) nation states.

C&P does not agree with this position. Members felt we should challenge the WCC on it. This resulted in a statement drawn up at this year's AGM to –as Friends say- 'lovingly disagree' with the WCC and '*invite all churches to resist together with us the temptation of justifying the use of deadly weapons even as a last resort*'!

In addition to this in the course of the past year C&P decided to respond to the document entitled 'Initial Statement on Just Peace' published by the WCC recently and set up a working group to develop their response, a group on which I also served.

From this response to the WCC let me quote just one sentence:

“As Peace Churches, we believe the Church's calling to follow Jesus and his teachings on non-violence found in the Sermon on the Mount is the very core of the Gospel and must be included in our thinking about and practicing just peace. A vision of God's peace in Christ should not only lead us to reflect on the nature of the Church as a mirror of the Trinity, but must also motivate us to act in the world.”

Towards the end of this response examples are given of such peace work undertaken by the C& P network. Both the above mentioned statements have been summarized on the EMES website and are available upon request from our Executive Secretary.

*Kees Nieuwerth
Emes Representative to Church and Peace*

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

The committee this year has consisted of Caroline Evens, Jenny Foot, Carolyn McMullen, Rachel Miller, Kristin Skarsholt and Fran Woolgrove. The committee has held two weekend meetings this year. At our October meeting we welcomed Liz Eddington, Janet Entwistle and Jasmine Perinpanayagam on to the committee, while we said a fond goodbye to Caroline (treasurer), Carolyn, Kristin and Fran (clerk). As a result, we have handed over the roles of treasurer and clerk.

This has been a quieter year for the committee with no pilgrimage taking place.

We discussed how we could best use our portion of the Elizabeth Rossinger legacy. We have decided to use a proportion of it each year as bursary help for pilgrims who otherwise would be unable to participate in the pilgrimage, with a view in future to look into participation from young people from the Middle East, especially students from Ramallah. We also saw a use for it in helping us to provide better training and preparation for our leaders in advance of the Pilgrimage. Elizabeth Rossinger was particularly interested in young people and peace, and we see participating in a pilgrimage as preparation for contributing to a more peaceful world.

At our February meeting we formulated questions to ask ourselves regarding our vision for QYP and its challenges; how we plan; how we can work successfully with another committee, both physically an ocean away and presenting a different culture. We then held a worship-sharing session during which we prayerfully addressed these questions. We found this exercise deeply moving, and left our meeting with greater clarity, and renewed hope and enthusiasm for our task. The results of this exercise were shared with the Section of Americas (SoAs) committee. We are now experiencing a much better degree of communication between ourselves and the SoAs committee. We have begun to think about ways to move our work forwards, such as the production of a leadership team manual.

Half way through the year preparations began in earnest for the next pilgrimage in July - August 2010. It will take place in the Pacific Northwest of the USA. We sent out application packs for both pilgrims and leaders from EMES. By the end of the year we were very pleased to have received five applications from potential leaders and we expect pilgrim applications to be oversubscribed.

The QYP Committee

Reports from Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Groups

Austria Quarterly Meeting

There is little to report from Austria this year; we rejoiced with our clerk, Crispa Aeschbach Jachmann, and her husband in welcoming their baby, Aurelia Cristina, into our meeting.

The Vienna group is still looking for premises in which to hold Meeting on a more permanent basis. At the moment we are meeting twice monthly in a room

in Don Bosco Haus at some distance from the city centre, but we will not be able to use this room indefinitely.

In Linz we have begun meeting on a regular basis with two friends of Friends who, inspired by reading George Fox's journal, sought out the Quakers.

The one important event of our year was the Central European Gathering in the spring, also held at the Don Bosco Haus, where Friends from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Britain, Germany and Austria joined together for a few days of reflection and fellowship. Our main theme was The Needs of Small Groups. It was also very interesting to have a pastor from the Evangelical Quaker Church in Hungary speak to us. The main impression this meeting left with me however was the wonderful energy and vitality of the young groups in Prague and Budapest. Really an inspiration!

Our other quarterly meetings were in Leonding in May, and jointly with the Bavarian group in Pfarrkirchen. In view of the 350th anniversary of the Peace Testimony next year we discussed what this testimony means for each of us.

*Irene Schuster
Representative*

Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting

Although there had at various times been small Quaker worship groups in Belgium (notably Brussels and Lessines), a permanent meeting was only born when expatriate Friends got together in the mid 1970s, in the capital. Contact was made with isolated Belgian Friends, until then under the auspices of France or Netherlands Yearly Meetings, and a monthly meeting established. It was granted special status directly under FWCC Europe & Middle East Section, rather than being tied to any adjoining Yearly Meeting.

The growth of a concern about European affairs among Friends in Belgium and elsewhere led to the creation of the Quaker Council for European Affairs and, in early 1979, the opening of Quaker House. The secretariat of FWCC Europe & Middle East Section transferred to Brussels for a number of years. Apart from being home to the QCEA secretariat, Quaker House hosts meeting for worship in Brussels, a small Quaker library and meeting rooms. There is some simple overnight accommodation space for Friends and attenders visiting Brussels (who should apply in advance to QCEA).

There are over ten nationalities within the Meeting, and spoken ministry can be in English, French, Dutch or German. The location of European Union institutions and other international organizations in the city has ensured a regular turn-over of members and attenders of many nationalities.

The meeting enjoys good working relationships with Belgian organizations and religious groups active in areas of traditional Quaker concern.

It participates in an annual “Border” meeting that brings together Friends from Belgium, France, Germany and The Netherlands.

*Paul Holdsworth
Clerk*

Britain Yearly Meeting

We held our first ever combined Yearly Meeting, Junior Yearly Meeting and Summer Gathering in York in July. This experimental “Yearly Meeting Gathering” took the theme “Creating Community, Creating Connections” and was a week-long event where Yearly Meeting business was interwoven with many other activities.

There were about 1,500 of us on the campus of York University, including 110 15-18 year olds at Junior Yearly Meeting and 165 under-15s. We participated in a wonderful variety of groups, sessions, and creative activities. Vivid images of connections and community will remain with us. Sometimes informal connections, outside of sessions, were as important as the formal arrangements, such as in “home groups”. All-age opportunities were particularly appreciated. The breadth and value of projects undertaken by Friends has been evident. This has all been a cause for celebration.

It is unlikely that anyone present will ever forget the sense of being led, through a series of talks, threshing, opportunities for discussion and a final business session, to affirm the equality of same sex marriages and we are now working towards the introduction of an interim process for a revised Quaker marriage procedure.

Our Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations has published a response document “We are but witnesses”, which has proved an excellent resource for its intended audience of other churches and faiths, but also with

our own members and meetings. Visit <http://www.quaker.org.uk/we-are-but-witnesses> to access the document.

The voices of our Friends who have been working tirelessly towards informing us about climate change were heard by all of us as we prepared for the Copenhagen summit in December.

An example of those voices is our statement on climate change, prepared by Quaker Peace and Social Witness Human Security and Environment Group and supported by responses from 179 meetings on the actions they were taking or planning to reduce carbon emissions (read a summary at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/quakers-and-sustainability-snapshot-friends-activities>). This statement of commitment was endorsed by Britain Yearly Meeting and supported by other Yearly Meetings. We continue to work on this concern.

Many Heavens, One Earth, a public multi-faith event, took place in November at Friends House (the home of centrally-managed Quaker work in Britain). Run in conjunction with the United Nations, it celebrated the commitment of faith communities to care for the environment and gave an opportunity to question leading speakers about climate change, interspersed with an imaginative mixture of music, dance and dramatic readings, drawing on Hindu, Sufi and Christian traditions.

Young Friends have been actively campaigning about climate change including organising the Quaker presence at a national demonstration before the Copenhagen summit.

This was the first year of implementing our 'Framework for Action 2009-2014', which identifies seven priorities for our work, all based on our testimonies, and taking into account what we can hope to achieve with our current resources.

Unfortunately, the global financial recession of 2008-9 has impacted on Friends work and has been relevant in planning the budgets for future years. For any of you who might visit London, you will find a new welcoming "Quaker Centre" in Friends House. When people walk into the new space, there is an immediate sense that Quakers offer something different. In contrast to the city noise outside, visitors find clean white space, enhanced with the

shapes, colours and textures of nature where friendly staff and volunteers will engage with them and inform them about the Quaker way.

