

What is FWCC/EMES?

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) was set up at the 1937 World Conference of Friends in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Its purpose is 'to facilitate loving understanding of diversities among Friends while we discover together, with God's help, our common spiritual ground; and to facilitate full expression of our Friends' testimonies in the world'. Representatives, appointed by the affiliated Yearly Meeting and groups, meet once every three years at Triennials in different parts of the world. They aim to provide links between Friends as they seek to perceive God's will more clearly, so that they may more effectively make their corporate witness. An Interim Committee meets annually to continue FWCC's decision-making processes and guide the work of the staff between Triennial Meetings on behalf of Friends.

The World Office in London is the centre of worldwide communications for FWCC. Its staff help organise Triennial Meetings and other gatherings and maintain contact with the work of the four Sections and the Quaker United Nations Offices. The International Membership programme links isolated Friends and worship groups around the world to the family of Friends. By means of staff travel, correspondence and publications, the office seeks to help Friends to gain a better understanding of the worldwide character of the Society of Friends and its vocation in the world.

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, the International Family Gathering, border meetings, seminars, peace and service consultations, the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (in cooperation with the Section of the Americas), and other activities, encourage mutual respect and trust, leading towards greater involvement of Friends. A small Executive Committee, assisted by a part-time Executive Secretary, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. Among many different interests, the Section also focuses on justice, peace and service issues.

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

Some Quaker Addresses in Europe

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From Your EMES Clerk

It is with great regret that I will not be able to be with you during this Annual Meeting. Unfortunately I am still recovering from an operation and the doctors didn't think it was a good idea for me to travel.

I want to thank our Swedish Friends for inviting EMES and the Planning Group for organising what promises to be a very exciting meeting. May the Spirit be with you during your worship and deliberations, and do enjoy each other in between the serious work. I would also like to thank the Executive Committee Members for sharing out the clerkship during my illness and particularly the Executive Secretary for her dedicated work and support.

QuiET Board Meeting in June 2003. Due to the marriage of my eldest son on the same day, I was unable to attend the QuiET Board meeting last June. Meanwhile we are in the process of building a better contact with QuiET and more news will hopefully follow in the course of this year.

An Executive Meeting was held from 17 - 19 October 2003 in London. Preparations for the Triennial were an important item on the agenda, as was the situation in the Middle East. Friends Play Centre in Ramallah and Ramallah Monthly Meeting require our prayers and attention. Meanwhile visits have taken place, of which you will receive reports.

Future registration of EMES to give the Section a legal basis was discussed and I would like to invite Friends from all over Europe to send in their comments and suggestions to me as to which country would be the more suitable for registration of the organisation.

The "Trees for Africa" Initiative will continue into the coming years. Friends are reminded that donations for this project are warmly welcomed and serve both as a compensation for all the air miles we are making, as well as support for the tree nursery of the Rural Services Project in Western Kenya in which Kenyan Friends are much involved.

The EMES Executive Committee meeting was followed by a meeting of the FWCC Interim Committee of which Section Clerks are a member and which runs the FWCC World Office in between Triennial Gatherings. The main issue for the Interim Committee was to interview and bring forward two names for a General Secretary and an Associate Secretary for the World Office, to replace Elizabeth Duke and David Brindle at the end of their service. The names of Nancy Irving as General Secretary and Joseph Andugu were suggested for approval by all Friends gathered at the Triennial in New Zealand. I am very pleased that the appointments were duly made.

Following the Interim Committee Meeting I was able to sit in at the International Membership Committee in session. Both the IMC and EMES could benefit from an exchange of information on isolated Friends living in European countries, particularly when there is some experience of discrimination on the basis of religion in those countries.

Within the Executive Committee a lot of thinking is being done about ways to structurally strengthen our active support for Friends in the Middle East. We pray for guidance in finding the right way forward for Friends in this region.

I look forward to reports from this Annual Meeting and keep you all in the Light.

Anita Wuyts

From Your EMES Executive Secretary

This is my second annual report as Executive Secretary and I can report that I feel I am slowly finding my way. It has been very hard not to occupy all my waking hours – and even some of the sleeping ones – with work and thoughts of EMES. So rather strangely for a report on the work I might start by telling you that after 2 years I am slowly learning to relax about work not done and make time for gardening, the occasional visit to the theatre or a concert and just “chilling out” with family and friends!

At the annual meeting in 2003 the decision was taken to launch a new Visiting Friends programme. I see this exciting new resource as having the potential to develop and contribute widely to nurturing the spiritual life of Friends and their groups in Europe and the Middle East. By the end of the 2003 six Visiting Friends had been appointed and three were beginning to plan programmes with the host groups in Denmark, Finland and the Czech Republic. The whole team will meet together for the first time in 2004 and arrangements for other visits will be made at that time.

