

Among Friends

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Last Summer In Ireland

The world family of Friends and the growth of the peace process

Every few years Quaker representatives from all over the world meet for about a week in a different continent to assess the work done by FWCC and plan future initiatives of the Committee, 'established in 1937 to be a channel of communication between Friends, helping us to explore and nurture our identity as Quakers...'.

This time Ireland Yearly Meeting was the host. Quakers there, both from the North and the South, displayed all their traditional warm hospitality to welcome over 300 participants from 41 countries, representing about 90 Yearly Meetings and Groups. In addition to the main gathering in Dublin (22nd Triennial of FWCC, 11-19 August), there were pre and post Triennial events in various places. I was fortunate to attend the one in the North, along with some 20 other foreigners, on Peace and Reconciliation.

Based in the modern Quaker Centre at Moyallon/Portadown, we also visited other places around Belfast where both Quakers and others have been active for decades in promoting peace at different levels, including Quaker Cottage, the Prison Visitors'

Centre and the Corrymeela International Ecumenical Community, founded and run basically by volunteers to facilitate contacts between Catholics and Protestants, as pre-requisite for peace-building, also in other parts of the world. Another meaningful encounter was held at the Stormont (NI Assembly) with four different top politicians, from both sides, Catholic and Protestant, who finally have decided to share power for the benefit of society as a whole. Useful and informative discussions were also held at Moyallon with several expert peace-makers who had come to share with us their views and experiences.

We strongly felt, everywhere, that a sort of fresh political wind is blowing in Ireland. Certainly many issues are still unresolved, especially in the North, where many people, including some 100 000 children live below the poverty line, despite massive aid from London. Some women still need help, such as that provided by Quaker Cottage, in order to re-gain their role in the family and society, after long years of hardship and post-conflict trauma. Yes, the socio-political landscape is changing, the British military presence has gone, new economic development and possibilities are materializing, thanks also to the input from the South, especially in terms of trade and investment. Grass-roots work, however, has to continue, and Friends seem to be well placed for this, and are appreciated in all sectors of Irish life.

In the past Quakers were among the few who showed clearly that changes were possible, but there was no general will or mood to do so. Today, the general mood has swung round, and few people would still stick to the old ways of thinking. We experienced the historical impact the Quaker community had in the past around Newry, a thriving town, largely Catholic, near the border with the Republic of Ireland, as we met with local authority representatives and visited the model village at Bessbrook, set up by Quaker industrialists in the 19th century.

The five days in the North provided all of us with

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the right preparation to face the big event in Dublin. Everything was made easy and simple, thanks to the tremendous dedication of Irish Friends and their gentle and loving care for each of us, with our particular (if not peculiar) needs. Admittedly the weather was not always what some of us had expected or hoped for, but we did experience a sunny day as we went off in buses to different Quaker historical places and mingle with local Friends, all eager to meet us. It was pleasant and rewarding to discover, as we travelled around, the important role Quakers had played in Irish life throughout the past three centuries, ever since 1654 when William Edmundson first set foot in Ulster. To mark this date and the contribution Friends have made to Ireland, especially during the 1840s famine, the Irish Postal Service issued a special Quaker stamp in 2004.

To return to the Triennial, let me conclude with some personal remarks. Partly thanks to this particular period of Irish society, there was an air of positiveness all around and hope for the future. Several speakers referred to the main theme, 'Finding the Prophetic Voice for our Time', but each giving different personal views as to what may be a prophetic voice in today's world. Such varied approaches contributed to a spiritual richness, inspiring each of us to come home eager to share our individual experience of the event.

Certainly the world family of Friends does not speak with one voice. The different cultures and religious

renewals have contributed to varied Quaker ways of practice and worship, ranging from extreme Evangelical to wide-open Universalist positions. When such seemingly opposite stands come together in a spirit of friendship it is possible to tackle even delicate and difficult issues, such as homosexuality, provided that all is done in the respect of the other's point of view. In Dublin we did not seek to reach uniformity, but unity in diversity. To the extent that we are, each of us, able and willing to practice the spirit of tolerance experienced there, we can continue to be a prophetic voice in our time, for if a movement of the spirit is not prophetic it cannot give good fruits.