For more information about our Yearly Meeting visit www.quaker.org.uk and follow the links which interest you most, or to get in touch with any of the Britain Yearly Meeting representatives for more information.

*Jez Smith and Mary Waldmeyer
Representatives*

Czech Republic, Prague Worship Group

2009 feels like a year where we consolidated our existence as Prague Worship Group. In terms of our spiritual growth what stands out to me is that we have become a small community of people who know each other better and better, respect each other with all our differences and have found a common purpose in establishing a growing Quaker presence in the Czech Republic.

We had a good start into 2009 with our online course through Woodbrooke. We got in touch with several new people through that some of whom have become regular attenders. A big thank you to Pavel Marusinec who translated, organized and led the course. We have been inspired and blessed by several people covering large distances in the Czech Republic to attend our meetings twice a month in Prague. Especially Pavel's family, now with three children since little Vaclav was born last January, regularly make the three hour train trip to Prague. Pre-worship singing has become an integral part that all and especially the children enjoy. Pavel always carries his big accordion and discovers new songs for us all and Jonas (11) often joins in on the fiddle. We acquired a number of English Quaker song books, have translated the George Fox song into Czech and started building a Czech song repertoire – in short, music makes for good fellowship.

We continued regular quarterly business meetings and have made good progress in adhering to Quaker business method. We found that it helped us in finding discipline and keeping things moving forward and organized. We have become a meeting that is Czech speaking and communicating while English translations always are made for meeting invitations, business meeting minutes, and of course when we have non-Czech speaking visitors.

We have started to build our finances with several members and attenders contributing a small amount to the meeting finances on a regular basis by wire

transfer. So we have created a spending budget for the first time, including a travel bursary.

Our relationship with the Nova Trojka Family Child Day Care Centre continues to thrive as we prepay our rent and then just sent emails to let them know the balance of their “Quaker account”. The centre is almost always unused on Sunday mornings when we meet and is a welcome small income to them while providing us with a perfect child-friendly setting with kitchen and simple meeting room (small gym). We are very grateful that we do not have to pay a fixed fee but a fee based on how many parties/families are there. So when our attendance is low, so are our associated expenses.

Since we started keeping records in April 2009, we have had an average attendance of 13 people at our meetings with the children sometimes outnumbering the adults. So in the autumn we decided to offer a regular first day school program always at the first of the two monthly meetings.

We spent quite some time last spring after shared lunches with an adult education program reading and discussing the chapters and queries of the small booklet “Truth & Integrity”. We also had two events where we invited speakers to worship with us and then tell us about their projects and organizations after lunch. In May we had 27 people in attendance when Martina Landergott talked about “Ne zakladnam” – the peace alliance opposing the US radar plans in the Czech Republic and then again in October we had a guest speaker when Marcus Pape shared his involvement as citizen advocate for the discriminated against Roma minority here.

A highlight was our retreat weekend in September attended by 18 F(f)riends and held at an old renovated mill in Southern Bohemia. It was there at the business meeting that we decided to apply for recognized worship group status. The year was concluded with a cosy December advent get-together with cookies and wine and lots of carol singing.

Please spread the word to F(f)riends who like to travel that Prague now offers in addition to all its glamour and tourist attractions also twice a month silent worship in the manner of Friends followed by a jolly good potluck lunch.

If you are interested in joining us while visiting Prague, please look up our meeting dates at www.kvakeri.cz .

Arne Springorum
Clerk

Denmark Yearly Meeting

The first English Quaker visiting Denmark was the twenty year old John Hall who in 1657 met King Frederik III but was later put in prison. In 1875 a group of six Danes applied for membership of the Society of Friends and the first Danish Yearly Meeting was held in 1879. However, historically the total number of adult members has never exceeded 60-70 people.

The present number of registered Danish Quakers is just over 30, of whom almost half are over 70 years of age, and fewer than half of those listed as members are active participants. However 40-50 friends of Friends are regularly informed of our activities through a newsletter (8 issues in 2009). In Copenhagen a meeting for worship is held every Sunday.

In 2009 two retreats were arranged in other parts of the country to allow isolated Friends to meet with those from the Copenhagen Area. We always send representatives to the Norwegian and Swedish Yearly Meetings and we enjoyed meeting with more Friends at the Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2009 in Gothenburg.

*Mogens Clause
Clerk*

Estonia

This year, Meeting for Worship in Tallinn has been held only very irregularly, on an ad hoc basis, due to disparate schedules, fatigue and other commitments. Our Meeting now functions more like a gathering of like-minded individuals, rather than a religious society, but worthwhile, none-the-less. We have held 6 Meetings for Worship this year when visitors have been in town from other parts of Estonia, Finland, the U.S.A. and Germany. There are currently 5 regular attenders from Tallinn: 2 Estonian, 1 Finnish, 1 English and 1 American.

We are all very active in our own ways. In addition to giving support to Finnish Friends and Sillamäe Children's Center in the east of Estonia, some of us are involved with the Lighthouse Children's Drop-in Center for street children in Tallinn and give weekly English lessons to inmates on remand in Tallinn Prison. Also Steve and Myra have been giving presentations, contacting politicians, etc. about their experiences this summer in Palestine/Israel and have one or two more presentations planned with the help

of Finnish Friends for early next year to be held in Finland. We also have a kind of 'twinned' relationship with Keswick Meeting in England, through the kindness of the parents of Sarah Bewley, who has been reposted from Tallinn to Kiev.

Anna-Leena Vierumäki

Finland Yearly Meeting_

2009 has been another year of adventures for Finnish Friends trying to grow in the spirit both individually and as a community. As we read in the epistle from France Yearly Meeting, we have experienced that to grow in the light, we also must go through the darkness.

Throughout Finland we continue to have four active worshipping groups: in Helsinki, northern Finland, Tampere and Turku. For First Day Meeting in Helsinki, we were fortunate to be able to use a larger and more street accessible venue. As hoped, visitors have come based on walking by and 'seeing' that it is the meeting place for Quakers in Helsinki. This year Friends also sustained a fortnightly, mid-week Meeting for Worship in Helsinki. Northern Friends meet by arrangement as often as they can and usually in private homes. Tampere Friends meet twice per month, and Turku/Åbo Friends meet weekly.

Our Meetings for Worship for Business again this year have been held in Helsinki, Tampere and Turku, to optimise the opportunity for all to attend. Our newsletter continued to be most ably produced and published bi-monthly in 3 languages, and distributed by email, post, and in large print version. This is all possible thanks to the contributors, a cooperative collective of translators among us, and the layout skills of the editor. The newsletter helps connect many isolated Friends and those who for various reasons are unable to attend meetings.

Discussion on the public and unstructured online discussion list has been active at various times during the year. The more formal, online Quakerism course has been facilitated twice this year in Finnish. The course is very valuable especially for isolated Friends and newcomers, who have no possibility to attend a worship group and discuss Quakerism with other people face to face. It has been challenging to facilitate the course on-line and meet the different expectations and needs that people have for that kind of course. Three non-Finns participated in the course trying to express themselves in Finnish, and

were supported in their efforts. This was a change from the Finns having to try to express any spiritual thoughts in English when there are non-Finns around. Other highlights for those of us who could participate have been two visits to Tallinn to connect with Friends there, and the triennial Nordic Summer Gathering. One of us attended the Young Friends Gathering in Damascus and has shared many inspiring stories, reflections and photos. Two of us attended short courses at Woodbrooke with great satisfaction. We are pleased that one of our members intends to take Equipping for Ministry studies, and we hope we can support her.

We are aiming to develop better web pages and to make the list of our precious library holdings available there. The library, currently housed in our apartment contains many valuable Quaker and other books related to spirituality in Finnish, Swedish and English.

We have come to an arrangement with a long term friend of our meeting to rent the apartment in Helsinki which will help defray the increasing costs of owning it. This means the apartment is not available for travellers as before. We are considering our options regarding the ongoing costs of maintaining the apartment.

