

Among Friends

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Exec

Dear Friends,

Welcome to issue 110 of *Among Friends*! Four months into the job, much has already happened! The Gathering in Vienna absorbed a lot of time and effort, and yielded rich gifts of fellowship. Photos and comments on the Vienna experience are in the centre page spread of this issue.

The farewell to Bronwyn Harwood as Executive Secretary was poignant. Friends were moved by her entreaty that we should always be conscious of the fact that “what holds us together is much, much more precious than any differences that may exist among us”. And the “This is your EMES life” skit masterminded by Aidan McCartney at the Sunday evening celebration was full of fun. I did not escape either, and was subjected to a formal welcome at the hands of (mostly) Young Friends, who gave me a knotted up human chain to untangle, and then serenaded me to the tune of “She’ll be coming round the mountain”. As they sang “She’ll be organising Quakers when she comes...” I appreciated the challenge ahead!

It was good to meet so many Friends in Vienna, particularly those from small and isolated groups, networking and making connections. Some are eager for more contact – see the article by Friends in Georgia who long to find a partner Meeting to twin with. It was also inspiring to see in the “market place” on Saturday evening, showing how Friends witness to Quaker



Bronwyn and Marisa

testimonies in different parts of the Section – in this issue we are offering a further opportunity to learn about pioneering work on Alternatives to Violence Friends House Moscow has developed with recruits to the Russian Army.

The Quaker Council for European Affairs’ (QCEA) presence in Vienna had great impact. I visited Brussels in April, learning more about QCEA’s history and current work. I arrived just a few days after the Spring Study Tour had concluded, and we have two interesting accounts of it in this issue. See also the moving Testimony to the life of Elisabeth Baker, a Founder Members of QCEA.

Phase Two of the On-line project is almost complete, and we are now waiting to find out whether we can raise the funds to continue to develop our Ministry and Outreach, which has been so fruitful during the initial 15 months made possible by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. We have made an application for three more years’ funding, and will know in July whether we have been successful. No doubt news of that and more will be in the next edition of *Among Friends*, due out in August. Until then, I hope you enjoy this edition.

Marisa Johnson
Executive Secretary

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An Experience to Remember

When my principal approached me last February about joining the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) Study Tour in April 08, I happily accepted. I felt privileged to represent Brummana High School and for the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the school's Quaker roots. I discussed the trip with my family since it would be my first trip abroad. At the start I was thrilled but deep in my heart I knew that it would not be easy for all of us.

I have been a Science teacher at Brummana High School, Lebanon, for 11 years in the Intermediate and Secondary sections. I also have responsibility for guiding students in the advisory, conflict resolution and personal development programmes. I have always tried to instill in my students universal values such as friendship, honesty and peace. The trip was a chance for me to encounter Quakerism at close hand and to learn more about these values in application.

When I got on the plane for the first time, mixed feelings of fear and enthusiasm were clashing both in my heart and thoughts. I had never imagined that my first visit outside Lebanon would be to a European country where I would experience train and bus trips for the first time. I reached Brussels and Friends were waiting to meet the only Lebanese participant in the programme. Their welcome made me feel as one of them, especially as I was staying in the Quaker House at Square Ambiorix.

During the programme, I met Friends of different European nationalities and shared with them my Lebanese culture. We visited the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council of the European Union in Brussels; and the Court of Justice and the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg. I also enjoyed learning about the Council of Europe and its four pillars and the types of work done by the NGOs and other groups. The most interesting presentations were the ones given in Quaker House about the relationship between the European Union and the Middle East when we had speakers both from the Council and from the Commission. They gave me a chance to learn more about foreign perceptions regarding my country and its political dilemma. I participated freely, expressing my points of view about a better democratic country that all Lebanese people dream of.



Karine Chebly

Part of my journey was to enrich the Quakers in Europe and deepen their understanding about the background of my Quaker school and the consequences of the political situation in the country on the school's profile. I discussed with the Belgium and Luxembourg Friends the importance of the school: Brummana High School was and still is at the crossroads between the Eastern and Western cultures. I emphasized the support needed in order for the school to be able to continue its mission.

The introduction to Quakerism and participation in all the programme activities were an asset to my journey to a new land. I was able to share all these experiences not only with my family, upon my return to my native country, but also with my fellow co-workers.

I really thank both my school and the Friends in Brussels for giving me such an opportunity and standing by me during the trip which I will never forget.

