

# Among Friends

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## The best laid plans..

Dear Friends,

I first went to the Centre Culturel St. Thomas for a Border Meeting in September 2012. What a lovely venue, I thought, and so easy to get to from Strasbourg City Centre – just 5km on a fast, efficient tram. I quickly checked availability for May 2014, and booked it for the Annual Meeting of EMES – dates: 1st to 4th May. With this important arrangement secured, I went on with my work, looking forward to the time I would return to Strasbourg, a city whose history speaks of the blessing that overcoming violent conflict can bring to its citizens, and to the nations of Europe. The very stones of the old buildings, with their French and German names written over each other, witness to the bloodshed and violence of the past, while the modern buildings of the European Parliaments and the Council of Europe speak of the stability and prosperity brought by mutual acceptance and the search for consensus. A message worth reminding ourselves on as dark clouds of dissent gather further afield.

2014 arrived at last, and with it preparations for the annual



EMES Annual Meeting 2014

Photo: Paul Sladen

meeting of EMES began in earnest. A busy, but happy time, this being my 7th annual meeting, I felt confident I knew what I was doing and was relaxed as registrations arrived in good numbers. Then I received a message – do you realise, it said, that 1st May, Labour Day, is a bank holiday in France, and there will be no public transport, no shops or restaurants open? After the first moment of shock left me frozen, panic set in, as I began to construct a PLAN B – for more than 40 Friends, arriving by air and rail from over a dozen countries. This is when my knight in shining armour came to the rescue – dear Friend Mike Zipser, resident of Kehl (on the other side of the Rhein from Strasbourg) and member of Strasbourg/Kehl Meeting. Mike organised transport with two local friends, who on arrival day shuttled backwards and forwards from the railway station, where valiant Martin Touwen (soon to become EMES Treasurer) and later Stephan Ball of Britain Yearly Meeting met Friends as they arrived, and conveyed them to the transport that would take them to our venue. Mike also prepared a wonderful lunch for the EMES Executive Committee, that was meeting all through the day, and a few Friends who had arrived early. In spite of some delays and cancellations, all but two Friends arrived in time for supper, and the last two joined us shortly afterwards. It was such a relief to have

*continued on page 4*

### Inside this issue:

Marius Boelsma	2-3
Poems	4
Nonviolence or the 'last resort' use of force	5
2014 Annual Meeting of EMES	6-7
EMEYF 2014 Spring Gathering	8
QUNO - Human Impacts of Climate Change	9
Woodbrooke online postgrad courses - Quakerism10	
John Henry Barlow, Quaker Man of Peace	11
Diary Dates for 2014	12

## Marius Boelsma (1926 - 2014)

*Pieter Ketner* writes:

On 1st March 2014 Marius Boelsma died peacefully in the house of his eldest son Ane in Sissach, Switzerland. With Marius we have lost a dear and faithful Friend.

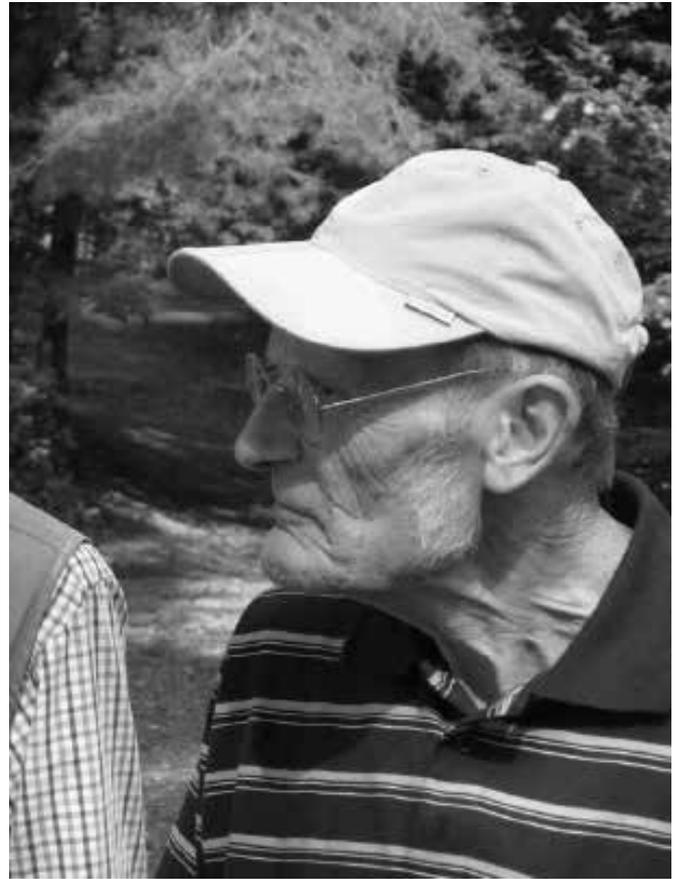
Marius was born in 1926 in The Hague. The Boelsma family, with 4 sons were frequently on the move as father Boelsma was transferred as employee of the Dutch Postal Service. Looking back at his childhood, Marius regretted that he never could make friends, because of the several changes in schools. Marius attended grammar school in Haarlem and The Hague.