This year Friends in Finland have visited meetings abroad and received visits by various Friends from abroad, including hosting Rachel Brett from QUNO. The year ended on a very sad note with news of the death of Birgit Rancken from a road accident. Birgit was a member of Sweden yearly meeting, resident in Finland, and long time Friend whom many of us have known and loved.

*Anne Herbert
Representative*

France Yearly Meeting

Publications: As British Friends who have just re-organised their structures will understand, we too are in the process of revising our book of "Pratiques et Usages" in order to bring them into line with French legislation. This is especially time consuming as we are so graphically scattered. This year we have published a French edition of "Advices and Queries", and a re-print of Henri van Etten's Chronicle of Quakers in France until 1947" will shortly be available. Freddy Moulongo, a Kinshasa political refugee in Paris, has

published "10 Questions" and our Treasurer/poet, Jean-Francois Cocteau, a third book of poems, "Emois".

Yearly Meetings: The financial crisis meant that fewer Friends were able to come to YM in August 2009, but we were moved by the Plain Quakers' play on John Woolman. We hope for more people at Strasbourg (16-20 July 2010) to consider the Challenge of Discernment: joys and difficulties, guided by Harvey Gilman.

Groups: Paris and Congenies hold Meeting for Worship once a week, and about 9 other groups once a month. Please see our quarterly newsletter, La Lettre des Amis, or the 2 web sites <http://quaker.chez-alice.fr> and www.maison-quaker-congenies.org which help us to communicate with each other, as does our visitor, Judith Roads. The Toulouse group has become a Monthly Meeting and plans to continue its annual family weekend. Our QCEA representative belongs to this group and travelled to Israel and Palestine with them in June to meet a wide variety of opinion from both sides. It was a journey which has much widened QCEA's remit as it seeks to influence the relationships between Europe and the Middle East. QCEA will need the help of all the YMs in the section as a whole to try and put this into practice.

The small Congenies group has managed to send some funds to plant olive trees in Palestine and to an Israeli Human Rights group. We also plan to start a monthly 'Circle of Silence' to support detainees in local detention centres. (460 of these interfaith circles already exist in French towns and villages). Last October, a colloquy on Quakers and French Protestants attracted a keen public.

The Centre Quaker International in Paris needs to undertake extensive Health and Safety works to comply with regulations for which they need funding. In Burgundy, a new group is just beginning.

France YM is quietly flourishing despite illnesses and deaths - perhaps all part of the tapestry of life.

Libby Perkins
Representative

Georgia Worship Group

Greetings from Georgian Friends Worship Group.

Georgian Friends Worship Group hold unprogrammed, silent Meetings for Worship. The number of Friends is slowly increasing. Four Friends of Friends applied for membership this year.

Representatives of the Georgian Friends Worship Group attended Ireland Yearly Meeting, FWCC/EMES annual Gathering in Moyallon and study course at Woodbrooke. Two young Friends attended EMEYF gathering in Damascus.

Friends House Georgia continued relief work for refugees in 2009, and plan to have a long term projects in 2010. Friends around the world have supported this work generously. Friends in Georgia also have plans to develop an Alternative to Violence Programme for Georgia. They have invited Friends from New York Yearly Meeting to visit and carry out some AVP training in 2010.

Georgian Friends Worship Group had been visited by Friends from UK, USA and Sweden. Friends in Georgia have had Woodbrooke on the Road course in the autumn of 2009. That was a great experience for Georgian Friends.

Georgian Friends would like to express gratitude to all the Friends for the support, help and the prayers for them and for Georgia.

Georgian Friends Worship Group

German Yearly Meeting

After such a year, where do we start? Our regional meetings, interest groups & the Yearly Meeting have continued to concentrate on our testimonies interconnecting so many aspects of Quaker life. Considerable thought and action has been given to our Peace Testimony and its 350 Year anniversary in 2010. A compendium (titled “Lasst Euer Leben sprechen” – Let your lives speak) of German YM Friends’ contemporary peace activities since 1945 has been published.

With a whirlwind of enthusiasm Kerstin Mangels has begun the job of developing and coordinating programmes so that “Youthful Friends” of all ages in our religious society are able to grow and learn together. This has

already included different types of all age inclusive (active) Meetings for Worship both at the regional and yearly meeting level. Where possible it is hoped that our younger friends will also be able to travel with “more experienced” friends as co-representatives of GYM to other Yearly Meetings- being accepted by the inviting yearly Meeting being one prerequisite.

Our “Quäkerhaus” in Bad Pyrmont held an open day in June, which was deemed a success and will commence a tradition to be repeated in 2010.

The family gathering in Hirschluch was attended by approximately 70 people, where amongst other things a virtual trip was made with the early Quakers from Germany / UK aboard the ship “Welcome to the new world”. They also learnt about the early land treaties that were signed with the various First Nations already living there, and how Philadelphia was founded on Quaker principles.

The main theme of the 79th Annual German Yearly Meeting in October was “Interfaith: The search for unity in diversity”. The Annual Richard Cary Lecture was read by Eberhard Küttner, who told us of his lifelong search for truth and how he is finding it in the realm of interfaith. Remarkably we were able to conduct our business “with a little help from our friends” because one of our clerks had resigned to move back to the USA and the other had to take care of a close relative who had unexpectedly fallen seriously ill.

The Yearly Meeting was moved to urge the newly elected German Members of Parliament to abolish “compulsory” military service (a promise of the Free Democrats, now part of the governing coalition) and further to disband military service in favour of civilian conflict resolution.

The yearly meeting has had to start making some difficult decisions regarding its activities and their funding due to the foreseeable developments from 2010.

*Christopher Hatton, and Björn Rohde-Liebenau
Representatives*

Hungary, Budapest Worship Group

I am happy to say that we in the Budapest Recognised Meeting are becoming a loving and vibrant community. Our regular events are:

- Border Meeting with Austrian and Slovak Friends in winter. In January 2009 it was held in the Slovakian countryside, and the theme was Compassion.
- Worshipping with Serbian Friends and Friends in Novi Sad, Serbia twice a year, in March and October.
- An annual Central European Regional Meeting at Pentecost. In 2009 it was held in Vienna, where we focussed on the needs of small groups. By way of bridge-building we welcomed Evangelical Friends from Tolna, Hungary to the gathering.
- The 14th Regional Meeting will be held in Révfülöp, Hungary on 21-24 May 2010 and preparations are underway. The theme will be Interfaith.

We are blessed with regular visitors: Cosima de Nicolas Kamata from France, Cathy Butler from the U.K, Major Thomas from the U.S. This year saw the visit of Richard and Sylvette Thomson.

Judit Borzsák and Zsuzsa Eastland were facilitating the Hungarian language on-line Quaker course (though in two instalments). There are positive results (community development with integration of new members and a home-ridden mother, discovering the depths of the Quaker way).

Our Gipsy project is on-going (street repair in Sajókaza has been followed up by giving support to the staging of a Gipsy play in Budapest).

Visits to Woodbrooke and German Yearly Meeting by Éva Katona and Zsuzsa Eastland respectively have brought new ideas and inspirations for the group. Berne Weiss represents us at the EMES Easter Gathering and has just taken part in the work of the international Nominations Committee.

We have started putting Quaker structures (regular Meetings for Worship, Business Meetings/Meetings for Learning) in place.

It is good to be part of a living network of Friends worldwide.

*Zsuzsa Eastland
Clerk*

Ireland Yearly Meeting

Ireland Yearly Meeting welcomed European Friends to the EMES annual gathering at Easter time. The gathering was based at our Moyallon Centre and local Friends were able to join visiting Friends in Worship.

This year Ireland Yearly Meeting was held during the summer from 22-26th July 2009 rather than at our usual Easter time. We had a residential Yearly Meeting at the Kings Hospital School, which is where the FWCC Triennial was held in 2007. The theme of our Yearly Meeting was from Galatians 5, vv22 & 23: “ The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control”. Our morning worship each day began with a meditation on one or two of these ‘fruits’, and it was inspiring to see how frequently throughout the Meeting the words of Friends on various topics related back to the guiding Theme.

The public lecture was given by John Dunston, Headmaster of Leighton Park, the Quaker School in Reading, England. The title was ‘The Stranger who lives within thy gates’ and the speaker drew on particular insights from his Jewish background as well as his understanding of the practical application of the Quaker Testimonies.