Karine Chebly

Focusing on EU policy in the Western Balkans

The Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), a regional civil society organization in the Western Balkans, addresses transitional justice issues in response to the legacy of conflict in the recent past in the Western Balkans. YIHR targets young people as agents of change - young journalists, politicians, civil society activists, legal professionals and students - raising awareness about the truth of the past in the face of broad denial and building capacity of young people to shape the socio-political agenda to prevent in future wars such as those of the recent past.

The European Union was founded to prevent conflict. It is in this capacity that it is of hugely significant importance to communities in the Western Balkans, with the potential to offer conflict prevention, transitional justice and reconciliation over the long term. As members of the European Union, countries in the region will be forced around the same negotiating table, and in many cases with common interests. Cooperation will be of strategic relevance to each country.

There are certain criteria that must be achieved before such a future is possible. For this reason I was interested to learn more about the EU as a whole and its Western Balkans policy in particular, as it is 'sold' in Brussels. I arrived at QCEA concerned that the EU's policy was, in real terms, empty. Having witnessed the inconsistency of EU action it has been hard to identify what policy goals might be driving their decision making. There seemed to be no priority of conflict prevention at a political level, relevant to both its Western Balkans policy and its founding principles.

My visit confirmed this to be the case. There is lack of a consistent message coming from the institutions. Key decision makers are showing awareness of the potential for Serbia, in particular, to turn its back on Euro-Atlantic integration, but their actions remain incoherent and hard to interpret, and some people we met during the visit showed a real lack of understanding on this issue. An impressive and knowledgeable representative of the European Court of Justice referred to joining the EU as a "no-brainer". It is, in reality, anything but, in Serbia and elsewhere in the region. This is outmoded thinking for the Western Balkans. My heightened awareness of the culture and thinking

within Brussels institutions is probably the strongest benefit of my participation in the QCEA study tour. I am now far more aware that there are genuinely committed, smart people on the inside, and that their lack of awareness of the situation is something that **we must** and **can** address.

There are established mechanisms for communication which we must take up and strengthen, and accessible and valuable constituencies we can address, particularly in the European Parliament. The presentation by Mr Peterle, MEP from Slovenia, was inspirational on this front. I am not entirely convinced by talk of an inevitably European future for the Western Balkans, but it is good to hear someone in his position talk the talk.

We need to be more active in locating persons like Mr Peterle, in order that we ensure they back up such visions; walking the walk in terms of lobbying for effective and coherent policy and action. Better communication, a more sophisticated and broader process of consultation, and investment in the right people on the ground - investing more time in getting to know the key actors from all parts of the political spectrum- could have a transformative effect on future development. I am reassured that there are a number of issues that the EU clearly has no capacity for and, in meaningful terms, no jurisdiction over. Most clearly this is reconciliation. A domestically initiated process must be supported to be conducted to the highest standards advocated by local civil society actors. In this regard I am now aware that my colleagues must be more assertive in insisting that this process is not adversely affected by EU initiatives addressing other issue areas (with broadly good intentions). The EU is hopelessly ill-equipped to deal with the situation on the ground, but can be a key supporter if, as numerous officials encountered during the visit put it, it "gets its act together".

The study tour was an excellent experience in terms of consolidating my understanding and thinking. Quakers remain one of the most stimulating groups with whom to learn.

James May, based in Belgrade, works with the Youth Initiative for Human Rights

News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

En helg med engelsk og nordisk Venner / An Anglo-Scandinavian Weekend

Thursday 3 – Sunday 6 July 2008

Come and make new Quaker friends, share experience of being Quaker in different countries and cultures, and practice your language along the way! 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. See www.woodbrooke.org.uk for a fuller course description.

The 10-week **Quaker in Europe** online pilot course has come to an end. Friends from 11 countries have spent time getting acquainted with the Moodle course software and with sharing online about Quakerism and their own experience. We have gotten to know each other and have learned a lot about the benefits and challenges of online interaction in a Quaker context. The group has been diverse in comfort levels with technology and English as well as in Quaker experience and theological standpoint. All have been committed to exploring learning and fellowship in this medium. Now the third step of translating the course into around 15 languages will begin. After that, it can be offered in these languages to Friends and enquirers, and it will be facilitated by native speakers. In July, the *Translating in a European Context* event at Woodbrooke will be an opportunity for those involved in the project to work together on translating the texts that are being used. We hope that many Friends around Europe will be able to get involved in the project as the course becomes available in different languages. The online project has great potential both as an outreach tool and as a way of nurturing Friends. If you are interested in learning more, please get in touch either with the Friends in your country who you know are involved, or with Julia Ryberg at julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk

Woodbrooke is going **on-the-road to Sweden** 6-8 June. Michael Eccles and Deborah Rowlands will lead Swedish Friends in learning more about *The Sense of the Meeting*. Participants will be both experienced Friends and relatively new enquirers. Woodbrooke has also been approached by the Europe and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) to do a Woodbrooke-on-the-Road at their gathering in Norway in August.