This world event also reiterated Friends' commitment to peace and the safeguard of Creation, indicating practical ways to follow in order to achieve lasting changes. One hopes that Yearly Meetings and Quaker groups would wish to implement at least some of the recommendations agreed in Dublin. Let us not forget that FWCC (now 70 years old!) has never acted as a central authority for the Quaker movement, but always emphasizing its consultative role, with the grass-roots really being the pillars of the Quaker decision-making process, as any democratic organization should be. The next rendez-vous of this type will be Kenya in 2012!

Comprehensive information, including the text of talks, and minutes, can be found at: <http://fwccworld.org/triennial/images>

Franco Perna, International Member, Italy

Border Meeting celebrates its 50th anniversary!

Friends in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg and the neighbouring areas of France and Germany take it in turns to organise a gathering in September each year.

This year some 36 Friends spent the weekend of 14-16 September 2007 in Germany - in Walberberg, between Bonn and Cologne.

Pieter Ketner (of Netherlands YM) had done a lot of research into the history of the Border Meeting – it was no mean task to trace the records of all those computer-less years! - and found that it was our 50th anniversary!

Piet Kruithof, who visited us on Sunday, told us that Quakers had, in fact, attended gatherings organised by a Dutch peace group as long ago as 1948.

If you have any little gems from the Border Meetings of Benelux, France and Germany do let us know!

The theme German Friends had chosen for this year's Border Meeting was a quotation from G.B. Shaw: "*I am not content with beautiful dreams; I want beautiful realities*". How can we transform our dreams into realities?

The first speaker was **Heidi Blocher** who was brought up in Switzerland and now lives in the USA.

Heidi's understanding of Christianity came from her family background (her father was a pastor), as well as through reading Quaker literature. She says that she is nourished by Christianity rather than that she is a Christian.

She spoke of the joy she felt when she was invited to speak to us and the joy she felt whenever she went to Meeting. She exhorted us to hold on to this joy (*lasst uns bleiben in dieser Freude*).

Heidi loves America and believes that the "American Dream", with all its imperfections, persists today.

But are we called on to dream or to be part of an existing reality?

Heidi told us of a couple who, when everyone asked what could be done after 9/11, said they were going to continue doing what they had always done – only more so!

The Bible asks us to do right, to spread the word but does it really ask us to save the world? The world is sacred; it is what it is. Can it be saved by structures? Does not change have to come from within the human soul? Early Friends saw putting the peace testimony into practice as taking away the causes of war. Should this be different today?

Early Quakers in the USA were not united about how to make the dream reality and the movement split into three groups:

- the evangelical (programmed) Friends want to save souls;
- the Hicksites (who are more like European Friends) want to save the world;
- the conservative Friends want to follow Christ.

Having asked herself "what do I want", Heidi finds her place amongst conservative Friends.

Our second speaker, **Martin Kunz**, a German living in London, had done alternative service in Kolkata. He told us he went there to save the world but realised that smaller goals were more realistic!

His approach to fair trade is firmly rooted in reality.

His particular project has been the development of fair trade footballs. Now, for the first time, rubber is subject to certain fair trade practices. Martin would like to see more fair trade rules applied to rubber and other commodities, such as cotton.

He pointed out that it is not only the small-scale producers who should be the object of fair trade - the disadvantaged are to be found in larger undertakings too and should have a fair wage. The producers themselves should decide what to do with the money, not outside monitors. A company cannot realistically guarantee to go on trading if demand falls off. Fair trade helps to fulfil minimum standards rather than to impose standards.

Neither globalisation nor the idea of fair trade is new: in 1732 chinaware was being made in China and designed in the Netherlands and there was a movement in the early nineteenth century to buy sugar not produced by slaves!

G.B Shaw's character goes on to say "the difficulty is that so few of us know [dreams] when we see them". Martin and Heidi, in their different ways, showed us how to distinguish between dreams and reality. In groups we concluded, rather inevitably, that there are no clear, easy answers. We have to question everything. How do we transform our dream, our vision? How can we affect the world from our reality?

It was pointed out that the American dream was based on exploitation but there was, nevertheless, a feeling that the dream itself was beautiful; ignorance and lack of awareness of other cultures meant that the means used to achieve it were less so.