Each year we welcome Friends from outside Ireland and this year we were joined by Friends from Kenya and Georgia, who each told us of life and work as Quakers in their home country. We also welcomed Friends from Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Quaker International agencies.

Much of the work being undertaken by Irish Friends at the present times shows the palpable inspiration of one or more Quaker Testimonies, in particular the overseas work of Irish Quaker Faith in Action, the Peace Committee, the aims and ideals of the newly-formed EcoQuaker Ireland Committee, and the beautiful handworked quilt which is but one outcome of the continuing cross-community work of Quaker House Belfast.

Regarding the ‘Why violence?’ campaign, we can report that the initial concern of a small number of Friends has become a catalyst for a much bigger Irish movement against violence, involving other churches and peace organisations.

During the year “Coming from the Silence” a book describing the Quaker Peace building work, which took place in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 2007, was published by Sessions of York www.sessionsofYork.co.uk. The book explores the work done by Quaker House Belfast, Ulster Quaker Service Committee, the Centre for Neighbourhood Development and the Quaker Peace Education Project in Derry.

Our Yearly Meeting epistle concluded with the following words of John Whittier: ‘Take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the Beauty of Thy Peace’.

*Alan Pym
Clerk*

Italy: Bologna Worship Group

The Bologna Worship group has been meeting regularly for some 20 years. A group of International Members and some attenders have maintained a faithful witness to Quaker testimonies. One of the Members, Pier Cesare Bori, leads weekly encounters of students through a group called “Una Via” which reads and meditates on sacred texts of different traditions. A similar encounter is then taken to a local prison, where many of the inmates are not Italian nationals, and represent many different cultures and faiths, particularly Islam.

Latvia Recognised Worship Group

A small number of Friends continues to meet in Liepaja and occasionally in Riga. The Friend from Daugavpils has moved to Britain with her family during 2009.

Lithuania

Kaunas Friends group has been holding Meetings for Worship this year just like we were doing earlier. Our meetings are held on Mondays but not every week. We gather in a group of three or four. Our group has decreased from 12 to 4 or 5. Others have either emigrated from Lithuania or died (2 Friends).

We are inactive in public life because we are older people and we cannot speak English well and also cannot manage computers well.

Algis Rekllys

A new group has started to meet in Vilnius. A visit by the Ministry and Outreach co-ordinator is planned early in 2010.

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Brummana Monthly Meeting

In an unsure situation of war and peace, our BMM continues to work towards the improvement of our oldest institution in the Middle East, Brummana High School. Three of our meeting members are on the school board and give a lot of time to it. I personally give a Peace and Global Citizenship course for the graduating class.

The Meeting supervises and oversees the community service the older students do in the Brummana and vicinity.

*Tony Manasseh
Clerk*

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Ramallah Monthly Meeting

The Ramallah Friends Meeting for worship is an unprogrammed meeting. Its membership is small because of emigration. Yet the meeting is always welcoming other Quakers and sojourners for worship and to participate in its activities. This past year we have had many guests worshipping with us on Sunday mornings and we are always encouraged when Friends from Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere join us for worship and other activities. Our spirituality is based on human dignity and human rights and the indwelling divinity in all. This is the source, the foundation of our work for equality, for the peace testimony and non-violent action

In 2010 the Ramallah Friends Meeting will be giving thanks for 100 years of the Palestinian Quaker community worshipping and serving in the Ramallah Friends Meetinghouse, which was dedicated on March 6, 1910. The Palestinian Quaker community, which existed long before 1910, worshipped in other buildings in Ramallah. The celebrating of the 100 years of the Meetinghouse is a way of taking stock of what Ramallah Quakers have done in Palestine and what other Quaker bodies have done and are doing here. We are happy that some Friends are joining us for the occasion. We do look forward to your support and prayers.

Jean Zaru, clerk of Ramallah Friends Meeting was invited by Karen Armstrong and TED to be one of 12 councillors from around the world to participate in a preparatory meeting in Switzerland last February. discussing Compassion in different religious traditions... The Charter for Compassion is an effort of a world movement, and was translated into many languages and written on a wooden plaque. We have six plaques displayed in Ramallah in English and

Arabic: The Ramallah Friends Meetinghouse, the Friends International Center, and the Friends School. I urge Meetings to look at the words of the Charter on Compassion, and reflect on it and share it, and when moved by the spirit, to act upon it.

Jean's book occupied with Non-violence has been translated into Swedish. These two months have been witnessing religious celebrations for Jews, Christians and Muslims. May it be a time of inspiration and renewal for all to affirm hope and light in the midst of darkness and oppression.

*Jean Zaru
Clerk*

Netherlands Yearly Meeting

In 2009 two concerns were prominently on the agenda of Dutch Friends: sustainability and conflict resolution. As an offspring of the 2008 Annual Meeting we keep exchanging ideas on how to cut down consumption of resources on a personal level. And many Friends contribute to an additional 1% of their income to a sustainability fund. This fund is run by the Dutch Quaker Relief Fund (Quakerhulpfonds). During our 2009 Annual Meeting we decided to which overseas projects these funds will go. And Friends were involved in the forerun of the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change, particularly on the ecumenical level.

The main theme of our 2009 Annual Meeting was conflict resolution. The whole meeting of about 80 Friends followed lessons of the Alternative to Violence Project course (AVP). With support and involvement of Friends AVP in the Netherlands has now run for three years and at the moment a group of about 10 trainers is available. Unfortunately due to lack of time and resources PR and thus the number of participants is limited. But those coming are very grateful for the impetus AVP has had on their personal development. There is a website: www.avpnederland.nl. We usually have interest groups during Annual Meeting. This time we intensified this and Friends were asked to offer all kinds of workshops including creative ones. This sharing of gifts and interests worked very well and we will continue this in the future.

Sadly 2009 has also been the year that we had to say goodbye to five Friends. Our numbers are declining, not surprisingly considering the age structure. On the other hand this year again we were able to welcome new Friends. Experience of the recent years shows that we are often found by people in their 60's, a period of reflection in life? So that means new faces among our

attenders besides those who come so long that we tend to count them as ‘part of the family (of Friends)’. In the Netherlands too, people interested in Quakers will soon be served by the ‘Quakers in Europe’ course on the internet. The experimental phase has been concluded successfully and the first course will start next February.

*Martin Touwen
Representative*

Norway Yearly Meeting

In 2009, Norway Yearly Meeting registered nine new members, and recorded the deaths of four of our members: Bernt-Erik Heid, Berenice Aanes Høy, Rakel Lapin and Berit Kyllingstad Collett. One Friend moved his membership to Sweden Yearly Meeting and two people have withdrawn their membership. From our regional groups, Stavanger Monthly Meeting reports organising a seminar in August on sustainable development at the farm of Nils Stakland, who died in 2008 age 96. Located in the southwest fjord country where Quakerism was first brought to Norway, the Stakland farm has been a model and pattern of sustainability, and of the holy joy of a life witness. The Monthly Meeting followed in the fall with a study circle on the book *New Light*.

Oslo Monthly Meeting co-hosted a national gathering on the idea of establishing a Norwegian Peace Tax Fund –to which a taxpayer could designate the use of his taxes as an alternative to military spending- in preparation for the 13th International Peace Tax Conference to be held in Sandefjord, Norway in July, 2010. The Monthly Meeting has also initiated a “Deep Ecology Learning Circle” which will continue in 2010. Numbers of attenders for worship have risen at the new Quaker Centre facility in Oslo, so additional chairs have been purchased!

A concern for all creation and the adoption of sustainable lifestyles in our three monthly meetings and in our country has been in focus through Norway Yearly Meeting as well as on the ecumenical scene in Norway, and Norwegian Friends were well represented at the “Faith for Change” conference in May and the “Climate Justice” ecumenical boat trip to Copenhagen in December.

We are engaged with fund-raising and organizational and program development to bring productive and creative life to the Oslo Quaker Centre. This is both the new physical premises in Oslo as well as an extramural effort to make Quakers better known in Norwegian society. In practice this also

involves us in inter-faith activities, and Oslo MM has made their meeting rooms available and participated in two events in the square outside the Centre building together with local churches and mosques, as well as initiating an inter-faith dialogue to work on environmental concerns, with financial support from the Local Authority.