At the **Vienna gathering** during Easter, Helen Rowlands led two Woodbrooke-on-the-Road workshops. She reports from these:

“One workshop looked at Quaker business method. We used the image of water. Below the surface there are core beliefs which inform the distinctive Quaker way, such as the idea of a loving God whose way we aspire to follow by opening ourselves to Light. We then looked at the ‘surface level’ behaviours and practices which, over the years, Friends have found helpful in reaching decisions together. Which of them are essential in all circumstances? What works in small groups, and what works better in larger groups which may need to be more formal? The interaction between experienced and new Friends from very different groups was particularly helpful.

The other workshop was for people from small or isolated groups. We looked at the positive as well the dispiriting things about being small, and found that often the down-side and the up-side are related. The key to enspiriting a small group is to build a shared vision of what the group could become, and this was not necessarily to do with growth in numbers. Awareness of being part of a wider community of Friends is important, and ideas were shared of how to do this. Notes from this workshop have been passed to Marisa Johnson.”

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.

Tbilisi Worship Group looks for a Meeting to twin with

Tbilisi is the capital and the largest city of Georgia, on the banks of the Mtkvari (Kura) River. Georgia is located strategically at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, along the historic Silk Road routes. It has often been the point of contention between various rival powers and empires. Historically, it has been home to peoples from different cultures, religions and ethnicities. Despite being an Orthodox Christian Country, Tbilisi is one place where a Synagogue, Orthodox Church and a Mosque are located next to each other in the ancient Bath district.

In 1801, the Georgian kingdom joined the Russian Empire. It was independent from 1918 to 1921 when it was occupied by Soviet Bolshevik forces, and until 1991 Georgia was a part of Soviet Union. Since the break-up of the USSR Georgia has been independent, but suffered a civil war and conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia that have resulted in 247,000 refugees from these countries.

The political situation is very complicated. The President came to power in November 2003, the "Rose" Revolution, promising economic and social stability and growth. In the four years since he has not accomplished his obligations. Unfortunately, the general economic situation has worsened. Prices for gas, electricity and food have increased, unemployment is running at 50% and the average monthly pension is 45 US\$.

In Soviet times almost all religions were forbidden: only one Synagogue, one Catholic Church and a few Orthodox Churches remained open in Tbilisi. Most of the population was atheist, or pretended to be! People were afraid that they would lose their jobs or even be arrested for being openly religious. Orthodox Churches were full of KGB informers. The situation changed after 1991 and many religious groups re-opened their Churches in Georgia and were registered as NGOs. A new law on the registration of religious organizations appeared only in 2005.

Today the majority of the population (80 %) belongs to the Georgian Orthodox Christian Church, who claim only they have the truth and the other Christian churches are merely sects. Nevertheless, there are many Roman Catholics, about 2,000 Lutherans, between 6-8,000 Jews and 300,000 Muslims. There are about

30 different Christian denominations represented in Georgia.

Quakerism in Georgia is recent. A Georgian contacted Friends 11 years ago and went to Moscow in 1997 where he met Russian Friends. A year later Vladimir attended Moscow Friends Annual Gathering. After that, contact with Russian and European Friends was lost until 2005. Since then more and more Georgians have learnt about Quakerism. We have two books about Quakerism translated into Georgian. We have been officially recognized by the Public Defenders Centre for Religious Tolerance. We hope that with time we will have Friends Meetings not only in Tbilisi, but also in other towns and cities in Georgia. We usually gather for Meeting for Worship at my apartment twice a month. Seven Georgians were accepted into membership by FWCC's International Membership Committee in October 2007 and we were recognized as a Quaker Worship Group.

We do our best to help people: diabetics, refugees and the disabled. We brought clothing and other relief to refugees from Abkhazia in the city of Mtsketa.