Dreams can be too big; the solution may lie in being content with what we are doing - without becoming complacent. If we do what we are called to do and are mindful of every step we take we may progress.

A Border Meeting does not come into being without an enormous amount of hard work and we were all grateful to the self-styled "Dream Team" of Ute Antioch, Horst-Dieter Breuer, Janet Kreysa and Coosje Petry for making this occasion so special.

The 2008 Border Meeting will be held in the Netherlands.

Vivien Flynn, Luxembourg Worship Group



Friends World Committee for
Consultation
Europe & Middle East Section
QUAKER YOUTH PILGRIMAGE
2008

Great Britain and Ireland
18 July - 15 August 2008

Applications are sought for leaders and pilgrims

The 2008 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage is to take place in Great Britain and Ireland. It will start in Glasgow and will explore Quaker themes in Scotland, England and Ireland between 18 July -15 August 2008.

The pilgrimage takes place every two years and is organised jointly by the European & Middle East Section and the Section of the Americas of FWCC, the world body of Friends. It is an opportunity to promote loving understanding of our diversities within the Quaker worldwide family.

The Pilgrimage will bring together 14 Young Friends (aged 16-18) from North America and 14 from Europe with two adult facilitators from each section on a four week journey of exploration. They will come from different cultural, language and theological traditions. During their time together they will experience travelling and learning together and seek to nurture their spiritual lives

Applications are now open for European pilgrims who must be between 16 and 18 years in July 2008. The cost for pilgrims will be in the region of £700. Financial help is usually available.

We are also seeking to recruit two adult leaders who must have experience of working with young people. All leaders' expenses will be paid.

For more information please contact a member of the EMES QYP Committee:

Caroline Evens – 0131 662 0735 – carolineevens@hotmail.com

Nigel Hampton – 028 388 31752 – nigel.hampton@utvinternet.com

Fran Woolgrove – 01539 737715 – fran@woolgrove.org

For application forms for pilgrims and leaders, please contact:

**Nigel Hampton, Moyallon Friends Meeting House,
117 Stramore Road, Portadown, Northern Ireland BT63 5JZ**

Telephone 028 388 31752

email nigel.hampton@utvinternet.com

Closing Dates

1 December 2007 (leaders)

4 January 2008 (pilgrims)

News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre UK

On 6 and 7 October 2007, John and Diana Lampen tutored a **Woodbrooke-on-the-Road** event for Friends from Midi-Pyrenees Meeting on the subject of Deepening the Spiritual Life of the Meeting.

The *Quaker in Europe* on-line project is well underway. It is jointly funded by the Catchpool Fund and EMES. Friends from The Netherlands, France, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Latvia, Russia and Georgia are working together to create an on-line introductory course that will be translated into these and other European languages and offered to Friends and enquirers. The group has been exploring the contexts in which they have become Quakers and in which their Quaker groups exist. We are discussing the fundamentals of Quakerism that need to be taught regardless of the context, and we will be looking at materials, texts and discussion questions that help address these fundamentals in a way that is appropriate to a variety of European contexts. (An indication of the potential interest in on-line Quaker interaction is a study circle in Scandinavian languages offered this autumn by Sweden Yearly Meeting, *On Foot with Fox in Luther's Landscape*. Thirty Friends and enquirers from four countries expressed interest. Twenty are in the group.)

Two 2008 Woodbrooke events are indirectly related to the above projects:

Translating in a Quaker context

Monday 7 – Friday 11 July

An event for people who translate Quaker material into

a variety of European languages. We will work together on a range of introductory materials, so that as many European Quaker groups as possible are able to follow up outreach by providing enquirers and newcomers with appropriate written materials in their own language. We will use time together to explore our understanding of core Quaker concepts and the language (both modern and historic) used to express them. We will support one another in translation work, building an ongoing network of people interested in carrying this task forward. Working language: English. By invitation only; please contact julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk if you would like to receive an invitation.

Leaders: Ruth Homer and Julia Ryberg.