These concerns and activities will continue to be central for our Norwegian Religious Society of Friends in 2010.

*Stephen Collett
Representative*

Russia, Moscow Monthly Meeting

Our monthly meeting is a small one, but the only one existing in Russia and the former Soviet Union. On Sundays we have silent worship just in the centre of Moscow. The information about that is available at Russian Quaker website www.quakers.ru. Over the last two years a member of our meeting, Galina Orlova, started a worship sharing and discussion group whose sessions are usually held two times per month.

A big concern to us over last January was the conflict in the Gaza Strip. On January 18th 2009, Moscow Monthly Meeting adopted the following special minute:

"Every human being is a child of God, and bears the spark of the Divine Light within. For Quakers, any resort to violence is outrageous and unacceptable - and its use can never be justified as a way of resolving political problems. We concur with the precept of George Fox, the Founder of the Quaker movement: that the use of violence is inadmissible, no matter what plausible pretexts may cover it. Such violence causes irreparable harm to the very foundations of human existence. We mourn for those who have perished in the course of the conflict, irrespective of their nationality or religious affiliation, and pray for the speedy establishment of peace and an end to military action."

Over last two years a couple of Friends from Oregon, USA, Judy and Johan Maurers, arrived in the Moscow area. So they usually attend our silent worships on Sundays and share with us their deep spiritual experience. I would like also to record our appreciation of a young British Friend, Jenny Haward, who was very active last year in our small Moscow Quaker community.

At the end of my report I think it is worth to mention that Moscow Meeting adopted on December 13th 2009 a minute concerning the new project of changes in the Russian Federal law "About Freedom of Conscience and Religious Congregations": "Moscow Monthly Meeting of Friends is aware of the draft legislation proposed by the Ministry of Justice to amend the law "About Freedom of Conscience and Religious Congregations" adopted in 1997. Among the proposed amendments, we are concerned with the sections of Article 1 and Article 2 that relate to "missionary activity." Certain provisions of those articles appear to conflict directly with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations and ratified by the Russian Federation.

The sweeping and imprecise nature of the proposed rules could easily lead to favoritism and abuse of power by local authorities. Anyone who is trying to explain his or her faith to an acquaintance not already familiar with that faith would appear to fall under the new rules; and such behavior, no matter how natural or routine, could lead to an official investigation, unless that believer already possessed written permission from his or her religious organization. Almost any ordinary religious organization, of whatever religion, expects its followers to be able to give others an account of its beliefs. Such normal behavior should not become subject to bureaucratic regulation.

In addition, the lack of definitions of "another benefits" and "psychological pressure" leave those categories wide open to abuse. Existing laws already defend citizens against fraud, manipulation, and extremist pressure.

For over three centuries, we Friends have publicly maintained our Christian testimonies of peace and nonviolence, honesty and transparency, the equality of men and women, community governance based on corporate prayer, and lifestyles based on simplicity and economic justice. We have freely addressed our concerns to the rulers of Russia and many other nations, and to ordinary citizens everywhere. We ask our government and our fellow citizens to respect our right to continue this public testimony without restrictions".

Mikhail Roshchin
Clerk

Russia, Friends House Moscow (Dom Druzei)

The situation regarding religious toleration continues to deteriorate. In February 2009 the powers of the Justice Ministry's Expert Council for

Conducting State Religious-Studies Expert Analysis were widened considerably. Its function is to investigate the activities, doctrines, leadership decisions, literature and worship of any registered religious organization. Under proposed changes to the Law on Religious Activity published in December 2009, only leaders of registered religious groups and their officially authorized missionaries would be allowed to pass out religious literature, preach and talk about their faith in public. Anyone else who shares their faith would face a fine. Sound familiar?

Moscow Monthly Meeting (Quakers) is registered with the Ministry of Justice as a local religious group. The Religious Society of Friends has not been registered as a national or international religious organisation, per se.... such a choice would require careful thought in this climate.

The Russian Language edition of Woodbrooke/EMES On-line Study Programme is ready to roll. Four facilitators have been trained. All that is needed now are “the students”.

Changes restricting visitor stays to a maximum of 90 days have limited our “visiting volunteer” opportunities. To avoid any potential problems our volunteer this year, Clare Hatfield, enrolled on a Russian Language Course at Moscow State University. One of the outcomes of her successful stay was a new PowerPoint presentation on the work of DD/ FHM. We like having visitors. Alas financial pressures mean we can only offer limited support these days.

Project work tends to roll over from one year to the next. Our Molly Bown Fund supported work with children’s projects continued. These all finish in summer 2010 when the money runs out. Of course the needs remain and the search for other funding sources continues.

We held our Annual Board Meeting this year in Odessa, specifically so that we could meet the AVP team there. We were much struck by their deep commitment to AVP values. To quote from the Board minutes: “It would be harder to find a better example of civil society, of a kind which Quakers try to build in their own communities, being generated from the grass roots in a society without the benefit of recent historical experience of such practice.” We were very pleased to have made the journey to meet them.

AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) work in Russia continues steadily. The challenge this year has been to respond to the post conflict situation in South Ossetia. It is not an easy region to get to. A field visit was made in May and contacts made and developed subsequently with two groups: one of teachers and other of civil society activists. Recent discussions have suggested that training workshops be deferred to spring 2010. The region is currently overloaded with state funded psychologists as the administration has recognised the need for trauma counselling. This official response has been positive for everyone. Useful groundwork.

AVP attracts people from different social and religious groups: a particularly useful and active link has been established with one Orthodox youth group from the Patriarch's Centre for Spiritual Development, producing both participants and facilitators who are engaged in giving social service.

In the spring AVP took part in the Moscow Fair of Volunteers Project, part of the 2009 Year of Youth Programme. Two representatives from the group took part in the All Russia Conference of Volunteers held in Stavropol territory (South Russia).

Setting 2010's budget has proved difficult. In common with the rest of the Quaker world not enough money trickles in. We have had to cut the AVP budget in half. We can start a project in South Ossetia but possibly not develop it: the number of workshops held in Russia and the Ukraine will have to be reduced. We suspect that unless we are successful in finding new sources to fund our work more difficult decisions lie ahead.

FHM Staff

Spain, Barcelona Monthly Meeting

This has been a relatively uneventful year for Barcelona MM, which now meets twice a month. The community continues to be sustained through the ongoing dedication of several members to attend as often as possible, despite travelling fair distances in order to do so. At the same time we enjoyed the participation of temporary residents in Barcelona and, of course, visitors from far and near. In April two of us gave a talk on the Quakers, past and present in Vic, Catalonia. In July we spent a very enjoyable weekend together in rural Aragon, and were joined by Friends from Finland. In November those that could were very excited to attend the presentation of Rosa Serra's book,

evolved from her PhD thesis, on Quaker help during and after the Spanish civil war.

Finally, a great effort was made to hold a kind of Christmas sharing celebration after Meeting in December, and it was genuinely heart-warming to welcome the daughter and grandsons of Nancy and Gerry Negelspach, two of the longest-standing members and sustainers of Barcelona Meeting. We wish for a very whole and true 2010 to all.

Caroline Wilson

Sweden Yearly Meeting

In 2009 Sweden Yearly Meeting was held in Kungälv, near Gothenburg, during the Nordic Quaker Gathering. Holding a larger gathering like this every three or four years is becoming something of a tradition among Friends in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. It gives us an opportunity to meet, study, worship and have fun together under a joint theme, and at the same time hold our separate Yearly Meetings. This year the theme was *Love for the Earth. Let your life speak!* In his keynote address, Per Ingvar Haukeland explained how deep ecology and the Quaker faith can be combined and serve as inspiration and support in our work towards a nature-friendly and sustainable society. As usual we were joined and enriched by visitors from other Yearly Meetings in the section.

Despite the natural cycle of older Friends dying and new and younger people becoming members, the membership of Sweden YM seems to remain around the 100 mark. Friends are widely scattered throughout this large oblong country of 9 million inhabitants– from Umeå in the north to Lund in the south, Gothenburg in the west and Ekenäs in the east – not to mention those in the middle. Nine worship groups of varying sizes do their best to keep the Quaker movement afloat in an increasingly secular land. Like other small groups we struggle to fill Yearly Meeting positions, and it is often the few and experienced who take on the tasks. We are working hard to change this so that younger and more inexperienced Friends also want and feel able to put their hands on the wheel and keep Quakers rolling along in Sweden.