In May I attended the Church and Peace Conference in Osijek, Croatia, which was for me personally a very useful introduction to the work of Church and Peace itself and to peace work being undertaken in former Yugoslavia, in addition of course it also provided an opportunity to meet and talk with many interesting and committed workers for peace. However I have had little time to follow up on the work and the EMES Executive Committee has decided to seek an EMES representative who can take specific responsibility for maintaining this link.

25 Friends met at Valence in Hungary for the 8th Central Europe Gathering for what was minuted as a time of deep and gentle sharing. That minute went on: “In meeting with others who are searching the truth the spirit can bring light to our understanding. We are reminded that Pentecost is celebration of the spirit. The community of Friends

strengthens us to have the courage to say the truth out loud and be judged by it.” However there was uncertainty about costs and venues for future meetings so the decision was taken not to meet in 2004 but to plan for other ways of ensuring contact between individuals and groups. The next meeting will be planned for 2005. A group of four Friends from Wem Meeting in Britain, which is twinned with Budapest Worship Group, attended at the invitation of Hungarian Friends. There is clearly benefit in this twinning arrangement for Friends in both meetings and it is an idea which others might like to consider.

In 2003 I attended just two Yearly Meetings. In Dublin in April there was a warm welcome from Irish Friends at their Yearly Meeting. This was my first visit to Irish Friends and, as I expected, I found a vibrant coming together of Friends from differing backgrounds. What I had not expected was that the invited visitors would include a broader interdenominational and interfaith representation than I had yet seen at any other Yearly Meeting. Guests included representatives from the Church of Ireland, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian Churches, the Islamic Cultural Centre, the Jewish Representatives Council, the Congregation of Progressive Jews and the Bahai community. In October I was pleased to be able to attend German Yearly Meeting: a weekend of deep reflection, joyful encounter and at times painful struggle to find the will of God for the way ahead. There is a lively group of young people and lots of children for whom the Jahresversammlung is as much a high point in their year as it is for their parents. The 40th anniversary of Quakerhilfe was celebrated in fine style.

Contacts in the Middle East. Unfortunately I was prevented from travelling to Brummana in January by a sudden acute illness and have not as yet been able to arrange a replacement visit. I hope to visit in 2004. In August I made my first visit to Palestine. I was fortunate to be able to spend a little over two weeks meeting many people, undertaking some voluntary work with girls in a local girls' home and in the Friends Play Centre in the Ama'ari Camp, meeting representatives of AFSC and EAPPI and of course attending meeting for worship with, and getting to know, Ramallah Friends. Like many others I returned shocked and angered by the horrendous denial of human rights, the violence, the aftermath of violence, the deep sense of hopelessness. I also returned with a better understanding of the need Ramallah Friends have for connection with the world-wide family of Friends, and in particular with us in the Europe and Middle East Section of FWCC. In practical terms there is support to be given with the Play Centre and with the development of the Ramallah Meeting House as a centre for peace and reconciliation. In December Franco Perna also met with Friends in Ramallah on behalf of EMES Executive Committee. He was, in particular, involved in discussions about the future of the Play Centre, and a separate report will be brought to the Annual Meeting.

At the joint **Peace and Service Consultation** towards the end of the year we were involved in both thinking big, as we heard of work on bringing in a Global Non-Violent Peace Force and in hearing of small Quaker actions for peace and service making a difference in people's lives at a local level. We agreed to hold a joint consultation again next year, seeing the peace and service work as being inextricably linked. We plan to meet in Brussels asking QUNO Geneva to provide a focal point on the agenda.

Quaker Council for European Affairs: I have represented EMES at Council meetings and can report steady progress through 2003 as the new representatives, Martina Weitsch and Liz Scurfield, have developed both the programme and the financial viability of QCEA. The work programme includes a number of projects in the areas of peace, human rights and economic justice. There will be materials available for representatives at the EMES Annual Meeting.

Quaker Voluntary Action continues to develop volunteering opportunities and projects with Friends in a number of countries. It was pleasing that the first volunteer to come to spend a (very successful) year on the New Barracks Estate in Salford, Manchester came through contact with Friends House Moscow. There is a clear link between the aims of EMES and the work of QVA and during 2003 I have continued to serve as clerk of the QVA committee. However I do hope to hand over this responsibility during 2004 as there are only so many hours in the day!

John Warder Fund. During 2003 funds were used: to support Young Friends travel to Hungary for EMEYF Spring Gathering; for the Central Europe gathering; attendance of two representatives at the Peace and Service Consultation; to cover the costs of a Friend attending two Ecumenical gatherings on behalf of EMES and was made available for Friends attending Border meetings.

Literature. The Executive Committee has wanted to encourage the production of Quaker literature in languages other than English and in 2003 was pleased to provide financial assistance for publications in Greek, Finnish and Norwegian.

Friends in Edinburgh have been supportive of the work for EMES. Anna Dunford has continued to provide invaluable assistance and moral support with some of the financial aspects of the office work, several local Friends regularly help with stuffing envelopes for the mailing of Among Friends, and since the July 2003 I have had much appreciated help from Alastair Reid with getting Among Friends ready to go to the printer.