An Anglo-Scandinavian Weekend

Thursday 3 – Sunday 6 July

A weekend to build friendship and fellowship between Friends of different countries. Come and make new Quaker friends, share experience of being Quaker in different countries and cultures, and practice your language along the way! The pace will be relaxed, and there will be time for creativity and re-creation. Main inputs will be translated consecutively into at least one other language, and there will be informal translation as needed at other times. For speakers of Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish or English who know at least a little of one of the others. Leaders: Ingrid Greenhow and Torbjörn Söderqvist.



Thinking of attending a course? Catchpool Fund bursaries are readily available if financial help is needed. Contact Julia Ryberg, European Project Co-ordinator, for information on the Catchpool Fund at julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk

or +46 (0) 175-715 30. See www.woodbrooke.org.uk for general information and to request a course brochure.

Summer in Palestine

This summer for the first time the small staff team at the Friends Play-Centre in the Al Amari Refugee Camp decided to hold a play-scheme. Normally the centre is closed during the long hot weeks of the school holidays. They asked FWCC EMES for financial assistance and to send volunteers. Thanks to generous support from Friends in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Britain we were able to provide the necessary materials and cover costs of local volunteers who acted as translators and to send three European volunteers. Stephanie Tarry, currently a student in the Bradford University Peace Studies Department, writes:

It has been three months since I returned from Palestine, and I am still not sure how to put into words what I saw and experienced there.

First I will explain why I was there: I, Anne, from Norway, and Welmoed, from the Netherlands, spent three weeks in Ramallah in the West Bank planning and running a play scheme for 30 children from 5 to 7 years old. In the play scheme we sang songs and practiced numbers and drew and created and most importantly played. In a place where the everyday can take such a toll it was lovely to watch the children being children. The reason it was so lovely to see is because the surroundings of the play-scheme and the situation of the country is not.

The refugee camp the play-scheme was situated in was appalling. When the camp was first erected it had 800 inhabitants, now there are over 5,000. Unfortunately Israeli law prohibits the camp from expanding outwards, so it goes the only place it can: up. Of course there is no, or very little, money given



Paper chains group



Amari teachers and helpers

for the expansion of the camp for those that have been displaced due to aggressive territorial advances made by the Israelis. Therefore architecture and sufficient building materials are severely lacking. Another thing that is severely lacking is the space for children to play, in our tour of the Al-Amari refugee camp I saw no green spaces, no swings, no hopscotch. The place the children have to play is the alley/road in between the houses. It is not just space outside that the children have to worry about, it is space inside also, with up to 3 families or generations sharing one floor of a house simply because there is no more space.

You can therefore imagine their happiness at a place they could be free in the way children should be free. Where they could sing and dance and play without having to dodge cars or be quiet because the walls of their house are so thin. Where they could sit and draw a picture with less of a worry that an Israeli tank may come down their street. At first they were very wary of us and still at the end some did not quite understand why exactly we had come. However when we showed them the coloured paper and glue I don't think they were too fussed why we were there.

The scarcity for resources they face as a result of daily life came out in their play-time and their art activities, with a lack of sharing and a hoarding of resources. The violence of living in a refugee camp in an occupied territory also came out in the communication that went on between them, more physical than verbal. However when we took them to a big park where they all had enough space to run around all of this was lost, when they did not have to fight for resources or space to



Sticky fingers

simply be they became what they should be, children.

Travelling around Palestine was amazing, and I got to see a vibrancy of culture and a sense of history like nothing I have ever experienced in England. However I also got to see abuse of human rights that no one would be allowed to experience here. We visited the town of Hebron and saw the roads that Palestinians are not allowed to walk on, and caged windows to avoid being stoned by a settler. We had rubbish thrown at us for listening to a Palestinian's hope of peace for his children, we saw footage of children and teacher's being kicked and stoned on their way home from school. It is not the overt abuses that disturb me the most, it is the assumption that Palestinians are second class citizens that is apparent everywhere you go. This was shown countless times, one particular instance was at the checkpoint to Jerusalem. The armed soldier who got on our bus was asked not to bring the cigarette aboard by the driver as the bus was non-smoking. Instead of asking his armed buddy to hold the cigarette he ordered all the men to get off the bus to have their IDs checked so he could finish his cigarette.