His schooling was irregularly because of the war. At the age of 18 his family fled The Hague, to stay in Friesland with relatives. Marius could not join them, as the risk of being caught on the way by the Germans, arresting all men above the age of 16 to work in Germany. He experienced this as a wonderful time being on his own, exploring The Hague, going frequently to the pictures and taking shelter at different places when needed. When the war was over Marius had reached the age for conscription in the army. He was a convinced pacifist through the influence of his mother and through contact with Bobby van Heeckeren. His father had served as an army officer during World War I. Later in his father also became antimilitary.

Marius refused to go into the army and had to go through the difficult process of being acknowledged as conscientious objector. For several months he was taken into custody in the military detention centre in Nieuwersluis. Marius made the best out of it and made life long friends there. Finally he was granted the CO status and had to do 30 months of alternative service. This he fulfilled in a land reclaim project and in a psychiatric institution.

After he had fulfilled his alternative service Marius joined the Internationale Vrijwillige Hulpdienst (IVH), the Dutch branch of the Service Civil International (SCI), the international volunteer organisation dedicated to promoting a culture of peace.

Marius joined work camps in various countries, amongst others in Poland, Finland and Lebanon. For some time he was member of the Board of IVH together with Inez Boon, who later became a member of Norway Yearly Meeting.



*Marius Boelsma* Photo: *Pieter Ketner, May 2014*

In 1952 he went to Pakistan to join a team that worked at Laluketh satellite town of Karachi and later in a project near Hyderabad-Sind. Much lifelong friendship grew, but most important he met Marianne Studinger, his future wife. They were married in October 1954 in Lahore, Pakistan.

In 1955 Marius and Marianne returned to Europe. They first went to Switzerland, where Marius was introduced to his in-laws. By the end of the year they came to the Netherlands and came to live, in Eindhoven, where Marius, without any qualification got a job as primary school teacher, with the help of a friend he made during his CO-period. At that time there was an enormous shortage of teachers, and crash courses for primary school teaching were offered to fill this gap. In 1959 the family now with three children, moved to Bennekom, where better housing conditions were offered and a job as secondary teacher, in geography and English. Marius continued his evening classes and got qualifications in English, which enabled him to teach it.

In Bennekom their fourth child (second boy) was born. From 1968 till 1970 the family lived in Zambia, where Marius was leader of a team of volunteers, who had to set up in various primary schools a physic project, designed by an American professor. It was an unsatisfactory job with much paper work, not Marius' favourite. Marianne did voluntary work and was actively involved in local and regional Quaker affairs. They visited Madagascar and South Africa.

Marius got to know the Quakers through Marianne. She had been in contact with the Quakers already before their marriage. Marius was a convinced pacifist and the Quaker testimonies of peace, justice and equality spoke very much to his mind.

In 1974 he applied for membership and participated, with Marianne, through her national and international commitments such as QCEA FWCC, in many Quaker gatherings all over the world, meeting and making Friends and friends. He served as clerk of Netherlands Yearly Meeting and on various committees.