By way of an activity summary, in 2009 the Yearly Meeting continued to offer regular Quaker retreats on a variety of themes (or none) at Svartbäcken. A number of Friends and attenders of all ages gathered at Svartbäcken in July for what has become the popular annual “people’s camp”. Beginning as a camp for

children, it is now an event in which people of all ages participate – hence the change of name. The Children and Young People’s Committee organised a number of all-age Meetings for Worship at the Friends Centre in Stockholm. “Worship sharing” conversation groups on Thursday evenings at the Friends Centre have also been well supported. Held in conjunction with the regular half-hour Thursday evening Meeting for Worship, these conversations have proved to be a good way of involving inexperienced Friends and attenders, many of whom have willingly taken responsibility for the evening’s theme. An Experiment with Light group also continues to meet once a month in Stockholm. Some of you may be interested to learn that in March 2009 Vilhelm Dahllöf, a former Sweden YM representative to EMES, took over as warden of the Friends Centre in Stockholm.

In 2009, Quaker Service Sweden continued to support projects in Bangladesh and Burundi, with the aid of Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) grants and also helped to support Quaker work in Gaza, Ramallah, St. Petersburg, Georgia, the Philippines etc., with money collected from private donors. Kväkartidskrift, the YM’s quarterly journal, has also continued to provide interesting reading and in many ways serves as an important outreach tool.

Another initiative of Sweden YM has been to introduce a more socially-oriented gathering in connection with our twice yearly General Meetings. A first attempt on the eve of our 2009 October GM was an experiment we expect to continue.

*Kerstin Backman, Sue Glover Frykman and Lars Longueville
Representatives*

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

2009 has been an important year for Switzerland Yearly Meeting in a number of ways. We have made the transition from an older to a younger clerk. For our 2010 Yearly Meeting we have had to change the location from Aeschi to Chambey. This year has also seen the completion and publication of "Swiss Quaker Life, Belief and Thought", a tri-lingual book that combines historical overview with personal testimonies (available from the Switzerland Yearly Meeting, 13 Avenue du Mervelet, Geneva 1209, Switzerland or from Sessions of York, Ebor Press Division, Huntington Road, York, YO31 9HS England).

Our retreat at the end of January concentrated on deepening the spiritual life of the Meeting. It was led by Nancy Krieger who emphasized that for her this meant strengthening our relationships amongst ourselves. She wrote: "... building a loving, caring community is possible. It doesn't mean that we have all to be alike, on the contrary, a strong community is built on respecting the differences between us. A group where everyone is super nice to one another, which avoids conflict at all cost, which speaks in generalities, in which people are reluctant to become involved is one which is based on what I would call pseudo-community. It looks like a community, but in reality, if tensions rise, it will break apart." It was emphasized that, just like a cross, we have to have a balance between our (vertical) spiritual strivings and our (horizontal) social commitment, among ourselves as well as in the world around us. A number of workshops helped us towards this goal. One of the exercises at the Retreat involved reflection and sharing on the following query: "What delights your soul? What makes your heart sing?"

We were saddened at our Yearly Meeting (always held at Pentacost) to learn of the tragic deaths in a South American airplane crash of the family members of one of our elders. We held her in the light. At the meeting we centered our discussions and meditations on the theme of "Sharing our gifts". As was written in the epistle, "at a time when we Swiss Quakers are seeking to renew our faith with fresh ideas, drawing on our more youthful members, we have been turning to the gifts we share with each other, and how to use these in the wider community. What are these gifts of the Spirit and of the inner Light?" As a way of approaching this theme, we had the choice of several workshops we could take part in that were led by various Friends and attenders. These included the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Jungian dream analysis, Jungian analytical psychology, drawing and painting, calligraphy, pantomime, playing games, and Greek folk dancing. We have learnt about Quaker economic ethics and Calvin, about the international language Esperanto, and how to discover our past through genealogy. In addition, a Friend spoke to us about "Making His light shine – Thoughts about dealing with our own talents".

The Geneva Monthly Meeting and the Bern group supported Georgian Friends in their efforts to relieve suffering of the refugees that fled the warfare in South Ossetia.

Two young Friends from Switzerland attended the meeting of young Friends in Damascus, Syria. From March 6 to 8 a border meeting in St. Peter near

Freiburg i.Br. in Germany was organized jointly between Friends of the two countries and was attended by about 8 Friends from Switzerland.

As the future hosts some of us met with the EMES executive secretary at the Herzberg retreat centre near Aarau to begin the planning for the 2011 FWCC EMES meeting.

We hold in the Light the Friends and friends who have died during this past year.

*Art Funkhouser
Representative*

Europe and Middle East Young Friends

2009 has been a landmark year for EMEYF. For the first time we held our Spring Gathering (our main spiritual gathering) in the Middle East. The gathering has proven to be a huge source of inspiration for EMEYF and in particular for the Young Friends who took part. With the generous support of Netherlands Yearly Meeting, EMEYF was also able to facilitate the participation of four Young Friends in the Young Quaker Christian Association Africa Gathering in Kenya, which took place mid December.

Looking back, Spring Gathering is still inspiring. It took place in Syria and centred around two questions: *How has your faith been formed and informed by the faith of others?*; and *How do your beliefs interact with 'the other'?* To help with the search for answers Young Friends were taken to a rich array of religious and historical sites, such as the Umayyad Mosque (where the head of John the Baptist is kept!) and where Jesus will appear for the apocalypse), the village of Malulah (where the Aramaic of Jesus is still spoken by some), the spectacular mountain monastery of Mar Mousa (where the breath taking scenery is matched only by the sense of peace it inspires), Abel's tomb and much, much more.

Not all of the sites were of a religious or spiritual nature. Friends were also reminded of how interacting with the other, if compassion is not present and care not taken, can lead to misunderstanding, dispute and even violent conflict. To illustrate such perils, the group received presentations about the situation of Iraqi refugees from the UNHCR and from Middle East based Friends about the

plight of many who live in Israel/Palestine. We also took a moving trip to the destroyed and rather eerie town of Qunaitra in the Golan Heights.

All of this and more in just one week! As you might imagine, these experiences had a big impact on Young Friends. Our coach journeys oscillated between being occasions for rich debate and a chance to catch up on sleep. But the impact of our Gathering has not been restricted to the time we spent in Syria, nor to those who took part. Naturally, we would like to share what we found and what we felt with as many people as possible. In an attempt to do this we put together an anthology of reflections, poems, sketches and reports (along with the gatherings epistle), which is available to download from our website: <http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org/documents/spring-gathering-2009-anthology.pdf>. By looking through the anthology we hope Friends will enter into the spirit that emerged.

On a more functional front, EMEYF continues to provide community to Young Friends spread across the section. For those who take on responsibilities, it continues to provide the opportunity to learn about ‘Quaker roles’ in a safe environment. As we realise the responsibilities we have, we learn, we mature and we enter into the wider Quaker Community with valuable experience under our belts that will put us in good stead, should we be called on to serve again. We have Young Friends serving with EMES, QCEA, the Global Change Group, the FWCC Young Adult Friends Committee and on several gathering planning committees.

All in all, EMEYF looks back on 2009 with a sense of fulfilment and gratitude. It looks forward to 2010 with a sense of hope and excitement. The adventure continues!

EMEYF 2010 Spring Gathering: 2-9 April, Moyallon Centre, Ireland.

EMEYF 2010 Annual Meeting: 12-14 November, Bad Pyrmont, Germany.

For information and contact details visit our website:

<http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org/index.html>

*Calum Shaw
Clerk*

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)

This year, QCEA was 30 years old. We celebrated in style with speeches, presentations, reflections and a lovely meal organized by two Friends from Brussels Meeting and served by a number of helpers from the Meeting and the

staff team. We launched the new ‘Quaker Vision of Europe’ and learned about the work of over 60 Programme Assistants who had contributed to QCEA during those 30 years. Some of them, and some of the former Representatives, were with us for the event; a very special day which saw a founder member get up on a chair and sing passages from Fiddler on the Roof.