So I come back from Palestine with bitter-sweet memories. Memories of resilient sparkling children that I will never forget, memories of the laughter at my out of tune singing, or the happiness at having a party with biscuits and popcorn. Unfortunately these go hand in hand with memories of a people who face such oppression and futility that I can't help but despair for the future of those I was lucky enough to meet and countless others in the same situation.

I wish my story had a happier ending but sad is better than false, and whilst current progress on this issue is so slow I find it hard to feel hopeful that these amazing

children will meet a better fate than those before them. The sunshine in this situation is the people that work everyday on the ground in Ramallah to help create a better future for these children, it is these people that deserve our thoughts and thanks, mine are definitely with them.

Stephanie Tarry

Foot-note

Anne Grethe Kjelling, volunteer who is currently studying at Trondheim University, wrote an article in Norwegian. Here in translation is a short extract:

“The day before we left for home, we joined a guided tour of Hebron.

What brings hope is that this guided tour was arranged by ex soldiers from the Israeli army who have served in Hebron. This organisation is called *Breaking The Silence*, and was started when some of the soldiers needed to talk about their experiences. They do not hide anything when they tell about what they themselves have done; injustices against Palestinians and the feeling of having been party to something that does not feel right.

While it hurts to hear of such things, it is also good that more Israelis get information about what is actually going on in Hebron – it also helps to show Palestinians in Hebron that all Israeli are not of the same mind as the settlers. People can talk to one another. But there is still an impossibly long road ahead.”

Welmoed Verhagen, the third volunteer, provided the photos. She has just completed a Masters Degree at Bradford University Peace Studies Department and has recently taken up a post with Pax Christi in the Netherlands.



Hebron street

Twins in Reunion: Budapest Comes to Wem

At the invitation of the Creamore Fellowship of Friends, four of us from the Budapest Worship Group spent a long weekend in Wem near Shrewbury on 18-20 August 2007.

After the heat of Hungary, rain and cool weather was a very welcome change.

At Terry Hobday's house we were spoiled by salad, ice-cream, hot chocolate and fruit yoghurt and the local teenagers soon got into playing funny games with the Hungarian young. There was laughter and friendship around the table and we concluded that good food and play combined was not a bad way of outreach.

On Sunday we attended Meeting for Worship in the pretty town of Shrewsbury. There were quite a few good ministries and at the end of the Meeting lovely little children were brought in. After coffee we admired the imaginative arrangement for different age groups of children in three rooms of the attic of the Meeting House.

The Wem group invited us for lunch to an old historic restaurant in Shrewsbury – they had been putting money aside for that purpose. In the afternoon they showed us round Shrewsbury and drove us back in the drizzling rain.

On Monday afternoon, after Terry's introduction to Jung's understanding of the collective unconscious and

the archetypes, we did a role-play based on the story of the big feast in Luke 14. It was revealing to try and walk in the shoes of the various characters. We realised for example that the servant must have found his master crazy, while the maimed and the blind may have looked down upon the people in the hedges.

A story-telling museum with the oral folklore of Shropshire was well worth visiting on the way home from the Catholic church whose premises we had been allowed to use free of charge.

The semi-programmed Meeting in the last evening focussed on the theme of 'water'. We saw a video presentation on Africa with the need of the young and the old alike for the 'water of love'. We listened to Smetana's symphonic poem called Vltava and saw photos by a Japanese artist of the various crystal patterns of water. One amazing photo suggested that the pattern of crystals had become more structured after prayer.

We ended this very rich and intensive weekend with learning and singing two favourite Quaker hymns of the Wem group: 'Peace is flowing like a river' and 'Friends forever'.

Now we are looking forward to welcoming our twin group in Budapest in October 2008.

Zsuzsa Eastland, Budapest Worship Group

Friends Meeting in Georgia

At the end of October the International Membership Committee dealt with a bumper set of applications for membership and was pleased to welcome into membership two new Friends in Belgrade, Serbia, a Friend in Banaul in Siberia and to recognise a whole new Worship Group in Tbilisi, Georgia, at the same time as accepting seven members of this group into membership.

