

# Among Friends

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## Special Offer?

### Dear Friends,

The title of this year's Cary Lecture, given at German Yearly Meeting in Bad Pyrmont by Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, is Special Offer! What do we Quakers have to offer the world in these turbulent times? In an engaging, thoughtful and often very personal message, Paul outlined the distinctive and precious lived experience of Quaker worship and ministry, which is not separate from our day-to-day lives, but rather infuses our way of being so that, in a vivid image used in the lecture, it radiates through us like a daffodil immersed in blue dye will change its own colour.



*Quaker House, Bad Pyrmont*

*Photo: EMES*

Paul described meeting Friends during his teenage years whose Quaker witness radiated from them in this fashion, and attracted him to become a member of the Religious Society of Friends. I am sure we can all think of such Friends ourselves. In many ways both Fritz Renken and Qavi, whose lives we remember in this issue, displayed their Quaker dye in abundance. I have personal memories of both these Friends. Fritz

was a member of the EMES Executive Committee when I first became Secretary, and his courtesy and gentle humour helped me settle in. He once gave me a clock which had "EMES" on its face, which he found amusing – it still sits on one of my bookshelves, and I think of Fritz whenever I see it.

I never met Qavi in person, but we corresponded at times over the years, over his concern for Palestinian people. Occasionally, I would receive a postcard from Jerusalem from him, just a line of greetings, no requests, news or lectures, just a reminder that he had been thinking of me. Such a touching gesture.

I wonder what Quaker hue might be visible through me, if any? No need to explain what I believe or why – just to be visibly touched by God's grace is the most powerful witness I can bear to the gift of faith I have been lucky to find among Friends.

*Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary*

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## Fritz Gunther Renken, Berlin 6.11.1926 – Sögel 8.9.2017

*Kees Nieuwerth*, Netherlands Yearly Meeting, and *Sue Glover Frykman*, Sweden Yearly Meeting (edited) write:

Our Friend Fritz Renken passed away on Friday 8th September. His life reads like a book.

He was a US citizen, lived in a village in Germany close to the Dutch border and was a teacher for most of his life. He was a member of Switzerland Yearly Meeting and at one time its Clerk. He often worshipped with Friends in Groningen in the Netherlands. When he was no longer able to come to meeting for worship there, a small group of Friends went to Sögel to hold a meeting for worship at his house on the fifth Sunday in the month. Fritz also served for many years as a representative to FWCC-EMES and was on the EMES Executive Committee. He also represented EMES at Church and Peace.

Fritz was born in Berlin, grew up in Bremen and spent time with family in Garmisch Partenkirchen. His parents divorced when he was a child and he grew up with his mother. When the Nazi's rose to power in Germany he and his mother – as American/German citizens – were considered “enemy aliens” and had to report once a week to the police. Moreover, Fritz's mother was worried that Fritz might be called up to serve as a soldier in the army. In the end they were exchanged for German citizens seeking to return from the States by the Swiss, with whom they had both registered for protection. Switzerland – being neutral – helped to secure these diplomatic exchanges. After journeying from Garmisch Partenkirchen over the Swiss Alps to Sankt Gallen for one night, and then by train via Geneva to Marseille in France, they boarded Gripsholm, a Scandinavian ship heading for the United States. Fritz had just turned 19 and arrived in New York on Presidents' Day (February 22nd) in 1945.

Fritz and his mother settled in New York. He went to Haverford College and met Tacie, the love of his life, on Mother's Day, May 8th 1946. They enrolled on an exchange programme to Norway with Oslo University and loved the landscape, the language and the culture – and thereby restored the relationship with Scandinavia. Later they moved to Braintree in Massachusetts, where Fritz attended the Harvard graduate programme, after which he taught at Haverford. Fritz and Tacie



*Fritz Renken* Photo: *Kees Nieuwerth*

adopted two children, a daughter (Kirsten) and a son (Stefan). Fritz was then offered the headship at “Tasis”, the private American boarding school in Lugano, Switzerland. When Germany experienced a huge teacher shortage and advertised widely for help, he applied and was offered a position. The family moved to Sögel in the 1970s and Fritz taught for many years at the upper secondary school there.