In 1987 Marius took early retirement and started a new "career" namely teaching English in foreign countries. He went to China twice, Vietnam and what is now Czech Republic. Marianne joined him for short or longer periods. New life experience and new friendships were made. This lasted for some 8 years. And full of energy Marianne and Marius continued their meetings with F/friends all over the world. They travelled to New Zealand to see their best Friends in the Quaker settlement in Whanganuai. They went to China again and visited Hongkong on behalf of FWCC. They regularly attended the China Group gatherings in UK and were present at Border Meetings. During summer the whole Boelsma family (four children and 13 grandchildren) was often seen in Switzerland, to see their relatives as well as visiting their numerous friends.

His love for Marianne was immense. During the last years of her life Marius cared for her with devotion. After her death (in 2009) he often talked about her with gratefulness. He once said in meeting for worship: "why should I mourn and be depressed having been married for 55 years to such a wonderful woman? To marry her was the best decision I made in my life. He soon picked up his desire to meet their friends. He made a last trip to China again and to New Zealand. He visited regularly his son in Switzerland and continued to attend Border

Meetings. Upon his death Kurt Strauss wrote:

*"When Marianne died, I remember thinking that it was almost impossible to picture her without also thinking of Marius, and now the same thought has returned. Marius without Marianne, or Marianne without Marius, is very difficult to take in, and now they are together again. They were amongst the very first Dutch Friends we encountered in the early 1960s, when Ann and I and our very young family came to live in Brussels, and attended our first Border Meeting in Arnhem. But the children grew up, and when Ann and I once more started attending Border Meetings, imagine our joy to find that our old Friends Marius and Marianne were still regular participants"*

Some years ago Marius "confessed" that he did not believe in God, that he was "agnostic" We just took it for granted; this is part of the Quaker diversity. But what he believed in was Love.

Janet Kreysa expressed this after his death:

*"I specially remember his thanks to Jocelyn Bell Burnell at the close of the 2010 Border meeting when he very wittily expressed great pleasure at the whole idea of being able to incorporate new ideas and views of the universe into his Quaker life. These ideas of the vastness of the universe could happily coexist with a quotation he once mailed me, without comment, just so:*

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another, and helping one another up with a tender hand

*Isaac Pennington, 1667*

In 2011 Marius was diagnosed with cancer. He took it bravely. Talked hardly about it and never complained. He accepted only minor treatment. He was not in pain. His spirit remained high, but his energy diminished little by little.

He kept on making plans for all what he still wanted to do. With his dry humour he said "I go when I am ready. I have still so much to do".

In December Marius moved in with his son in Switzerland, where he was cared for with great love. He was cremated in Switzerland. A Memorial Service took place on 9th March in Bennekom.

We will miss this remarkable Friend dearly.

## The best laid plans.. *(continued from page 1)*

everyone safely gathered in!

Another last minute complication arose because our Clerk, Rachel Bewley-Bateman, was prevented from travelling at the last minute by having to undergo urgent knee surgery, from which, I am glad to report, she is making a good recovery. The four remaining members of the EMES Executive Committee decided they would all take a turn clerking the business sessions, while I acted as recording clerk for each of them. This arrangements worked very well, and with the prayerful upholding of elders, we managed the business to everyone's satisfaction, even when the Spirit led us to abandon our scheduled "evening of creative activities on the theme" in favour of testing an urgent concern from two Friends to respond in some way to the crisis in Ukraine.

A reminder, if one was needed, that we may make our plans in good faith and strive to be efficient and prepared, but ultimately we need to respond lovingly and trustingly to circumstances as they unfold, making use of our skills and gifts, giving generously to one another, as may be needed. That is the greatest test of community. And it cannot be planned for.

*Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary*



*My hero: Mike Zipser Photo: Paul Sladen*

## Poems

*Jane Roses* of Finland Yearly Meeting writes:

### **A sense of Timing (30.5)**

Mistiming  
A little bit off.  
More than once  
Not being in the right place  
At the so-called  
right time.  
What is the signal?  
That I must listen more?  
Or, just that  
sometimes it  
doesn't seem like  
I recognized the connection  
when it was part of  
the plan.

### **Ice-hockey restlessness (20.5)**

Ice-hockey restlessness  
Pervaded yesterday  
Mixed with  
grounds of coffee  
and real cocoa  
to prevent  
concentration,  
focus,  
and most of all  
flow.  
But in the end  
there was flow.  
It was just  
unexpected  
in its colour.