I have greatly valued the privilege of travelling among Friends across the section. I have received so many gifts of the spirit through those I have met and look forward to

meeting with more Friends in the year to come as we seek together to discern God's will for us as individuals, for our Quaker community and for our action in the world.

Bronwyn Harwood

Reports from Yearly Meetings and Groups

Austria Quarterly Meeting

Friends in Austria gained a new place to meet at for Meeting. It is centrally located in Vienna and a sublet of the office of *Konfliktkultur* of Susanne Jalka, our clerk. It also holds our library of about 500 items with its catalogue now accessible on computer.

We offered several evenings of open house for information about Quakers which drew about 30 people. This our new witness, which we hope to extend, has also been appreciated by Austrian Friends for bringing contact with people of various religious interests and unexpected questions from them.

Austrian Friends took part in organizing the German Yearly Meeting of 2003. Hungarian Friends, like in previous years, were able to share one of our Quarterly Meetings, this year in Vienna with the theme of community and clearness as Quaker processes. We were visited by many Friends from abroad, and some of us were able in travelling to refresh their Quaker links.

The American attack on Iraq led, in Austria too, to large demonstrations for peace and to increased anxiety about hawkish labours of terror overshadowing those labours of peace and justice in the world which are most urgent.

Ewald Eichler

Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting

The Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting met regularly in 2003, has its financial house in order, and is proceeding as best it can to formulate and implement its concerns. Between 15 and 20 of us meet regularly every First Day. A group of 6 meets regularly in Luxembourg. We have 24 members, a varying number of members of other Meetings, and some 30 attenders in regular attendance.

The major event this year for us was, of course, the lead-up to the second war in Iraq. We demonstrated and felt the frustration of realizing the apparent futility of marching in protest, even with tens of thousands of other people, only to know that the decisions had been made long before. We find it hard to sow the seed but not to count the harvest. A number of us attended the Border Meeting with Friends from Germany, the Netherlands, and Great Britain in Walderberg, Germany, under the very able direction

of Eva Liebman. Roswitha Jarman, who is doing admirable work with traumatized people in the Caucasus led us in the consideration of the questions: From where do I gain inner strength to cope with what I may be challenged to do? How do I deal with conflicts within myself around me and in the world at large? What are my personal experiences of forgiveness and reconciliation? Over the years, acquaintances have developed into friends to the point that the Border Meeting coalesces into a real meeting for the weekend. It takes time to nurture friendship and love, and the process cannot be hurried.

Our Pastoral Care Committee has been particularly active with the grave illness of two of our members. The spiritual and emotional return on the time and effort we invested in helping our friends was and is copious. Indeed, in tending to its members, we feel, the Meeting puts its intentions to test.

A number of us are working our way through the "Commands & Invitations" Study Pack published by the Quaker Resources for Learning. We find it a very well prepared and beneficial program and recommend it to Friends, whatever stage of their spiritual journey.

We have continued our close involvement, personal and financial, with the Quaker Council of European Affairs. We recommend the work of the QCEA to Friends everywhere, as it is a way we can make our voice heard in the deliberations of the European Union in the very critical ways of contributing to the process of policy preparation of policy, monitoring the implementation, and keeping us informed in areas close to our concerns. We wholeheartedly support the Vision of Europe published by the QCEA and recommend it to Friends the world over.

Edward Haasl

Britain Yearly Meeting

This year has seen a continuing peace witness among British Friends. Many local Meetings have faithfully sustained vigils in their own area, and Friends have gathered together for worship before the big national demonstrations for peace. On 15 February a large number of Friends from around the country met in silence publicly in central London before joining the largest anti-war protest in British history.

Friends have also made parliamentary representations against the war in Iraq, and have been active in the movement against Fylingdales military base in Yorkshire being used in the proposed US 'star wars' missile defence programme. As an integral part of our Yearly Meeting session on 'Witnessing to peace in a changing world', most of those present, adults and children, continued our worship in an hour's act of public witness outside Euston Station.

In our Yearly Meeting we also considered outreach and 'inreach' issues. How do we present Quakerism to others, and how do we develop an ability to articulate our faith to others? Major outreach movements in Wales and London are encouraging other parts of the Yearly Meeting to look at how they might participate, and a conference on outreach was held which involved one hundred and forty Quakers from around the country. Each of us has been encouraged to make the Quaker testimonies our own, that our ministry might be strengthened. Some 700 Friends and attenders gathered for another successful all-age Summer Gathering, returning re-invigorated by the energy and friendships generated during it.

QPSW has been active in many places. Among its activities has been participation in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. The moving accounts of the observers experiences while living and working in Palestine have aided awareness within the Yearly Meeting of the problems in that area. One of the proposals for discussion sent by BYM to the FWCC Triennial was our concern to support Quakers, and others who are suffering, in the Middle East. QPSW's vocational training project in the Lebanon has been laid down, within the time frame as originally proposed. Within Britain, the government supported 'Circles of Support and Accountability' project administered by QPSW to help sex offenders from re-offending has become well established and is being followed with close interest by the police and other services.