Mikheil Elizbarashvili, the newly appointed clerk of Tbilisi Meeting, writes:

The country where I live- Georgia is located in the

Caucasus. Tbilisi is the capital and the largest city of Georgia, lying on the banks of the Mtkvari (Kura) River. According to an old legend, the present-day territory of Tbilisi was covered by forests as late as 458 A.D. One widely accepted variant of the legend of Tbilisi's founding states that King Vakhtang 1 Gorgasali of Georgia went hunting in the heavily wooded region with a falcon. The King's falcon allegedly caught/injured a pheasant during the hunt, after which both birds fell into a nearby hot spring and died (from the burns received in the hot water). King Vakhtang became so impressed with the hot springs

that he decided to cut down the forest and build a city on the location. The name Tbilisi derives from the Old Georgian word “Tpili”, meaning warm..

Georgia is located strategically at the crossroads between Europe and Asia and lying along the historic Silk Road routes. Georgia has often been the point of contention between various rival powers and empires. In 1801, the Georgian kingdom joined the Russian Empire and Tbilisi became the center of the Tbilisi Governance (Gubernia). From the beginning of the 19th century Tbilisi started to grow economically and politically. New buildings mainly of European style were erected throughout the town. New roads and railroads were built to connect Tbilisi to other important cities. From 1918 to 1921 Georgia was an independent country. In 1921, the Democratic Republic of Georgia was occupied by the Soviet Bolshevik forces, and until 1991 Georgia was a part of the Soviet- Union. Since the break-up of the Soviet-Union Georgia is an Independent Country. The demographics of the Country is diverse and historically it has been home to peoples from different cultures, religions and ethnicities. Despite being Orthodox Christian Country, Tbilisi is

the place, where a Synagogue Orthodox Church and a Mosque are located next to each other in the ancient Bath district.

The History of Quakerism in Georgia is rather short. Our group in Tbilisi is fairly young .Bagrat Mamakhlis contacted Friends 10 years back. He went to Moscow in 1997 and there he met Russian Friends. One year later another Georgian , Vova Astvacurov

went to a gathering of Friends in Moscow. Unfortunately a few years after that the contact with Russian and European Friends was lost. Only in 2005 links with Russian and European Friends were restored.

We gather twice a month at my apartment. With the help of Friends House Moscow we have published two books about Quakers in Georgian during these 2 years. That helps us to work with Georgian speaking people. On behalf of Georgian Meeting I would like to thank Friends House Moscow for its support. We have been officially recognized at the Public Defenders Center for Religious Tolerance in Georgia. I hope that in time we will have Friends Meetings not only in Tbilisi, but also in the other cities of Georgia.

News in Brief

Belarus

A.L. from Belarus keeps in touch. He and his family have occasionally been able to attend international Quaker events over the years but have been unable to attend others due to restrictions on travel both from Belarus authorities and with difficulties with getting visas from other countries. He has written recently asking that his message be shared widely with Friends. Below are extracts from his letters:

Greetings from Belarus! (Otherwise known as the backyard of Europe.)

How are you? I hope that you well. May this message find you in good health and in safety. We as before here in Belarus for God’s purposes: to love of Him and neighbor, as He gave us commandment.

As you knows I live in the city of Gomel. Since 1990 I with my wife and daughter began to read the Scripture. However experience and knowledge came

in some years later. God poured into our hearts His love and revelation about every human being is unique and precious, despite of the color of skin, gender, confession, language, race and social status.

I am alarmed concerning a situation here. Please give publicity about that to all over the world. There are Christians from the USA. Here in Gomel, Belarus our daughter during 10 days studied English in 2005 (a Baptist worship-house. 9, Ostrovskogo Bystreet). They few times had dinner in our house. One of our Friends wrote to say three of the English teachers were taken to the police station and questioned and accused of trying to make everyone Baptist (they gave their personal testimony on the Sunday night meeting while students were present.) They were “deported” from Belarus and told they cannot return for at least one year.

A.L. is concerned that if these things (action of the

totalitarian regime with respect to freedom of worship) are not uncovered then it will be too late just as it was at the Stalin and Brezhnev's regimes. Please give publicity to this incident with a view to personal security for local believers and seekers (not only Baptists) within the next few years. We in Gomel have a worship group (the friends who think and seek of God as we). However we do not organize own regular public worship because of good reason.

For more background information see Forum 18's Belarus religious freedom survey at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=888

"Killing a frog by warming up the water very gradually" is how one Protestant describes Belarus' religious policy in Forum 18 News Service's survey analysis of religious freedom.