2009 was also the year when QCEA embraced the challenge of addressing the EU’s role in the Middle East. In June a group of 12 (the Joint Representatives, the Clerk and Council Members and Alternates representing between them 10 countries) travelled to Jerusalem, Ramallah, Tel Aviv, Bethlehem, Nablus, and Nazareth to speak with many different people including government officials, EU representatives, Palestinian and Israeli peace activists, and settlers, to understand the context in which the EU is active in the region. It was an immensely rich, exhilarating, thought-provoking and difficult journey for us all. In our report back to Council in October, we tried to convey both the intensity of the experience and the urgency of engaging with these issues. When we were in Ramallah in June, there was a degree of optimism around. By October, much of this had evaporated and the situation is now as tense as it can be. Council endorsed the plans for a new programme of work.

In April, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted – unanimously – a report on women in prison which took up 32 of our 45 recommendation included in the 2007 QCEA report on the subject- a major achievement after several years of hard work by several Programme Assistants and more specifically by Liz Scurfield who did the painstaking lobbying work in Strasbourg. We are now able to ask member states about their response to the recommendations and are collecting responses (over 20 since the summer).

QCEA continues to work tirelessly to contribute to the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, a network of 27 NGOs. QCEA has been on the Steering Committee and since 2007 has provided the Vice President. Through EPLO, we have been able to contribute to the (albeit limited) public debate on the establishment of the European External Action Service. Martina Weitsch was one of the EPLO speakers at a public debate on the issue and contributed to the publication of a policy paper.

2009 was also the year of the European Parliament elections. We mounted an effective campaign focused on the English speaking countries in the EU to encourage Friends and others to vote; we participated in an EU-wide campaign

(with other EPLO members) to encourage candidates to support a peace platform.

In 2009 QCEA began in earnest the long process of renovating Quaker House Brussels. A listed building, this is a difficult and tightly controlled process; we have seen (or rather heard) the exterior façade re-pointed, we have had electricians, and carpenters and wallpaper experts working around us; we moved the office to the first and second floor at the same time as welcoming the EMEYF Annual Meeting into the house. After many years of ‘sitting on’ an old disused oil tank, this was removed, along with around 1000 litres of old heating oil. We hope all this will be finished by the end of next year.

Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch

Quaker United Nations Office and Committee (Geneva)

As we look to 2010 with a sense of hope and determination, we also reflect upon the past twelve months. 2009 has been an eventful year for QUNO Geneva with significant progress in areas of programmatic work and several new members of staff joining our team.

Rachel Brett has continued her work on the rights of those in detention, conscientious objectors and refugees. The Human Rights and Refugees programme has worked closely with the Thai government on a project entitled “Enlightening the Lives of Female Inmates” (ELFI). The ELFI project has not only concentrated on practically improving the lives of women in Thai prisons, but has also sought wider engagement at the international level. The programme has continued in its tradition of bringing together diplomats with those directly afflicted by human rights violations. A particularly successful event brought conscientious objectors from Colombia, Israel and the Russian Federation to Geneva, to brief the Human Rights Council on their plight. Jennifer Rosenberg’s term with QUNO came to an end in July 2009, and in September Holly Mason-White joined QUNO as Programme Assistant to the Human Rights and Refugees programme.

QUNO Director David Atwood’s Disarmament and Peace programme was active in 2009 across a range of related areas from small arms management initiatives to the peacebuilding architecture of the UN. QUNO has played a central role in engaging civil society actors concerned with the destabilising relationship between armed violence and under-development. Through a conference in Oslo in April 2010 these efforts will seek commitments by states to not only take practical action to break the cycle of armed violence but also ensure that the work of the Millennium Development

Goal process takes note of its impact. In the autumn, Tom Richardson replaced Adam Drury as Programme Assistant. Adam maintains a role within QUNO as a consultant to the armed violence and development work.

In March of 2009 Caroline Dommen became the new representative for Global Economic Issues (GEI). Caroline has continued QUNO's work on issues related to trade, food and intellectual property rights, raising concerns about the sustainability and fairness – or lack of – international policy in these areas. The GEI programme, in collaboration with others, will seek to make the voices of those expressing those concerns and bring proposals for more equitable and sustainable solutions. Policies to respond to the needs of those who are, or risk being, displaced due to climate change offers a new area of work and chance for collaboration between QUNO programmes. There are plans to publish a briefing paper on the topic in 2010. Over the past three months, Tom Gibson, a short-term intern, assisted the GEI programme and other dimensions of QUNO's work.

For two weeks in July the tranquillity of Quaker House was shattered by the arrival of 24 inquisitive Young Friends. Despite the odd medical emergency and a somewhat laissez-faire approach to getting to lectures, the 2009 Summer School was a huge success. The fortnight offered both stimulating discussion and thoughtful reflection, enriched by a cultural melange of participants from as far afield as Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Rwanda, Sudan and Liverpool.

In September Quaker House said goodbye to Helen McEvoy, our dearly loved Office Manager. Since then Sylviane Trousseau has already proven herself to be a highly competent multi-tasking, multi-lingual, administrative saviour — ably rising to the many challenges of day-to-day life at QUNO.

For 2009 at least, QUNO weathered reasonably well the financial storms that have affected so many voluntary organizations. We remain extremely grateful to all those individuals, organizations, Yearly Meetings, and others who supported our work in 2009.

David Atwood
Director

Quaker United Nations Office in New York

It is impossible to write this report without first highlighting the difficult financial position that the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), and its funding body the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), have been facing. In the summer of 2009, AFSC financial staff concluded that the organisation needed to reduce costs by 50%. The news was dramatic; QUNC

wrote to AFSC in sympathy, while also highlighting the importance of QUNO's work to Quakers worldwide. By the autumn, it was apparent that QUNO would face a 25% budget cut, one of the lightest of budget cuts in AFSC, but still a harsh adjustment. QUNO has managed, remarkably, to maintain its programme staff and two interns, however travel, investment and any other non-essential expenditure has been halted, salaries have been reduced and staff agreed to take two weeks of unpaid leave. We hold QUNO and AFSC staff in the light, and thank them for their commitment in these difficult times.

Despite these challenges, QUNO is in perhaps its most healthy working situation since I began my QUNC service in 2005. It is now fully staffed, with a director (Andrew Tomlinson), two QUNO Representatives (Sarah Clarke and Francesca Riddy O'Dowd), and two interns (Molly Michell-Olds and Joe Thwaites). QUNO has developed a Strategic Plan in consultation with QUNC members and AFSC staff. The Plan has evolved into areas of programme work which are now being implemented. Below is a summary of each area of focus: Peace Building, Prevention, and Quaker Outreach & Liaison. The evolution of the programme work reflects a process of capturing a theme under which specific programme work can adapt to changing needs. At the last QUNC meeting on October, QUNC members approved the recent adjustments to QUNO program work.

Peace Building:

The programme area of Peace Building initially focused on the UN Peace Building Commission. This work at QUNO was described as 'Building Sustainable Peace' and is now simply called 'Peace Building'. This thematic program approach enables QUNO to continue supporting the UN Peace Building Commission while also exploring QUNO's special contribution to peace building work. In particular, QUNO aims to remind the wider UN community that the inclusion of civil society in the peace building efforts is crucial. In the case of Burundi, a country chosen for attention by the Peace Building Commission, QUNO has helped Burundi Quakers and other civil society representatives to connect with UN peace building efforts in the country. In one such example, Francesca's recently worked with Friends' service agencies to link up Burundian Friends' longstanding work on community reconciliation with the new 'National Strategy for Socio-Economic

Reintegration of the War-Affected Population’ that has been presented by the government to the Peace building Commission¹.

Prevention

The current programme area of Prevention was previously entitled ‘Political Engagement for Peace and the Responsibility to Protect’. It was agreed at the last QUNC that these titles were limiting; the theme of ‘Prevention’ enabled QUNO staff to explore broader Quaker contributions to work on the prevention of conflict. QUNO describes this work as “promoting a more holistic approach by the wider UN Community to preventing violent conflict and facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes. Key to these efforts is the inclusion of all relevant perspectives, so that efforts that respond to potential or actual violent conflict pave the way for building sustainable peace.” QUNO constituents in this work include UN diplomats, the UN Secretariat, Agencies, Fund and Programme officials. This work tends to focus on unstable countries or regions; of late QUNO has been working intensively on Myanmar and Somalia. QUNO will soon host the New York launch of a major new report on Somalia from Conciliation Resources and Interpeace, *“Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacemaking”*. The report will be a basis for meetings with various stakeholders (member states, civil society representatives, UN officials, etc) over the critical situation in Somalia.