With the support of Friends House Moscow (Dom Druzei) we published 400 copies of a self help book about diabetes and distributed it free to diabetics and have published the first Number (500 copies) of the Newspaper "Diabetes Bulletin" with support from Lisburn Friends Meeting.

We want to learn and exchange experience with another Meeting, which could be a spiritual twin to us. We sometimes feel ourselves isolated because we do not have Friends with a long life experience of being a Quaker. Such an experience and guidance could be very helpful to each Georgian Friend. We feel that we have a big potential and a lot of energy but sometimes we need advice from our Friends about what we can do, to make the world better and more peaceful. We want to know that there are Friends always ready to help us with advice, can answer our Questions and support us in their silent prayer.

We ask you to remember us in your thoughts and prayers at these troubled times.

*Mikheil Elizbarashvili,
On behalf of Tbilisi Friends Worship Group*

Voices from Vienna

“When you meet with friends at home (undoubtedly pleasant to you people) you in some concepts are “cooking in own juice”. Dialogue with unfamiliar, but similar on religious beliefs people is, doubtless, a new and a very pleasant experience.”

“Mostly I enjoyed the hearing and speaking of all the different languages(each language produces a different vibration in your mouth when you speak it, therefore having a different effect on your emotions, which means on this Vienna gathering, where the same Friends talked to each other in two or more languages, we had very special atmosphere created.”

“My “spiritual petrol tank” was pretty empty, thankfully my family-logistics made it possible for me to take part, I have returned so overfilled with spiritual blessings.”

“By the time we knew that we had been accepted to participate in the gathering, the flight back on Monday had been fully booked and we had to leave early on Sunday, missing one entire day.”

“Recharged our batteries.”

“In general, I enjoy hearing from activities by Friends in the place where they live and work. How do Friends put



The Gathering

their faith into practice, that’s the question for me.”

“On-line Learning Project (EMES and Woodbrooke) very exciting stuff, well presented and a terrific project”

“Would that we could meet up every year.”

“Perhaps overall what remains in my mind most was the Friday evening Showcase of the Quaker groups and their work all over Europe.”

“The rooms were excellent, the facilities were good and the sessions were rewarding.”

“Just to say how very much I appreciated the workshop run by QCEA on criminal justice. Highly informative and we got much more out of it because the speaker was so willing to take questions as she went along. Very rich session.”

“Although not an official theme, the most important message of the gathering for me is that Quakerism is here both for our spiritual comfort and discomfort. This was expressed in many different ways. This was most obvious was in the workshops which frequently focussed on themes of faith in action. On some level it is comforting to hear of the work that Quakers are doing and to know that I am part of a faith community



Easter in Vienna

which, however imperfectly, is trying to confront the most urgent and difficult issues of today. However, it is also rather discomfoting to have to confront how little I personally do to create a more peaceful world.”

“Perhaps the strongest sessions included very personal statements from Friends, describing how they came to Quakerism and also how they facilitate peace in their daily lives. In this connection, our Friends in Palestine are closer to the “front-line” of overt conflict. However, we were reminded that we are all called to do what we can, wherever we are.”

“For me, the most exciting session was the showing of a film, based on ‘Romeo and Juliet, but modified to reflect life in Palestine. This had been made by young people attending Friends School, Ramallah. We appreciated this immensely. Moreover, we set up a live “Skype” interview with the main actors over the Internet and gave comments and asked questions.”

“It seems to me an ongoing issue in life really, that women should not have to forgo being part of things because they have young children. I don’t know how to resolve it and it certainly isn’t just the responsibility of Quakers to find creative solutions, but it seems to me important to think about how women should be able to be in the world as well as be mothers, and not just in the modern way of putting them into nurseries while women do their own thing.”

“It seemed clear to me that one of our group who would have had interesting things to say, and who could have easily been encouraged to say them in a conventional discussion group, said nothing. In worship



Marit and Ali

sharing it becomes impossible to offer encouragement to such people. I wish Friends were not so in awe of the technique.”

“I would like to express my gratitude for the possibility to visit the Gathering in Vienna. I have had very many good impressions from that Gathering. It is always good when you have a possibility to meet and communicate with the Friends from different parts of the world. I have learned a lot and receive a very big and positive experience from the communication and worshipping with European and Middle East Friends.”

“Once again we could feel how important the possibility of meeting with other Friends was for these who come from fledgling groups in order to strengthen their resolve to continue in what for them is a new way of expressing and practicing their faith.”