By contrast **Britain Yearly Meeting** recently held a "National Quaker Week". There were Quaker advertisements on underground trains in London. Many meetings arranged for articles in the local press and opened their doors to invite the public in. Friends wore Q badges.

Mary Waldmeyer, one of Britain Yearly Meeting's FWCC EMES Representative, writes with news of one local activity and an invitation to Friends:

As part of National Quaker Week we held a Coffee Morning at Osmotherley Meeting House and invited the villagers to come for "coffee, fresh scones and chat". This was great fun and we made many people welcome. We were surprised to receive £34 in donations, which we decided to send to FWCC EMES.



Line drawing by Richard Waldmeyer

Osmotherley is a beautiful village on the edge of the North York Moors and the Meeting House was built in 1723. There are no Quakers living in the village now but we continue hold a meeting once a month, which is attended by Friends from up to 5 monthly meetings and local people from other churches.

We would like to welcome Friends from around Europe to come and visit this lovely spot. The gallery of the Meeting House has been converted into a bedroom for 5 people and there is a separate dormitory block with 20 more beds. The Meeting Room has an open fire and sofas and comfy chairs as well as some original benches. The buildings are centrally heated; there are hot showers and a simply equipped kitchen. There is an hourly bus from Northallerton, which is on the main London-Edinburgh railway line. Individuals, families or groups can book it at very reasonable prices. Email mary.waldmeyer@virgin.net or google "Osmotherley Quakers" for more information and pictures.

Art Funkhouser, Switzerland Yearly Meeting's FWCC EMES Representative, has written to say:

The Watford Meeting (Britain Yearly Meeting) has produced some really lovely and well-made (short) videos about what Quaker meeting is like and other related topics. You can view them at:

<http://uk.youtube.com/srekaug>

France: 3rd International Salon for Peace Initiatives, May-June 2008, Paris

This Conference will provide a space for reflection and encounter for people committed in this field, in France and in the world. It will take into account the death anniversaries of Gandhi (1948) and Martin Luther King (1968). An important place will be given to international organisations and associations from the whole world committed to the promotion of the culture of non violence and peace.

Websites : <http://www.decennie.org/documents/Salon3/fr/accueil.html> and <http://www.nvpdecade.org>

Friends who attended the previous two events will know how lively and inspiring they were. A small group

of French Friends takes the lead role in organising the Quaker stand at the Salon. Friends from other countries are strongly encouraged not only to visit the Salon but also to provide documents for the Quaker stand, and to come and help. More information from: Centre Quaker International de Paris. +33(0)1 45 48 74 23 email: quaker.paris@tiscali.fr

Europe and Middle East Young Friends

You can contact Young Friends via their Secretary, currently Matt Loffman, at: emeyf@qcea.org, Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium.

New Executive Secretary

From a strong list of candidates for the post of FWCC EMES Executive Secretary, the Executive Committee has selected Marisa Johnson of Jesus Lane Meeting, Cambridge. For the first three months of 2008 there will be two Executive Secretaries. Marisa and Bronwyn will do some travelling together and share the workload, especially in the run up to the Vienna Gathering, at which point Bronwyn's term of service comes to an end. The usual EMES email and postal address should be used. Marisa introduces herself:

I was born in Naples in 1956, of refugees from north-east Italy and Croatia displaced by the second world war. I came to the UK in 1976 to improve my English, and ended up settling in England, marrying Mick in 1980, and having three children. My oldest daughter sadly died in 1986. My sons are in their early 20s, both at university at present (Norwich and Durham). I have worked in health, social care, housing and consumer rights. Since 1990 we have lived in Cambridge, and started attending Friends Meeting in 1991. I became a member in 1997, and have been an overseer, and elder and an assistant clerk to Monthly Meeting. From December 2005 to March 2006 I served as an Ecumenical Accompanier with the EAPPI programme, run in Britain and Ireland by Quaker Peace and Social Witness. I was based in Jerusalem, together with a Danish young woman, a Norwegian man and a Swedish man. Since my return I have been doing dozens of public talks to raise awareness of the situation in the West Bank.

EMES/EMEYF Gathering, Vienna, 20 – 24 March 2008.