There has been a focus on the work of QUNO, especially the Geneva office, which is under the care of BYM, and Friends House hosted the launch of its appeal. Our Parliamentary Liaison Officer responded critically to various government proposals restricting the rights of asylum seekers.

We continue to look at our organisational structures, with a view to making sure that they are relevant, and as effective as possible to support our work in the present world. In addition to the central work and the work of central committees, our RECAST group (a working group on this subject) has looked at the future of General Meeting', the regional gatherings, and some of these have already been laid down. Others see good reason to continue. This process continues.

Payment for the refurbishment of Friends House was completed in April 2003, some ten years earlier than originally projected. The improved facilities are enjoyed by some 100,000 people who use the building for meetings during the year. Serious attempts have begun to move the electronic cataloguing of Friends House Library forward, with an aim to making the catalogue of the collection eventually available on the Web.

The centenary of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, marking one hundred years of Quaker education in Europe, has been the occasion of the launch of a

new study pack for meetings, *Hearts and Minds Prepared*. A study has been made of how the Gwen and Corder Catchpool Fund can best help Friends in continental Europe make use of Woodbrooke's facilities.

Mary Jo Clogg and other representatives

Finland Yearly Meeting

Friends in Finland have had a quiet year. We have at times felt despondent at our small size, and apparent lack of energy as a meeting. However, growth very often comes after crisis and at our Yearly Meeting held in Helsinki in June, at the same time as giving thanks for God in the life of Onni Rauha, we focussed on what each of us could offer to the meeting. This list gave us some cause for hope in ourselves, and tasks which have previously been carried out by one person have now been shared. We are happy that we now have a young Friend among us for the first time in many years, and are pleased to encourage her active involvement in European Young Friends' activities. A second worship group, meeting in Tampere, has recently started, in addition to the worship group in Oulu and regular weekly meeting in Helsinki.

Finnish Friends are especially pleased to have the support of the now officially appointed visiting Friend, David Blamires, and look forward to meeting with him face to face later in the year.

Jane Rose

France Yearly Meeting

This year has been a year full of changes for the French Assembly blessings and trials. Quakers protested in their different ways against the war in Iraq, through protest letter writing, demonstrations, and also commitment to peace in daily life. There has been increased racism towards Moslem and Jewish communities since the war. A growing number of Quakers are getting involved in interreligious groups. The need to seek peace and reconciliation through recognising what is similar in each religion is paramount. The yearly meeting supported a participation in the hunger demonstrations in New York.

The contract for Congenies is finally signed and we are ready to start the work of renovation for a Quaker centre. The project is evolving smoothly and creatively we are happy to say we have a secretary in charge which is invaluable. We had our first children's camp in July which was very successful. There have been two retreats.

Joy Liengaard

German Yearly Meeting

A year of growth, in insights if not in numbers. Our magazine the “Quäker” grows thicker and more interesting with every issue, reflecting a range of opinions and activities and news of Friends. A report of a Bezirksversammlung (General Meeting) in Bezirk Ost stated “the exchange of very controversial opinions was characterized by gentleness and mutual respect; thanks in part due to the calm, but firm and friendly guidance by the clerk; just how Quakerism should be!”

Yes, there were controversies: but there is an increasing desire to transform conflicts into something productive for us all. Some general meetings have had as their topic “dealing with conflict” and perhaps we really are capable of learning. For instance, the new generation of Young Friends worked their way through difficult times to a statement about the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs, that will also help guide younger teenagers when confronted with this problem; and will challenge us all to consider our responsibilities. And at Yearly Meeting in October in Schney, after lengthy and intensive searching, ways began to open up to heal the breach caused by the question of whether the Peace Committee could be in membership of external organisations. For the 140 adults and 46 children and young people there, Yearly Meeting was an encouraging experience. In the annual Cary Lecture, Robert Antoch described how his terrible experiences as a child in wartime, and his subsequent work in healing and peace have convinced him of the “power of goodness” (Gütekraft) and of the necessity for us to love ourselves, our fellow humans, and God; and of the validity of Martin Buber’s translation of Leviticus 19.18. Faced with the threat and then the reality of the Iraq War we realised how important it is to have a functioning Peace Committee. Among other activities, they provided useful information on organising vigils and demonstrations. For a short time here it was “trendy” to express anti-war views, and Friends could join fellow citizens in various forms of protest, often displaying wit and fantasy. But the question was raised “are we too timid and do we think too small?” and there were regrets there was little corporate Quaker action. Increasingly concerned now about the “war against terror”, the Peace Committee is planning a seminar in March on non-violent responses to terror.