Quaker Liaison & Outreach

The Strategic Plan identified a need to not only support Quaker agencies in their UN work, but also to strengthen relationships with the wider UN community in order for Quaker work to be better understood and recognised. Andrew tends to focus primarily on this work, as well as supporting AFSC in some of its global and financial planning work during this difficult time.

Regions

Many people ask about QUNO involvement in specific regions. Below is a list of regions in which QUNO currently has, or would like to have, some level of work linked to the themes above:

Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Somalia/Horn of Africa, Zimbabwe, West Africa (Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia), Chad/CAR, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Timor L’Este, Israel/Palestine, Iraq, Myanmar, China/Tibet, Indonesia, Balkans, Georgia, Haiti, Guatemala, Northern Ireland

¹ As described by Andrew Tomlinson in an email to QUNC members on 6 January 2010

Lindsey Fielder Cook

Quaker Voluntary Action

‘There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.’ Sign of the door of the Friends Meeting House in Ramallah, Palestine

2009 was a year in which we moved forward. But what are the messages that come from this?

Working Retreats

We held five Working Retreats in four countries. These retreats involve young and the not so young people – coming together from far and near – to do practical work and engage in spiritual reflection over a period of a few days. The three retreats financially supported by EMES – in the Netherlands, Sweden and at Ramallah in Palestine – all took place and were well attended, each by ten or more participants. They did useful work, for example in supporting the Olive harvest in Palestine, but more than this – as feedback shows – they moved those involved beyond a rich experience to new learning, growth and spiritual encounter. One message here is: this is a powerful approach for Friends.

These retreats, however, only modestly engaged Friends from outside of the UK – in spite of our efforts in contacting over 60 Meetings across Europe beyond Britain. A second message, therefore, is that we would welcome help in encouraging take up of retreats.

Our experience has contributed to several discernments. First to put in place a more ambitious programme for 2010 including retreats in France at Congenies (March 20-27), Moyallon in Ireland (July 17-24th) and again at Ramallah (October 27 – November 5th). There are also four retreats in the UK (Details see www.qva.org.uk). Second, we are moved to have an independent assessment of the programme undertaken and to explore how the approach may develop further – for example in addressing the challenges of a world environment under pressure. We intend to address these matters in 2010.

Other work

We have tried to support EMES and Friends outside of the UK in 2009 – including representation at the Service consultation in the Autumn.

Our other work has not prospered greatly in 2009. We have persisted with Quaker ministry in Forensic Psychiatry in secure hospitals and units. There is a regular Quaker Meeting at Rampton High Security Hospital in the UK, which has provided rich encounters for those involved. Patients who are deeply troubled in the mind draw much from the loving silence of a Quaker Meeting. We would like to hear from others doing similar work.

We are on the look out for new areas of voluntary work in which to engage Friends. We wish to record our thanks for support – both financial and practical – received from EMES in 2009.

Martin Smith
Clerk

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

We have enjoyed more of the fruits of Julia Ryberg's work as European Projects Coordinator during this year. The benefits are very real of the increasing work with new and potential Friends; of a greater understanding of how to use new technology to bring us together; and of the experience offered by a wider community of Friends on which the Woodbrooke education programme can draw. The funding for this work remains largely within the resources of the Catchpool Fund; this fund has now become the responsibility of Woodbrooke trustees rather than having its own trustee body, and we look forward to continuing the very successful integration into our overall activity.

A little more than a year ago, about 24 European Friends involved in translation of the *Quaker in Europe* on-line course met at Woodbrooke for week of exploration and work around issues of translation in a Quaker context. A result of that week is a Handbook for Quaker Translators by Kjeld Renato Lings, Danish Friend who served as resource person during the course.

The *Quaker in Europe* on-line project has moved into its third and very exciting stage: preparation of facilitators and delivery of the course in as many as European languages. To date the course has been run in Czech, French, Norwegian, Finnish and Hungarian. Second runs in Finnish, French and Czech are to take place. Translations are ready in Russian, Dutch and Danish with other languages in various stages of completion.

Julia has now developed a training course for facilitators so that others can take responsibility for this project, with almost 20 Friends now equipped for this work. This work has also fed into the new Woodbrooke/Quaker Life project,

Becoming Friends, and will provide information to be used as work goes forward on the World Conference in 2012.

Another European Clerks course has run successfully at Woodbrooke, and Woodbrooke-on-the-Road has continued to serve Friends outside the UK. Michael Eccles and Julia Ryberg visited a group in Tbilisi, Georgia, to great effect in October.

In 2009, Friends from Germany and Russia completed the two-year Equipping for Ministry 'open learning' course along with a dozen or so British Friends; the current group includes an Irish Friend, and the 2010 group will have Friends from Finland and Sweden. Everyone benefits from the rich exchange of experience between different groups of Quakers and the sense of community which grows through this more extensive course.

Woodbrooke serves Friends in Europe in various ways: individual bursaries for short and longer courses, courses focused on European needs, courses that gather European and British Friends, Woodbrooke-on-the-Road, encouraging European Friends to serve as Associate Tutors. There are many opportunities to explore, even in a more difficult and challenging economic situation, and we are all glad of the collegueship and spiritual accompaniment we offer one another.

Jennifer Barraclough
Director

Yearly Meetings in 2010

Yearly Meeting	When	Contact
Denmark	26-28 March	post@kvaekerne.dk
Ireland	8-11 April	office@quakers-in-ireland.ie
Sweden	13-16 May	kvakargarden@kvakare.se
Switzerland	21-24 May	rorie_nazareth@bluewin.ch
Netherlands	28-30 May	secretatiaat@dequakers.nl
Britain	28-31 May	Gillian Ashmore, Recording Clerk, Friends House, 173 Euston Road London NW1 2AX
Norway	24-27 June	kveker@kveker.org

France	16-20 July	jeanne.louis@wanadoo.fr
German	4-7 November	pyrmont@quaeker.org

Some other events in 2010

Grenztreffen Switzerland/Germany/France	19-21 March	k.mangels@gmx.de
EMEYF Spring Gathering in Moyallon	2-9 April	www.emeyf.quaker.eu.org
Central European Gathering in Vienna	21-24 May	eastland.zsuzsa@freemail.hu
Peace and Service Consultation in Kortenberg, Belgium	19-21 November	emes@fwcc.quaker.org

CONTRIBUTING TO FWCC EMES

The work of FWCC EMES depends on contributions from the Yearly Meetings in the Section and from individual donations. Contributions for the general work can be made using the bank details below.

In Sterling: By international transfer to:

Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HB, UK

IBAN: GB11 CPBK 0800 5150 0732 10

BIC: CPBKGB22

It is also **essential** that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES

Account Number: 20180696

Sort Code: 08-60-01

Holders of UK bank accounts can also send cheques or CAF vouchers in pound sterling made out to 'FWCC-EMES'.

In Euros: Sozialbank Account

IBAN: DE35 3702 0500 0001 0795 00 in Germany just 1079500)

BIC: BFSWDE33XXX (in Germany just 370 205 00)

Name: Sozialbank

Location: Cologne (Köln), Wörthstr. 15-17, 50668 Köln

In the name of: Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East

CONTRIBUTING TO THE AMARI CAMP PLAY CENTRE, RAMALLAH

There is a separate, FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre account. Contributions for the play centre should be made as follows:

By international transfer to:

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ, UK
IBAN: GB48 MIDL 4005 3072 1385 49
BIC: MIDLGB2141W

It is also **essential** that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre

Account Number: 00091841

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Holders of UK bank accounts can also send cheques or CAF vouchers in pounds sterling for the 'FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre' to the EMES office.

Please note that EMES does not hold accounts for other Quaker work in the Section

Please contact the FWCC EMES Office or the Treasurer, Neithard Petry, for further information or to inform us of bank transfers you are making.

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