### **Candle (9.5)**

Candle  
Burning  
Softly.  
No guttering  
No movement  
Except the  
act of burning  
gently through  
being alight.  
A lighted candle can  
bring peace  
or peaceful  
thoughts.  
But the candle  
Is not that peace.  
It is simply a doorway.  
Or, even more simply,  
a candle

# Nonviolence or the use of force as a ‘last resort’?

## An ecumenical discussion about conflict resolution and reconciliation

*Extracts from a report of the Church and Peace AGM held in May 2014:*

Almost 60 people from 11 European countries inside and outside the European Union – from the United Kingdom to Serbia and Russia – came together in Baarlo (The Netherlands) from 23 to 25 May 2014.

‘... accounting for the hope that is in you’ (1 Peter 3:15) was the theme of the conference organized by Church and Peace, a European ecumenical network of communities, organizations and individuals committed to peace-building, with strong membership from the historical Peace Churches.

The call to join a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace was presented by Kees Nieuwerth, a Quaker from the Netherlands, who had been present when it was first issued at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013.

The pilgrimage offers a broad international framework for organizing pilgrimages in the eight years before the next WCC Assembly, e.g. to the UN conference on climate change (COP21) in Paris in 2015, or to the world’s largest weapons trade fair, also in Paris in 2016. One suggestion was to devise an interactive pilgrim map offering spiritual reassurance and encouragement, and indicating places of solidarity in view of the vulnerability of humanity and nature. This would be on way of making the many, often small and fragile initiatives visible at the European level and worldwide, declared Antje Heider-Rottwilm, chair of Church and Peace.

The conference featured a panel discussion on ‘Just Policing’ and unarmed intervention: the churches’ dialogue on the responsibility to protect (R2P). How can people be protected from human rights violations and the breach of international humanitarian law? To answer this question, the United Nations in 2005 adopted the concept of responsibility to protect, with its three pillars of prevention, response and rebuilding. Efforts have been made to implement it in the last few years. The controversial part is the ‘responsibility to respond’, which also allows for military interventions and using force as a ‘last resort’.

It seemed questionable whether the motivation for this is R2P alone or whether this concept is not intended

to legitimize further immense spending on weapons production and the military.

The 10th WCC Assembly – after energetic efforts by Peace Church representatives on the spot – recommended undertaking ‘critical analysis’ of the concept of R2P and its misuse to justify armed interventions. The Peace Churches will continue to advocate for unarmed peace-building and peace-keeping missions, and help develop and take part in such undertakings.

A panel discussion between James Jakob Fehr from the German Mennonite Peace Committee and Jonathan Frerichs, WCC Programme Director for Peacebuilding and Disarmament raised two important questions. First, to what extent can ‘just policing’ lead us out of opposing positions for or against using force as the ‘last resort’? Secondly, is it still possible to cooperate in practical terms despite different attitudes to the use of force?

Jonathan Frerichs showed that there is broad field of commitment to counteracting violence when it takes the form of human rights violations, poverty or war. At the level of practical solidarity, these options include peace missions to protect endangered population groups or practical work for reconciliation as in Serbia, about which Church and Peace members reported. Other measures are political advocacy for individuals or groups, and not least, intervening in favour of standards and treaties at the UN level, which is part of the ongoing and occasionally successful working areas of the WCC.

Jakob Fehr focused on the ‘spirituality of reconciliation’. “As long as people mistrust or hate their neighbours (the neighbouring social or political group), they will not attain peace.” “We have not yet invented all forms of peaceful conflict intervention,” Fehr noted. “I think that there is lots of room for new ideas to come.”

By way of conclusion, Antje Heider-Rottwilm expressed her satisfaction at the results of the conference. “I am very glad about this encounter here in Baarlo. There are still open questions, but we must keep working on them together in the ecumenical movement. And we face great challenges which we intend to tackle on the joint Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, where we can supplement and challenge one another,” she stated.

## Annual Meeting of the European and Middle East Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (EMES) 2014

**The Annual Meeting of EMES 2014 was held at the Centre Cultural de St Thomas, Strasbourg - May 1st - 4<sup>th</sup> 2014**

We shared times of joyful thankfulness mixed with serious concerns for peace building in the face of growing unease and tensions across Europe and the world as we witness yet another time of political instability. Our friendship, based on accepting the universal inner light, is worldwide.