Meanwhile Quakerhilfe’s 40th birthday celebrations reminded us of 40 years of action, in many different countries, against poverty, oppression and despair. A “Quakerly” auction and strip-tease at Yearly Meeting reduced us to tears of laughter and helped raise funds for on-going projects. In recent years three annual national gatherings, in addition to regional gatherings, for “Juniors” and for Young Friends have taken place. Participants speak of how they value their growing sense of friendship, a tribute to the dedicated band who organise these events. Thinking internationally, several general meetings have been interested to welcome speakers from QUNO and QCEA. And Friends in Germany have this year organised two border

meetings, one together with Swiss Friends and the other with Friends from Belgium, Britain, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (sadly, no-one from France could come). Looking outward and being active in the world is important to us. But again and again we find ourselves needing to concentrate on the Source (what Robert Antoch called the “gemeinsame Mitte”). Friends at the Retreat in Immshausen in May reported “experiencing each other and God”. At a border meeting, considering our sources of strength, we were encouraged to develop and keep a sense of wonder. And one of the participants of the canoeing trip, organised for teenage Friends, wrote of “experiencing so much together, so much fun, and wonderful open-air meetings for worship”. Our worship and our involvement in the world seem more than ever interdependent.

Janet Kreysa

Hungary, Budapest Worship Group

In 2003 our Worship Group was given a lot of support by EMES and Woodbrooke and we are truly grateful for it.

In February Judit Borzsák and Zoltán Ferenczi were enabled to get to Woodbrooke in preparation for the 8th Regional Meeting. They also managed to spend a couple of days with Terry Hobday and our twin group in Wem. In July Éva Katona was enabled to take part in a research course at Woodbrooke and came home greatly enriched.

On 11-18 April we helped to host the EMEYF Annual Meeting, and on 17-20 April the EMES Annual Meeting at the Lutheran Study Centre, Révfülöp. Éva Katona helped with the arrivals of Young Friends, Zsuzsa Eastland had an informal meeting with them, András Imrényi was their guide on a bus excursion and Éva Farkas was one of the speakers at the EMES Annual Meeting.

At the 8th Regional Meeting (Velence, Hungary, 6-9 June) Ulrich and Annelore Tschirner gave us a valuable personal account of what they meant by Quakerism. Twenty-five people attended including 4 from our twin group. In view of the financial uncertainties some of our countries are facing when joining the European Union in 2004, the sense of the Meeting was that we should now skip a year, deepen our own community and strengthen our Friendly network through inter-visitations. We have been in touch with the Leschenkos in Belarus and started a correspondence with Athens Meeting.

After a summer break, we had a day-retreat in Velence, sharing and planning. The two Éva's attended the traditional Border Meeting with Austrian Friends on 13-14 December. At our November meeting Nóra Kuntz, national director for Hungary of

Habitat for Humanity joined us and inspired us. We are led to offer a work weekend for the organisation in April.

A happy family event was the birth of a baby girl to Marianna Bátovszky in April. Long-term commitments to the elderly, on the other hand, by Berne Weiss, Judit Borzsák and Zsuzsa Eastland prevented us from meeting more frequently than once a month.

We are glad to spread the news that our Joseph Farkas' book called 'Break up your fallow ground' is now available in a good English translation.

Zsuzsa Eastland

Ireland Yearly Meeting

Friends in Ireland, as across the world, have been burdened by the progression towards a war in Iraq. All over the country, Quaker banners and participants were visible at protests, vigils and public meetings against the war. Our Yearly Meeting in April 2003 was dominated by concerns for the situation in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. We exchanged ideas and opportunities for action and urged Friends to continue to witness for peace in whatever way they could.

Internally, it is also a time of great change for Ireland Yearly Meeting. We preparing to move headquarters to the outskirts of Dublin, and we hope that the new location will give us more space. We are also in the process of revising our Book of Christian Experience for the first time since 1960. It will include a number of new areas, to respond to issues faced in our modern world. A draft will be considered by Friends at Yearly Meeting in 2004. This is a long and challenging process, and we are grateful for the dedication of the committee to its pain-staking work. 2003 also saw the publication of a colourful guide to Quakerism targeted at schools and young people. More than 4,000 were distributed in its first year.

Friends will undertake various activities in 2004 to mark 350 years since the first Quaker Meeting in Ireland. The anniversary is an opportunity for outreach, celebration and reflection on the past, present and future of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland and beyond.

Christine McCartney

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Brummana Monthly Meeting

We still meet every Sunday for worship, and the attendance could be as small as four and as much as 25. Brummana High school is doing very well despite the harsh political and economic situation both in Lebanon and the region. The Lebanese

Quakers are the Guardian Angels of the school, and spare no time or effort to help the school in every possible way. This support of Local Quakers has been going since the school was founded over 130 years ago.

Sabah Baz

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Ramallah

It was wonderful seeing Friends from EMES at the Triennial in New Zealand. I had previously attended a Triennial 30 years ago and it was wonderful to be again part of the wide world family of Friends. I regret not being with you all for your Annual Meeting, but hope to do it next year.