His beloved wife Tacie passed away some eight years ago, which was hard on Fritz. When he started to find driving difficult, Groningen Friends visited him instead. At the beginning of 2017 Fritz fell and broke a leg. At first he seemed to recover reasonably well, but later became weaker and was admitted to a nursing home. My wife and I visited him there on Friday 8th September. His son Stefan was with him in his room and Fritz was very weak. He recognised us though and held our hands. His eyes were only half open. We told him not to hold back, but to ‘go to the Light’. After a little while he opened his eyes very wide, as if looking at something far away. After a sigh, he left us. A memorial meeting for worship to give thanks for the grace of God in his life was held in a beautiful wooden church at Sögel and attended by family, Friends, neighbours, colleagues and friends from the village.

Fritz is still close to us in a rather special way. Some ten years ago Tacie welcomed a stray cat, Millie, into their household. Millie was Fritz's companion in his last years. Millie has now come to stay with us! And so have some of the religious books that Fritz cherished.

## Mohammed Abdul Qavi



*Mohammed Abdul Qavi* Photo: [popular-resistance.blogspot.co.uk](http://popular-resistance.blogspot.co.uk)

*Sue Glover Frykman*, Sweden Yearly Meeting, writes:

Mohammed Abdul Qavi died peacefully on 27th August 2017 in Palestine. Born in Delhi, India, in 1936, he moved with his family to Karachi, Pakistan, when he was 12. Later he moved to Chittagong and then Dhaka (formerly East Pakistan, now Bangladesh). Qavi, his wife and two daughters moved to London in 1958.

He attended Quaker meetings for worship in Blackheath, local chapter meetings of the United Nations Association and many political gatherings. His strong desire to change the world for the better led him to stage regular peaceful protests in the late 1990s in Blackheath village and later outside the Pakistan High Commission in London against the Pakistani government's complicity in the US attacks on Afghanistan in 2001. He took part in many peaceful protests and demonstrations and was a supporter of the Occupy movement. Passionate about education, he supported the schooling of children and students in Pakistan and organised the distribution of books to school libraries.

Qavi first visited Palestine in 2002 and devoted much of his time there to education work and attending peace vigils. He was a gentle spirit and every week stood holding a sign with the words "Keep Hope Alive". His faithful witness created a ripple effect for peace and justice.

Our Friend Jean Zaru, in Ramallah, writes: "He attended our meeting for worship regularly, coming all the way from Beit Sahour. He contributed to the Meeting and also to scholarships at the Friends schools. He resisted structures of violence non-violently. He carried for us Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting and copies of advices and queries too. We are sad he is not with us, but his spirit, caring and kindness will be with us."

Qavi wanted to die and be buried in Palestine. Memorial meetings for him have been held in Bethlehem and in various locations in London, including the Quaker Meeting House in Blackheath.

### Sources:

<http://popular-resistance.blogspot.se/2017/09/qavi-1936-2017.html> and <http://popular-resistance.blogspot.se/2017/08/qavi-rip.html> , both posted by Mazen Qumsiyeh

## What do you want from EMES for your spiritual development in the coming years? A question of strategy.

*Sue Glover Frykman*, Clerk, *Martin Touwen*, Treasurer, *Berne Weiss*, Executive Committee Member, *Andrew Lane*, co-opted member of the Strategy Group write:

As part of its work plan, the EMES Strategy Group would like to know what you – individual Friends, EMES’ constituent yearly meetings, groups and organisations – would like and may need from EMES for your spiritual development in the coming years. Knowing this will give the group a sense of what Friends in the Section are being led to do, what kind of community building is taking place, what your forms of worship and sharing are, what your witness is or may become, and where the Spirit might be leading you.