Our European Meetings for the most part share a tradition of tolerance, of uncertainty, non judgement and a cultivation of one another's expression of the spirit of goodness - the God- that leads us. We have Friends working in geographic isolation and others whose isolation is due to their specialist way of expressing a faith that is not shared among local Friends. We can now use telecommunications to share Inspiration, insight and experience.

The theme of this year's annual meeting, ***A Confident Quaker Voice***, has encouraged us to look at the work of EMES.

The work of Quakers United Nations Office (QUNO) was presented by Jonathan Woolley, with many examples of the Quaker presence having effect and influence. Quakers dare ***to ask the big questions***.

Andrew Lane from the Quaker Council of European Affairs ((QCEA) told us of their work building relationships and using advocacy to represent the Quaker voice to the European institutions – the European Union and the Council of Europe on issues of economic justice, sustainability, human rights, democratic governance and peace. Recent initiatives include lobbying to promote civilian alternatives to militarism and consideration of the economic impact of decisions of the European Parliament.

Gretchen Castle reminded us of the three aims of



*Lucinda Martin (German YM), Convenor of Nominations Committee, Marisa Johnson (EMES), Dag Hovda Sture, Norway Yearly Meeting (Clerk for that session) Photo: Paul Sladen*

FWCC: ***connecting friends, crossing cultures and changing lives***, and the transformative love that unite us and the developing plan for the next Friends World Conference in Arequipa, Peru, in January 2016. We have been encouraged to consider whether the work of EMES is having an effect on our Meetings. Does the work of the Section make a difference? Are our Meetings and Worship Groups aware of the spread of our work in Europe, the Middle East and together with FWCC, our work in the world? Can we use the resources that have been built up as a tool to support our Quaker life and practice? Can we use it to uphold the work of peace building in our local communities? Through a carefully crafted programme, we were encouraged to imagine a world without war through work sessions that helped us to reflect on how we had been affected by war and actions that could be taken as steps towards peace, as a community and as individuals. We were also invited to consider the effects that a changing of our perspectives on biblical language could have for the common understanding among Quakers and with other Christians, noting that

our responses to traditional Christian language could sometimes become an obstacle to peaceful processes and to the moving together in our common concerns for peace, within and outside of the society of Friends. Kees Nieuwerth, our representative on Church and Peace, brought his experience of attending the World Council of Churches' General Assembly in Busan, South Korea and asked us to join with other Churches on "Pilgrimages of Justice and Peace" to choose "*an economy of life*" instead of an economy of death, by bringing about a spiritually-grounded transformation of the dominant economic model.

At a time of escalating violence and suffering in many parts of the world and the increasing tensions along the Ukrainian border, two Friends, Mikhail Roshchin from Moscow Meeting and Roland Rand from Tallinn Worship Group in Estonia told us of their wish to travel under concern to Eastern Ukraine to meet and talk with individuals and organisations to hear their views of the situation and to explore what is needed at this time. During a moving meeting to consider this, the Annual Meeting tested their concern and from the prayerful gatheredness of the business meeting, agreed to support our Friends to travel with the support of a small group of two or three Friends experienced in peace work. Funding for this initiative can be channelled through EMES.

We seek to deepen understanding and mutual support among Quakers everywhere and invite Friends to take part by doing the following:-

- Invite your Representatives to speak at your meetings;
- Contact our secretariat with offers of hospitality to Visiting Friends;



*Dag Hovda Sture (Norway Yearly Meeting) and Janet Scott (Britain Yearly Meeting)* Photo: Paul Sladen



*Andrew Lane, Deputy Representative, QCEA*  
Photo: Paul Sladen

- Twin your meeting with one in a different country;
- When visiting abroad, take part in local Quaker activities and report your experience to your Meeting;
- Contribute an article to Among Friends;
- Tell our Nominations Committee via our secretariat of your willingness to take part in our committee and project work;
- Consider contributing funds individually or as a Meeting to one or more of the activities below:
- Peacework East Ukraine; an initial budget of € 7130 is sought, and the response has been very encouraging;
- Amari Play Centre;
- Travel grants for FWCC World gatherings.