The work on the Meeting House is going on. We are planting many olive trees in the yard. We have enough funds for the renovation of the Annex. We might finish in the summer if all goes well. Then we have to think of program and funding for it. I hope the section can adopt some of our expenses.

We are a small Meeting and we cannot survive financially or spiritually on our own. We need one another.

The new building for the Friends' Ama'ari play centre has been finished and furnished, and Colin South reported that funds are rolling in. The children will move to the new site soon. I wish you all Happy Easter. With warm best wishes to all Friends that gather for the Annual Meeting.

Jean Zaru

Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Within our small Yearly Meeting meetings are held regularly at Amsterdam, The Hague, Groningen in the North-Eastern and Bennekom/Utrecht in the Central and Deventer in the eastern parts of the Netherlands.

Some Monthly meetings discussed prior to the Triennial in New Zealand the theme '*Being Faithful witnesses: serving God in a changing world*'. Moreover the study booklet for this Triennial was translated and published as a series of articles in our Monthly, 'De Vriendenkring'. After the Triennial our representative shared the experience of this FWCC-meeting with Monthly Meetings. It was experienced as a very inspiring but at times demanding gathering indeed! It became quite clear that we need to improve FWCC's financial situation by increasing our contributions!

At our Yearly Meeting this year we considered how we can practice our Quaker testimonies in the context of European citizenship. We all received a little piece of a puzzle and had to jointly reconstruct the map of Europe from these. Friends had also

been asked to bring memories and objects from different European countries they visited and share them together. The theme was introduced by our new representatives at Quaker House in Brussels, Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch. They shared with us why and how they applied for the appointment as joint representative. They highlighted the three major and interrelated areas of QCEA's work: human rights, economic justice and peace. Later, Bob Goudzwaard, a Dutch economist active in ecumenical work spoke on his work on the 'economy of the enough' which is highly critical of the dominant economic model pursued by governments nowadays.

Europe with its heritage in the area of social policies has an important contribution to make to make economic justice and sustainable development possible at a global level.

Kees Nieuwerth

Norway Yearly Meeting

In Oslo and Stavanger Norwegian Friends meet every Sunday most of the year, in Kristiansand every fortnight, and in Bergen and Spinn monthly. At Lillehammer a group meet occasionally. A group met in Trondheim most of the year, but sadly this has now come to an end.

Our yearly meeting was held at Lundheim folk high school at Moi, a place well suited for families, and the theme we discussed was "Unity and diversity – experiences of faith". Norway yearly Meeting encourages people to bring their children to YM, and we try to make the YMs a family occasion as well as a business meeting. A "meeting for all ages" was arranged at a mountain cottage in the autumn, and a pre-Christmas family workshop was held at Aas (the revival of an "old" tradition).

Quaker Service Norway (Kvekerhjelp) continue their work with the Change Agents Peace Programme in Africa, and support the work with Palestinian children in Gaza.

The Iranian woman is still sheltering in Oslo MM's flat, but there is hope now that she will be granted asylum.

In Oslo and Kristiansand there have been study groups working on different themes, among them Jesus and my quaker faith and Eckhard Tolle's book "The Power of Now".

My own meeting in Stavanger has become very small indeed. Three people have moved to other places, and this has left us with only four regular attenders, two of which are in their 80s and 90s. Younger people do exist on the membership list, but alas due to work and childcare they seldom find time to attend meeting. However we have a wonderful meetinghouse with plenty of space for growth, so we choose to be optimistic but welcome good ideas about how to grow.

Lilian Aarek

Sweden Yearly Meeting

Last year we had our yearly meeting at Svartbäcken as usual. For several years the Swedish Faith and Practice Book Committee has taken care of the Yearly Meeting theme, and we have used our Yearly Meeting sessions to formulate our Swedish faith and practice. Last YM we talked about our testimonies. That chapter is still under review.

We have now changed the organisation of our Yearly Meeting. We recognize that the YM is about the size of a Monthly Meeting, so there are not MMs any more. The Elders serve all of Sweden. Some worship groups have their own business meetings, but the YM meets for business three times a year. There is a new recognized worship group in Lund in the south of Sweden.

For some years we have held an alternative meeting for worship, which we call All-Age Worship, about four times a year. We do things like dancing or painting flowers within the meeting. Each occasion has a different theme. Some Friends sit quietly all the time; some take part in the activity now and then. It has become a popular way of introducing worship for children and other inexperienced attenders. Every summer we also invite children, and sometimes the parents, to a Summer Camp at Svartbäcken.

Once a month we also hold a one-day retreat at the Quaker House in Stockholm. This is in addition to the regular retreats at Svartbäcken.

One of our members is documenting the history of Quakers in Sweden.

Karin Ern

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

The sense of activity and hopefulness mentioned in last year's report has been confirmed by heartening developments: this time, we could welcome four births, and, of several new friends of Friends, two were admitted into membership. A wedding has taken place as well. Our membership seems to be blessed with longevity: the one Friend whose loss we mourn was in his nineties.