Please share this as widely as you are able with your groups. We invite responses through the EMES Representatives Forum, the Peace and Service Consultation Forum and/or via email to [emesclerk@outlook.com](mailto:emesclerk@outlook.com) and are open to such until 21st December 2017.

Andrew Lane will be doing wall chart exercises on this topic at the forthcoming Peace & Service Consultation and the EMEYF Annual Meeting, both of which take place in November. Also as part of our work plan, we are conducting a SWOT (strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths) analysis of EMES as an organisation. Please feel free to contribute to this too, so that we can create as large a picture as possible. Following feedback from the Executive Committee, and any follow-up work that needs to be done, our aim is to present a strategy plan to the EMES Annual Meeting in June 2018.

We look forward to your contributions and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## Speaking Truth to Power on Nuclear Weapons

*Sue Glover Frykman*, Småland Worship Group, writes:

The Småland Worship Group, which is under the care of Sweden Yearly Meeting, has been in existence for the last six years. As reported in a previous Among Friends (in 2014), we meet once a month for Meeting for Worship in our homes on a rotating basis. We have a contact person and every six months decide where we will meet and when for the coming half year. As we have no premises, and no regular business, we do not have a clerk, a treasurer or any committees.

On 19th August this year we made history by holding our first Meeting for Worship for Business. This arose because the Gothenburg Worship Group had agreed to send a letter to Sweden’s foreign minister in connection with the endorsement by 122 countries of the treaty banning nuclear weapons at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 7th July 2017, following months of talks and strong opposition from nuclear-armed states and their allies. Sweden was one of the endorsing countries.

We had heard about this letter and were provided with a copy in case we wished to do something similar.

After our regular Meeting for Worship and lunch, we gathered for worship sharing on the topic of peace. From this, we moved into a Meeting for Worship for Business to discern whether we too wished to send a letter of encouragement to the foreign minister to suggest that the Swedish Government sign the UN treaty and ask the Swedish Parliament to ratify it. As we have no regular clerk, we appointed a clerk for this particular occasion, who wrote draft minutes and then read them out for us, as per Quaker practice.

We quickly united with the text that we had been provided with – after a few tweaks, that is, so that we could call it our own. What took more time was the discernment on who would sign the letter and be the contact person in case of further enquiries. After careful consideration, we reached agreement and the letter was printed out and signed. We decided that we wanted to send a letter by post, rather than as an email, in the hope that it would have more impact.

Over tea and cake, we talked together about how in the past, members of Sweden Yearly Meeting had been granted audiences with government ministers to air the

Quaker view on different issues, and that this had been regarded as important. We wondered whether we still had the right to do this, and asked one of our number to do some research and bring the matter to the next Samfundsråd (roughly translated as Interim Yearly Meeting). Someone also volunteered to send the letter from Gothenburg to the worship groups under the care of Sweden Yearly Meeting that had not yet received it, so that they could do as we had done if they wished.

This was a collective exercise and one that we felt was important and valuable. It was very useful – as well as challenging – for us as a worship group to come together in this way and make such a decision. It also seemed that the experience was worth sharing with other Quakers in our Section as inspiration and encouragement that, no matter how small your group is, you can make a difference and ‘speak truth to power’.

## Quakers Without Borders

*Dan Flynn*, Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting, writes:

To celebrate the 60th Anniversary Border Meeting in continental Europe, sixty-three Friends and Young Friends from continental Europe, Great Britain, Ireland, the Republic of Georgia, and Russia, and one non-Quaker invited speaker gathered together at Maison Notre-Dame du Chant d’Oiseau, B-1150 Brussels, Belgium from Friday to Sunday 1 - 3 September 2017 and progressed during the weekend

from  
**Border Meeting**  
 “Living with the Other  
 – an exploration of differences and similarities”  
 To  
 Neighbours Meeting  
 To  
 Welcome Home!  
 “Is this the first time you have been home?”  
 To  
**Quakers Without Borders**

On Friday evening, we were privileged to have two Friends who had written a history of Border Meeting in the Summer 2013 issue of *Among Friends*, Janet Kreysa (German Yearly Meeting) and Pieter Ketner (Netherlands Yearly Meeting) to lead us through some of the highlights of those sixty years and how Border Meeting has left a life-long positive impact on their spiritual journeys. A selection of photos and documents were displayed



*Quakers Without Borders*

*Photo: Dan Flynn*

throughout the weekend, while on this first evening a slide show evoked an earlier time of more formal-looking gatherings, offering heart-warming glimpses of youthful incarnations of Friends currently in attendance as well as beloved Friends who had passed on.