Finally, hold the international work of Quakerism in the light and tell others of it.

## EMEYF Spring Gathering 2014 (Macedonia), Epistle “Go with the flow. There is a different sense of time in Macedonia.”

From the 12th of April to the 19th of April 2014 we came together in Lagadin, Macedonia, for our Spring Gathering. The decision to go to Macedonia was a bit scary and the organizing committee faced many challenges to make this gathering happen. We were not aware of any Quakers here and none of us had ever been to the country before. But we managed. Since we are all strangers in Macedonia, we were all put in the same position from where we then started to explore.

This gathering felt active, buzzing. We overcame our worries of going to an unknown country and not being able to plan every detail. Sometimes it was difficult to pinpoint what was happening, but we could sense that a lot was going on.



Some of us came to the gathering feeling we must overcome borders and tear them down. Then we worked on our theme „Borders within and without“ in workshops and discovered other aspects. Borders keep us together. We have them for structure, but must remember that they need to be permeable.

Impassable borders tear and keep communities apart.

Misha from Georgia could not get a visa to come to Spring Gathering. This felt very significant to our gathering. It even was eye-opening for some of us, because many young Friends never experienced an impassable border.

After Annual Meeting in November, EMEYF was without a clerk. This was difficult, especially for the members of the Communications Committee. To our surprise, this situation led to a very different experience in meeting for



worship for business and in the end resulted in a very high engagement of the whole group into the process. We have faith that what needs to be done will be done. Three Friends volunteered to record minutes during our business meetings and they were surprised they could actually do it.

Next Spring Gathering will be held in Georgia. Georgian Friends have been prevented from participating in our community for many years. We are glad to accept their invitation to get to know them and their country.

Our youngest participant was Peter, who turned one at our gathering. We appreciated sharing our time with him. We held him close and entertained him with music. This way we also got to experience this Spring Gathering through his eyes. We sincerely hope to meet Peter again next year to celebrate his second birthday with him!

We move forward in hope and live adventurously



*All photos on this page are from the EMEYF website*

# QUNO programme, the Human Impacts of Climate Change

Lindsey Cook writes:

As I sit down to write this article for Among Friends, I am deeply aware that my involvement in climate change began through EMES. I served as your representative on the Quaker United Nations Committee (New York), where I tried to understand and reflect the concerns most pressing amongst European Quakers. Environment remained high on the list, with a particular focus on climate change, but I did not connect the dots until Netherlands Friend Kees Nieuwerth explained why climate change was a peace issue. I returned to graduate school for greater understanding, and eventually found myself as the QUNO (Geneva) Representative on Climate Change.

The QUNO programme is called the Human Impacts of Climate Change. The title reflects the connection between what might be seen as a purely environmental issue, to peace and justice concerns. Rising global temperatures due to human activities (anthropogenic climate change) have profound impacts on the livelihoods of the poor and most vulnerable today, and on the ability of all generations in the future to thrive on this planet. We focus on three areas: quiet diplomacy at the international climate change negotiations under the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), we engage with Quaker initiatives and NGOs working on this issues, and we explore how climate change inter-connects with our QUNO work in peace and natural resources, food and sustainability, and human rights.

The negotiations have experienced pervasive blockages upheld by deep anger, disappointment, mistrust and low political will. Many NGOs already offer excellent expertise, or run campaigns to pressure countries toward effective and fair action. We came to see our unique role in the traditional QUNO 'quiet diplomacy' work - bringing together a diverse group of delegates, off the record, to help build communication and trust, supported by our own research to understand how other complex multilateral negotiations in the past were able to move forward.

Since June 2013 we have held five 'quiet diplomacy' dinners during the climate negotiations. The response from delegates has been positive, emphasising the

'human' experience as well as a 'place for sincere and honest discussion' (quote from a developing country). We shall continue these efforts as long as we believe they are of value in supporting a fair outcome to the negotiations. We write briefing papers for delegations and the public, which are available online ([www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org)).