In two of our worship groups, the young in spirit and in years have taken over the clerkship from the young in spirit and old in years, one of whom had served for more than four decades, most of that time as friend of Friends, a distinction reflected in our membership list by 'F' and 'f', and, it was recently suggested at a weekend retreat, perhaps ripe for abandonment. It was felt that this would more closely reflect the

identity as well as the considerable potential of our multicultural Yearly Meeting in generating inspiration and dedication. What all those associated with it have done over more than seventy years in establishing this tradition is to be set down in a project 'Letting their lives speak.'

The theme of our Annual Gathering over Whitsun asked how we nourish and live our Quaker testimony in times of crisis. We were fortunate in having Helen Bayes to guide us here, the Australian Friend who gave the Backhouse Lecture at her Yearly Meeting last year: 'Respecting the Rights of Children and Young People – A New Perspective on Quaker Faith and Practice,' who was the 2002 Eva Koch Research Fellow at Woodbrooke, and who had been awarded the Australian Human Rights Medal 1999 for her work on behalf of the rights of children. A Geneva NGO, 'Défense des Enfants Internationale,' had supplied her with exhaustive information and inspired her to set up an Australian section.

Helen Bayes traced for us the growing up-processes of early Friends' young generation who had in their deportment not lived up to the trust put in them, a trust based on the belief in the Light within every young person. A time of harsh punishments had ensued, only to give way in time to a renewed faith in young peoples' perception of truth, no matter how outlandish their dress and manner. Yet any enlightened approach, Helen Bayes continued, depends on recognising their dignity which involves battling the many abuses to which they are often subjected. The lesson for us in this is to cultivate the sensitivity needed to discover leadings in communicating and sharing concerns, to engage in trust one to another, aware of the spirit at work in each of us, old and young alike.

A Friend wrote a moving aperçu on the mutual relations of 'being' and 'doing' – our testimonies needing both, in crises among nations, among Friends, among the forces of health and illness in our bodies, among discordant voices in our own souls.

Our German-speaking worship groups at their annual Autumn Gathering worked on John Woolman's Journal, extracting its validity for our times under three headings: ministry today – slavery today – simplicity today. Our Yearly Meeting is engaged in relief and rehabilitation work in the Near East and in Africa. Transboundary meetings continue.

So we look forward to tracing many a spiritual path winding its way in our mountains.

Fritz Renken and Jackie Leach Scully

Europe and Middle East Young Friends

This has been an exciting year for EMEYF with us holding our regular gatherings in different ways to usual.

Our Spring Gathering was held at Easter in Hungary in co-operation with the Europe and Middle East Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation Spring Meeting. The gatherings were held at the same venue and had an overlap for Young Friends and older Friends to spend time to worship together and to learn about each others' lives and organisations. The theme of our gathering was *Norms and Values: who we are and what we live by*. During the week Young Friends at Spring Gathering did a variety of activities including reflecting on the Quaker testimonies, both silently and in discussion. Spring Gathering also discussed how spirituality could be sought through music, and the development of Quaker communities in Budapest.

In November we held our Annual Meeting for business at Quaker House, Bad Pyrmont, Germany for the first time since the mid-1980s. Since that time we have met annually in Brussels. The gathering was well attended and it was a positive step for us to meet in a different environment in a location which was easier for some to get to. We hope to meet there again in the next few years. Annual Meeting gives us an opportunity to meet face to face and hear reports from Young Friends from countries across Europe and the Middle East. Unfortunately the representative from the Russian Federation was unable to attend due to visa difficulties.

At Annual Meeting we also had a workshop run by Helen Rowlands of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, UK on the history and use of Advices & Queries which gave us an interesting insight into something that many of us take for granted.

EMEYF continues to be a strong spiritual and practical support network for Young Friends across Europe and the Middle East. We now have an email list which we can use to stay in touch throughout the year.

We are looking forward to the World Gathering of Young Friends to be held in 2005, in the UK, and to the insight into the Quaker world that this will give Young Friends who are fortunate enough to be able to attend.

Michael Eccles

Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, (QUNO)

2004 begins in a whirlwind of change at the Quaker Office in Geneva. After 11 years as Director and Representative for Trade and Development, Brewster Grace will retire at the end of February. During these 11 years Brewster has led QUNO through a great many changes which have strengthened its presence in Geneva and beyond, while sustaining its fundamental linkages with the Religious Society of Friends worldwide. Outside the walls of Quaker House, it is his work with the World Trade Organisation and the International Labour Organisation for which Brewster will be best remembered, particularly the pioneering work which he has led over recent years on

Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) issues. Brewster will continue to work with QUNO as a consultant on the TRIPS work until October 2004. We thank Brewster for his years of Quaker service and for his leadership and collegueship while leading QUNO. We shall miss him greatly. In early February, Martin Watson will join the staff as Representative for Global Economic Issues. Martin has served most recently as European Director for development programmes at UMCOR-Europe in Vienna, the international humanitarian and development agency of the Methodist Church. He previously worked with the Methodist Relief and Development Fund in the United Kingdom, and with the Directorate General for External Economic Relations at the European Commission. We look forward to welcoming our new colleague to QUNO and to the Geneva community. David Atwood will replace Brewster Grace as Director of QUNO. David has been on the staff of QUNO since early 1995 as the Representative for Disarmament and Peace. He will continue this work while taking on the Director's role. With all the change, there is thankfully also continuity. Rachel Brett continues as QUNO Representative for Human Rights and Refugees. Helen McEvoy, our Office Manager, and Eva Tanner, our Finance Officer, continue in positions which are vital to making the work of QUNO possible. Our Programme Assistant, Rachel Taylor, who has been with us since March of 2003, will complete her period at QUNO in August 2004. Rebecca Kmentt, who serves QUNO in a variety of capacities, including as Communications Officer, will be with us until the end of June 2004.

QUNO news and publications are available online at <http://www.geneva.quno.info/>

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

The committee has been comprised of Alice Drewery, Alannah Morton O'Neill, Batian Nieuwerth, Julia Ryberg and Richard Waldmeyer.

We met at Svartbäcken, Sweden in March of 2003 to begin planning the 2004 Pilgrimage, which will be held from July 16-August 13. The Pilgrimage will begin with two nights of homestays with local Friends in Birmingham followed by 4 nights at Woodbrooke. The group continues to 1652 country for six nights, then on to a retreat at Barmoor for six nights. The remainder of the Pilgrimage will be spent in the Netherlands and Germany with a variety of activities including following the footsteps of George Fox's journey, participating in a work camp with refugees and learning about the work of Friends during the second World War.

We had four leader applications and chose Jane Nicholls and Caroline Evens. We had 17 pilgrim applications and accepted 15. The pilgrims are from Britain, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Russia and Sweden.

Alannah O'Neill and Julia Ryberg will be leaving the committee at the end of the 2004 pilgrimage. We suggest that, in addition to replacing these members, a sixth person might be chosen. We find it important that there are three committee members in England because of the amount of work that is necessarily done from there. We have discussed the rising costs of the pilgrimage and hope for guidance regarding how much the Pilgrimage may cost in the future. We are also interested in considering the suggestion of the American section that each section hosts the pilgrimage every other year rather than the current arrangement whereby America hosts every third time.

Julia Ryberg, Clerk

Diary 2004

Yearly Meeting	When and Where	Contact
Britain	28 - 31 May	Elsa Dicks, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ United Kingdom, Email: rco@quaker.org.uk
Denmark	October 30 - 31	Kvækerne, Drejervej 17-4, DK-2400 København, N Denmark
Finland	June 4 - 6	Jane Rose, Vaasankatu 4 C 53, 00500 Helsinki Suomi Finland
France	August 25 - 29	Louise Elias, 5 ave de la Mijeanne, F-11600 Fraïsse Cabardès France
Germany	November 11 - 14	Quäkerbüro, Planckstraße 20, -10117 Berlin, Germany
Ireland	April 13 - 18	Valerie O'Brien, Swanbrook House, Bloomfield Avenue, Dublin 4 Ireland
Middle East	No sessions planned	Sabah Baz, PO Box 4, Brummana Lebanon
Netherlands	May 14 - 16	Hadewijch Touwen, Quakersecretariaat, Postbus 989 NL-4600 AZ Bergen op Zoom, The Netherlands
Norway	June 24 - 27	Marit Kromberg, Skovveien 20, 0257 Oslo Norway
Sweden	May 20 - 23	Sweden Yearly Meeting, Kväkargården, Box 9166, S-102 72 Stockholm Sweden
Switzerland	May 28 - 31	Maison Quaker, 13 Ave du Mervelet, CH-1209 Genève Switzerland

Other Meetings in 2004

4 - 16 July, **Quaker United Nations Summer School**, Geneva

16 July - 14 August, **Quaker Youth Pilgrimage**: in England, The Netherlands and Germany

16 - 20 September, **Baltic Friends Gathering**

Contact Hans Aaen, Engtoftevej 25, DK-3520 Farum. hans.aaen@teliamail.dk

17 - 19 September, **Border Meeting in Netherlands**

Location: Lielvelde. Contact: Marius Boelsma

17 - 19 October, **EMEYF Annual Meeting**, Bad Pyrmont, Germany

Contact EMEYF, QCEA office, Quaker House, Square Ambiorix, 50, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

5 - 7 November, **Economic Justice and the EU. Conference in Brussels**. Jointly run by QCEA/QPSW. Contact Suzanne Ismail, QPSW, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2 BJ suzannei@quaker.org.uk

26 - 28 November, **European Quaker Peace and Service Consultations**, Brussels

Contact Bronwyn Harwood