“I feel that in general things were well organized, although-because we struggle to lead a simple lifestyle-would have preferred a less luxurious venue.

We would also add that a little more attention to children care would have been most welcome.”



Music Making

Friends House Moscow takes Alternatives to Violence (AVP) programme to Russian Army

Lipetsk psychologists are the first in Russia to begin a unique experiment. They are training soldiers in basic communication without conflict. First through the training were soldiers from units of the interior military forces.

The unit's leaders release them every day from service. And they're in a hurry to change their army boots for slippers. In fact, service doesn't end – interior forces soldiers are spending the time in army-oriented psychological training. Psychologist Alexandra Pominova explains to yesterday's newcomers: the right approach to communication is relevant everywhere – in civilian life, and in the barracks.

Alexandra Pominova, psychologist: "What we're doing is this: looking at communication without conflict, and at understanding. In a violent situation you yourself can be a source of violence, whoever and wherever you are. It's important to understand how you can communicate in a different way."

There are 10 people in this group. The psychologists work with them through different contentious situations, not all with a specifically military side. All are taken from real life. Rifleman Roman Goloborodov takes the role of a father, whose drunk under-age son crashes his car. In real life, Roman is sure that violent confrontation is unavoidable in a purely male group. The main thing to know, is how to correctly avoid it. "That's exactly why many men find themselves in such conflict situations in the first place."



Fifty soldiers from the Lipetsk internal forces unit have already been trained in conflict-free communication skills. The groups include young men from different intakes and departments, in order to get to know each other better. Officers aren't invited, in order to not disrupt the hierarchy. Konstantin Fedyanin did the training two weeks ago. He's convinced it has an effect. "The guys here from Dagestan, I practically never talked to them. Afterwards we began to communicate, understand each other immediately."

The "Alternatives to Violence" project will continue as long as it is financed. AVP is a core project of Dom Druzei, Friends House Moscow, which is funded by Friends in Europe and America. But the unit leadership is interested in having as many soldiers as possible participate. From April, new army conscripts will do only 1 year's service. It is already being debated at ministerial level whether the shortened length of service attracts the envy of less-fortunate older conscripts. Work on such a project could be a good antidote to violence against younger conscripts.



Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Elisabeth Baker

Born 25 October 1940, died 14 May 2007

Elisabeth was born in Stretford, Manchester, in the north of England, the eldest of three daughters. Her family was of the utmost importance to her throughout her life. Once she had completed her high school education she went to Manchester College of Commerce and Languages, where her studies included French, Russian and secretarial work.

After working in France and, for a short time, in a commercial company, she went to Friends House, London, for a year before joining the staff of the Friends International Centre as Irene Jacoby's secretary. She was involved very fully in the life of the Centre and became much more than a secretary. Her dynamic personality, sense of fun and her capacity for friendship were evident even then and the friends she made at that time remained in touch with her for the rest of her life.

When Margaret Gibbins of FWCC wanted her to join a Quaker committee, Elisabeth said that she could not because she was not in membership. Margaret's response was "well it's high time you were!" Elisabeth heeded that call and went on eventually to become a founder member of Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting.

From 1968 to 1973 Elisabeth worked in the Department of International Affairs of the British Council of Churches as administrative secretary to Noel Salter. During this time she also acted as interpreter at peace and youth conferences.

When Britain joined the then European Communities, Elisabeth and the Salters went to Brussels. Elisabeth first worked at the Coordinating Council of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and, in 1975, moved on to the Council of the European Communities, still dealing with the ACP countries. Her job involved a lot of travel, including attendance at the Lomé summits. She acquired considerable expertise and was greatly respected by negotiators at the highest levels. A member of Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting, himself a senior EU negotiator, remembers what an important role the ACP group, and particularly Elisabeth, played in bringing both sides together and building bridges.

She had an ability to help without anyone feeling she was doing anything special, a capacity to make herself

invisible whatever the strength of her convictions and the depths of her insight. Elisabeth's contribution often passed unrecognised but she accepted this with quiet grace, good humour and optimism.

Friends remember her warmth and the way in which she quietly and discreetly supported those in need, whether by helping to find lodgings or inviting them to her home or to one of her favourite Brussels restaurants. Indeed, many stray Friends found themselves living on her top floor over the years!

Elisabeth's struggle with cancer was a long one but she was able to give encouragement and strength to others when cancer struck their own families. She sat at bedsides and attended funerals and showed kindness and sympathy when she was none too well herself.