We participate in a 'peace and environment' group which includes QPSW, QCEA, Northern Friends Peace Board, Woodbrooke, FCNL and Living Witness. This has led to the planning with FCNL and QUNO New York of several 'quiet conversation' meetings during the Climate Summit in New York.

For us, Quakers around the world provide our guiding, empowering voice on how to face, embrace and act positively to meet the challenge of living sustainably and justly on this earth. Catastrophic climate change is not inevitable – it depends on the choices humanity makes now to live sustainably and justly – or not.

A few highlights from the recently published Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report (AR5, available online at [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)):

- *The climate system is warming at rates unprecedented over decades to millennia*
- *Carbon dioxide concentrations are 40% higher than in pre-industrial times*
- *Human activity has caused most of the warming between 1951-2012*
- *The Earth's surface warmed 0.85% between 1880 and 2012*
- *Arctic ice has been decreasing on an average of 3.8% since 1979*
- *GHG have risen more quickly since 2010 than ever before, due to economic and population growth.*
- *The cost of mitigating GHG emissions would be relatively inexpensive in comparison to the social and economic costs of delaying mitigation action.*
- *'Business as usual' will likely result in a mean global temperature increase by 2081 of 2.6°C to 4.8°C compared to 1986–2005.*

# First online postgraduate courses in Quakerism now available

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham in the UK, in conjunction with Lancaster University, is now offering the first online postgraduate courses in Quakerism: a Postgraduate Certificate in Quaker Studies; and an MA in Quakerism in the Modern World.

These courses are unique, as there will be no residential requirements for studying them, meaning that students from across Europe or anywhere in the world can register without having to worry about the practicalities of travelling elsewhere.

Both courses are designed to introduce students to theories, issues and processes connected with the history, theology and sociology of Quakerism in a global context. The programmes are especially relevant to those interested in Quaker theology and history; the adaptation of religious groups to new social and geographical settings; globalisation and religion; and secularisation.

Students will have the option to follow the programmes on a full-time or part-time basis over 12 or 24 months.

Online degrees offer convenience and flexibility in terms of study time and location and there are no residency requirements.

Students' learning will be supported by leading Quaker Studies specialists and accredited by Lancaster University, one of the top dozen universities in the UK.

The courses will be delivered online, beginning in October 2014. Based on distance learning pedagogical principles, they will employ a wide variety of online learning tools to enhance students' learning experience. They will be run by Ben Pink Dandelion who looks after Woodbrooke's Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies. Ben said, "This is a really exciting and significant development. This is the only online course in Quaker studies with no need to travel. We hope that we will have a global learning community with Friends and those interested in Quakerism from all over the world learning together."

Learning activities consist of key readings, lecture podcasts, as well as participation in presentation,

web seminars and online discussion forums. An online orientation introduces students to tutors and familiarises them with online learning tools and resources such as the discussion forum and the e-library. The programmes aim to help students realise their academic potential by encouraging choice and independence in their studies.

So what is it really like to pursue your studies online? Two Lancaster University students who have already started on other courses made the following comments about their experiences.

"It is the first time I ever took part on a distance learning program and so far enjoy the experience. I think it provides full learning prospects adjusted to the particularities of my daily program. I really enjoy the fora and think they give each one the opportunity to participate, be really heard and register their views. Though the most difficult part, presentations were something to look forward as it was very enjoyable to hear and see my distance learning classmates."

"Just to say I have found the course extremely interesting, stimulating and above all topical, which all in all has made it really motivating. I have moreover, found all people connected to the course more than helpful and the criticism, when needed, constructive, which as a teacher myself I very much appreciate. As well as this I have to say I have found my colleagues on the course to be inspiring in themselves and I feel that I am learning and have learnt a lot to date not only from the course but from them as well, and as such look forward to learning more as the course progresses."

On successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate, students have the option of transferring to the MA in Quakerism in the Modern World. The MA is an excellent way to prepare for PhD research or for leadership in denominational settings.

Please visit [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/cpqqs](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/cpqqs) or <http://bit.ly/quaker-lancaster> to find out more about these online opportunities (including entry requirements and fees) or email Ben Pink Dandelion at [b.dandelion@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:b.dandelion@lancaster.ac.uk).