Registration for the Gathering is now officially closed. However there may be just a few places still available and any-one interested should get in touch immediately with Martine Kuipers, on emesregistrations@fwcc.quaker.org or write to her at Bekemaheerd 164 9737 PZ Groningen the Netherlands

Friends House Moscow

After over nine years of enjoyment of the traffic on the Moscow Inner Ring Road, Dom Druzei, (Friends House, Moscow) has moved to a recently refurbished office above a small shopping centre further out of the centre of Moscow. We are easier to find because the Office Block is next to the exit of Shosse Enthuziastov Metro Station on the Yellow Line (Metro Line No 8). The top end of Ismailovski Park is just five minutes away. We are on the Fourth Floor and the lift will work eventually! Alas, being in a proper office means we can no longer offer accommodation to visiting Friends in Moscow, but the welcome will be the same should you care to visit us. (And of course we know of places to stay.)

Please note the new postal and email addresses: PO Box 98, Moscow 111024, fhm-dd@rambler.ru, and phone: +7-903-664-1075 (mobile).

Dom Druzei has moved. Don't forget us!

*Sergei Grushko and Natasha Zhuravenkova
(and Peter Dyson)*



Natasha and Sergei

Diary Dates 2007

We are short of space for full postal addresses and phone numbers. Please contact the EMES Office if you need this information.

9 – 11 November FWCC-EMES Peace and Service Consultation, Brussels. Chant d'Oiseau Conference Centre, Brussels. Contact Bronwyn Harwood, emes@fwcc.quaker.org

16 – 18 November Europe and Middle East Young Friends, Quaker House, Brussels. Contact Matt Loffman, emeyf@qcea.org

20 – 24 March 2008 EMEYF/EMES Joint Gathering, Vienna. Contact Bronwyn Harwood, emes@fwcc.quaker.org

29-30 March Denmark Yearly Meeting near Copenhagen. Contact Mogens Clausen m.clausen@post.tele.dk

April Ireland Yearly Meeting. Contact Ireland Yearly Meeting Office office@quakers-in-ireland.ie

1-4 May Sweden Yearly Meeting, Svartbäcken. Contact Julia Ryberg, julia.ryberg@tele2.se

May Netherlands Yearly Meeting. Contact Hadewijch, secretariaat@dequakers.nl

9-11 May Latvia Recognised Worship Group, Liepaja. Details available (in December 2007) from Inese Ansule, Clerk, nese172001@yahoo.com

9-11 May Switzerland Yearly Meeting, Aeschi

23-16 May Britain Yearly Meeting, London. Contact Gillian Ashore, Recording Clerk, Friends House, 173 Euston Road London NW1 2AX

26-29 June Norway Yearly Meeting, Moi near Stavanger. Contact Marit Kromberg Grønland 12, 0188 OSLO, Norway. marit.kromberg@c2i.net

27-29 June Finland Yearly Meeting, Tampere. Contact jane.rose139@gmail.com

Please send items for inclusion in the diary to emes@fwcc.quaker.org

German Yearly Meeting – job opportunity

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) - German Yearly Meeting - requires from mid-2008 for their office in Berlin an Administrator (german/english speaking) (19 hours per week).

Main tasks are general office and secretarial work, administering the subscription and mailings of the publication "Quäker", bookkeeping and facility management for the office.

A detailed job description can be obtained from the Berlin office: +49(0)302082284, berlin@quaeker.org

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

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FWCC-EMES. 1 Cluny Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 4SW, UK emes@fwcc.quaker.org

Subscriptions

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To receive a copy by post please contact us at the EMES office.

There is no set subscription fee for Among Friends. We depend on voluntary subscriptions. Costs of printing and distribution are rising and we hope those who are able to pay will consider an annual donation of around 12 Euros or £8.

If you wish to make a bank transfer, please use the details below:

From outside the UK:

Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HB, UK

IBAN: GB11 CPBK 0800 5150 0732 10

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It is also essential that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES

Account Number: 20180696

Sort Code: 08-60-01

For holders of UK bank accounts please send cheques or CAF vouchers in GBP to the EMES office. Scottish Charity number: SC 036528

Deadline for Among Friends 109: 1 February 2008