Elisabeth was a committed Friend. She was one of the founder members and keystones of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), an inseparable part of the institution, and was valued by all the staff and others who passed through the door of Quaker House Brussels. Despite her own failing health, she kept everyone sane through her support and sense of fun. She was modest but determined - and had quite strong views about how things should be done! Indeed, she only ever complained when things were not done as she thought they should be.

She never once complained about her illness, which she faced with fortitude and optimism. Elisabeth was interested in life to the very end. She took Open University courses, violin lessons and travelled round France on the trail of a historical agriculturalist with Pat Stapleton, who was one of the first two joint representatives at QCEA.

Many Friends remember her 60th birthday party, which started as a tram ride round Brussels, with champagne glasses in their hands. Elisabeth was so good at bringing her friends together.

A fitting epitaph could be the tram which used to pass the end of her road: it came from "Paix" and its destination was "Silence". How appropriate for a Quaker!

She was one of the kindest, most generous, helpful and unselfish people and her friends' lives were the richer for having known her.

Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting

NOT PRIVATION BUT APPROPRIATE LIVING

An opportunity for Friends to reflect on energy security, climate and conflict
QCEA's Associate Members' Conference held in conjunction with QPSW

- Keynote Speaker: Head, heart and spirit: Energy security and sustainability seen through the testimonies and scripture (Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch, Representatives, QCEA)
- Workshops: Energy and sustainability seen through the lens of the testimonies (we will use a variety of approaches and techniques in the workshops including art and music)
- Meet Friends from across Europe

Saturday night live – David Ferrard in Concert: Songs for Peace and Justice

5 to 7 December 2008

(Starts with supper on Friday and ends after lunch on Sunday)

Chant d'Oiseau Conference Centre, Brussels, Belgium

Application Deadline: 18 September 2008

Cost: €195 per person (including registration, meals and accommodation, excludes travel).

For participants who are Associate/Supporting Members or who represent a Monthly Meeting which is an Associate/Supporting Member the cost is €170.

Booking is essential as places are limited!

Contact: Sara Erlandsson,
Quaker Council for European Affairs, Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: serlandsson@qcea.org
Phone: +32 2 234 3062

News in Brief

Historic Public Meeting in Poland

On March 2, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. the first regular monthly public meeting for worship in centuries took place on Polish territory. There has been no indigenous Quaker movement holding regular public meetings since the city authorities of Danzig (modern Gdańsk) successfully suppressed the Quakers there in the seventeenth century, an issue which elicited protest letters from both George Fox and William Penn to the municipal authorities and the King of Poland.

Although there have been various foreign Friends holding more or less public meetings for worship intermittently in Poland, especially for many years the Quaker Esperanto Society in the Polish mountains, there were no regular meetings available in any part of Poland. Now the independent Polish group Poznańska (Uniwersalistyczna) Kongregacja Religijnego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół (Poznań Universalist Worship Group of the Religious Society of Friends) has organised the long-term holding and publicising of

public meetings for worship. In doing so it is building upon the 2007 Central European Regional Friends Meeting which it organised in Poznań last May for EMES. At that gathering the exceptional step had been taken of advertising a public lecture on Quaker spirituality by Julia Ryberg of Woodbrooke-on-the-Road and providing for its translation into Polish. This created a small group of interested locals and gave the organisers experience at organising and publicising Quaker events.

The group is eager to invite foreign Friends to worship with them. Meetings occur on the initial First Day of every month. Details of finding the meeting venue and any exceptional changes of which First Day in the month the meeting will be held can be found at <http://www.amu.edu.pl/~bmaurus/quakerpoland.html> or the official Polish-language site <http://www.amu.edu.pl/~mjarczyk/k/> as well as by writing mjarczyk@amu.edu.pl or bmaurus@amu.edu.pl

QCEA Embraces the Challenge of Energy Security, Conflict and Climate Change

Climate change and energy security are on everyone's agenda, as attested by a recent conference in Brussels on 'Geopolitics and Security', with significant representation from military circles.

QCEA has been developing a project to look at the issues after long and deep discernment: is it doable, affordable, and does it have the potential to capture an authentic Quaker voice? As Netherlands YM, German YM Peace Committee, QPSW (Britain YM) and 'Eco-Quakers' in Ireland YM are addressing the issues, we at QCEA feel that we are tapping into a rich source of fresh Quaker thinking.