## John Henry Barlow, Quaker Man of Peace

*Antony Barlow* writes:

On June 17th this year, the City of Birmingham will erect a blue plaque to one of the outstanding Quakers of his time, John Henry Barlow who was referred to in the Obituary in *The Times* in 1924 as ‘The outstanding Quaker statesman of his generation’.

He is being honoured this year for his lifetime’s work for peace leading up to, during and after the First World War.

His family were Quakers from their inception, being descended from George Fox’s first follower James Lancaster and no-one embodied Fox’s Peace Testimony better than John Henry Barlow.

- He was Clerk of Yearly meeting from 1913 and all through 1915 and 1916 at a very taxing time for the Society, when much Quaker opinion was seriously divided on the correct response to the war.
- He led Quakers in opposing the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act, which brought in censorship of all publications which he refused to sign. He along with other Quakers were brought to trial at The Guildhall. *The New York Times* wrote: “*They retired to consider their verdict and John Henry Barlow, rose and invited Friends who were present at the trial to engage in silent prayer. For a time, the court then became a Quaker meeting, during which the silence was occasionally broken by vocal prayer. Future historians may record it as a landmark in the relation of the British churches to the State. It is probably the first occasion since the Stuart period on which an organized religious body has deliberately challenged the State’s authority.*”
- In 1915, he led members of the No-Conscription Fellowship to successfully secure ‘the conscience clause’, which enshrined the right to claim exemption from military service in the 1916 Military Service Act.
- He helped to start The Friends Ambulance Unit - Realising that many people, though abstaining, still wanted ‘to do something’, he worked tirelessly with Philip Noel Baker to establish in conjunction initially with The Red Cross, The Friends War Victims Relief Committee, which later became The Friends Ambulance Unit.
- He spearheaded a special Peace deputation to Holland in 1915 to try and find common ground



*John Henry Barlow 1855 - 1924*

amongst neutrals as a basis for Peace negotiations.

- He proposed Forgiveness - In 1918, the day after the signing of the Armistice, his forgiving views were widely publicized: “*We express our profound thankfulness that this terrible war is over. But we seek for Grace that we may regard with true Christian charity, those with whom our nation has recently been at war and that we may be preserved from cherishing feelings of revenge and bitterness. And may we face the future with wisdom, fearlessness, faith and humility.*” Archbishop Desmond Tutu and he would surely have had much in common.
- In 1920 he led a Quaker Peace delegation to Ireland to appraise the situation during the uprising of the Black and Tans and written up in *The Times* of October 5;
- First Quaker to speak on the Radio - in 1924 he was the first Quaker to be invited to speak on the BBC.

In addition to his work for peace, he was also George Cadbury’s choice to be the first Director of his new housing project, The Bournville Village Trust in 1900, providing housing for the poor, which he led with distinction for 20 years, praised by Lloyd George, Henrietta Barnett amongst many in the housing world.

## Diary Dates 2014

More dates for 2014 are available on the website: [www.fwccemes.org](http://www.fwccemes.org). Please send items for inclusion in the diary to Marisa Johnson at [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org).

**22 July – 21 August 2014: Quaker Youth Pilgrimage** in Peru & Bolivia

**2 – 9 August 2014: Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering**, Bath

**12 – 14 September: Border Meeting**, Walberberg near Bonn. Contact Anne Monheim [contact@grenztreffen.be](mailto:contact@grenztreffen.be)

**2 – 5 October 2014: German Yearly Meeting**, Bonn-Venusberg. Contact the Clerks [clerks@quaeker.org](mailto:clerks@quaeker.org)

**28 – 30 November: EMES Peace and Service Consultation**, Kortenberg, Belgium. Contact Marisa Johnson [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org)

**27 – 29 March 2015: German/Swiss Border Meeting**, Contact Brigitte Seger [seger.brigitte@sunrise.ch](mailto:seger.brigitte@sunrise.ch)

A **European Quaker All Age Gathering** to celebrate 30 years of EMEYF is scheduled for 30 July to 6 August 2016 in Bonn. Would you be interested in helping plan it? If so, please contact [martintouwen@gmail.com](mailto:martintouwen@gmail.com)

### Head of Learning

A rare opportunity has arisen to become the new Head of Learning at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham.

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Application deadline: Friday 15 August, 5pm

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ



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