We will work on the question of where we stand, here, in the global North, the part of the world that is using much more than its fair share, that has got used to abundance beyond reason and that has to be willing to engage radically in being part of the solution. We call this 'the demand side of the equation' for short, but it's of course not as simple as that.

Drawing on funding given to QCEA some time ago for in-depth research work we created a new post of Policy Officer to give us the capacity to engage with this work in a targeted and focused way. Neil Endicott will join us in July to take up the challenge.

Is this something Friends need to do, now, at European level? If I had any doubt about this, attending a conference on 'Conflict Prevention and Climate Change'



Neil Endicott

on 24 April 2008 in Brussels would have answered them in one moment. All the discussion was about adaptation to the consequences in the global south and how 'we' can 'help' with that. QCEA was the only voice heard in the hall that asked the question about the elephant in the room: our life-styles and the policy messages that need to be developed to change them drastically, so we stop being the problem.

QCEA is looking forward to having Neil here with us and to our work in this area taking off in such a way that we can ensure that future discussions will take on board the elephant in the room before it is finally too late.

Martina Weitch

Invitation to attend the Asia West Pacific Gathering

Register now for the Asia West Pacific Gathering in Bhopal India, 6-12 November/and /or for the Young Friends Event 12-15 November at the same venue. An extensive pre and post Gathering program is being developed and will be sent to all registrants. Over 100 Friends from all Sections of the world will be in attendance, with English being the main language and translations available into Hindi and Japanese. The amazing culture of India will be included in the program as well as the external events. Friends will see the work of local NGO's, Quaker schools, Friends Rural Centre, and join in the celebrations with Mid India Yearly Meeting for its 100 year

anniversary. Registration forms should be emailed to Valerie@fwccawps.org asap as places are filling up fast. All visa applications are to be under the 'tourist' category and more advice and assistance will be sent to all registrants. A package of information on India is ready to be emailed, and it is strongly suggested that Friends also purchase a Tourist guide of India and read all they can about this old and fascinating civilization. The cost of Registration is \$160 AUD and there are details on the website of how to make direct deposits to the account in Australia. The balance, \$390 AUD is payable in India in rupees.

Diary Dates 2008

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

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

18 July – 15 August 2008 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage: "A journey through conflict to peace"

26–29 August France Yearly Meeting, Pontmain, Contact; Libby Perkins: libby@ripserve.com
7 Chemin de Fonvieille 30111 Congénies, France

19–21 September Border Meeting, Netherlands, Contact Hadewijch Touwen, Netherlands YM Secretary, Religieus Genootschap der Vrienden (Quakers) Postbus 2167, NL-7420 AD Deventer

10–12 October FWCC-EMES Peace and Service Consultation, Kortenberg Abbey near Brussels. Contact Marisa Johnson emes@fwcc.quaker.org

31 October–2 November German Yearly Meeting, Bad Pyrmont. Contact: pyrmont@quaaker.org

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

Stellenanzeige Kinder- und Juniorenarbeit in der deutschen Jahresversammlung

Die Religiöse Gesellschaft der Freunde (Quäker) sucht bundesweit eine engagierte und pädagogisch erfahrene Persönlichkeit zur Entwicklung von geeigneten Konzepten und zum Aufbau eines Netzwerkes für die thematische Arbeit mit unsern Kindern und Jugendlichen. Es handelt sich um eine halbe Stelle, die zunächst auf 2 Jahre befristet ist. Voraussetzung ist Vertrautheit mit und Nähe zum Quäkertum (Mitgliedschaft von Vorteil, aber keine Bedingung), Bereitschaft zu Dienstreisen, Fähigkeit zum eigenständigen und konzeptionellen Arbeiten. Aussagekräftige Bewerbungen bitte bis zum 18. 05. 2008 an das Quakerbüro Berlin, Planckstraße 20, 10117 Berlin. Auf Anfrage ist dort eine Stellenbeschreibung zu erhalten.

RESIDENT FRIEND/S, French speaking essential, sought to volunteer for Congénies Quaker Centre, near Nîmes. 15 flexi-hours per week, 3-6 months minimum. Studio-flat. Start date by arrangement. Information: centre.quaker.congenies@gmail.com. CQC, 11 ave. des Quakers, 30111 Congénies, +33 466 71 25 93. www.maison-quaker-congenies.org.

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Deadline for Among Friends 111: 1 August 2008