To initiate a transition from the past towards the future, George Thurley of Europe and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) then led an evening-ending Worship Sharing for reflection on where we have been and on what the future may hold, the latter reflection developing during the weekend.

On Saturday morning, we started with ourselves. Gretchen Castle, General Secretary of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) spoke on **Can we be Friends?** about how the four main varieties of Quakers worldwide today – unprogrammed, programmed, evangelical, conservative – can find common ground to live and work together through the four FWCC sections: the Americas, Africa, Europe and the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific by “Answering God’s call to universal love”.

## Quakers Without Borders (continued)

She cited the danger of fundamentalism closing borders today and stated that FWCC exists to help ensure that does not happen within Quakers. “I live on an island where there are still border issues,” one participant said, “and I am happy to be a member of the big Quaker Family worldwide.” “Having had to cross sometimes dangerous borders in my lifetime,” another said, “Border Meeting is where I feel at home.” Another summarized the importance of our World Family of Friends with the expression, “There is no ‘Other’.”

On Saturday afternoon under the title **What do we understand of Islam?**, Phil Gaskell (Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting) talked about early Quaker contacts with Islam, citing George Fox’s quotations from the Koran and Mary Fisher’s 1658 visit to the Ottoman Empire to expound her Quaker faith to the Sultan Mehmed IV, how Quakers suffered in the Christian world then, and how Muslims face similar challenges in the Christian world today. He offered some reflections and a two-page bibliography for present day Quakers seeking a balanced understanding of Islam and its followers.

Hajib El Hajjaji of the Center against Islamophobia in Belgium (Centre Collective contre Islamophobie en Belgique) <http://ccib-ctib.be/> then spoke about the experience of being a Muslim in 21st century Belgium. He was born in Belgium of Moroccan Muslim ancestry, educated in Catholic schools, and works as an energy project engineer in Brussels. He has been active in local politics for Ecolo (green party) and CdH (Humanist Democratic Centre party). Using French-language PowerPoint slides, Hajib spoke in English. It was the first time he had been invited to make his presentation to an English-speaking audience. He closed by expressing the hope that this first time was but a first step to continuing dialogue. Or, as actor Humphrey Bogart said to actor Claude Rains at the end of the 1942 wartime movie *Casablanca* in Morocco, “Louis, I think *this* is the *beginning of a beautiful friendship*.”

From Phil’s and Hajib’s presentations came a oneness: both Islam and Quakers believe all have direct access to God and both have suffered in the Christian world as Jesus suffered in his time.

On Saturday evening, Susanne Odeh and Annie Janssen from German Yearly Meeting led us in practicing the Quaker “Fun Testimony” as all were invited to offer their

musical, theatrical, or poetical ‘party piece’. We started off with a sing-along of the following words set to the music of *In an English Country Garden*:

People of peace  
Wearing sandals and socks  
60 years of Border Meetings.  
Let’s take the chance to think outside the box  
And exchange some Friendly Greetings.  
Friends from France and Germany,  
British Friends from ‘cross the sea,  
Luxembourg and Belgian Quakers, too, say “oui!”  
We’ll meet you there.  
We have so much to share.  
60 years of Border Meetings.  
Convents and cloisters,  
hostels for the young.  
60 years of Border Meetings  
Offering meals delightful to the tongue.  
But beware the quite strict seatings.  
Topics of complexity  
Sometimes cause perplexity.  
But as Quakers, we’re allowed to disagree.  
No doubt of this.  
We wouldn’t want to miss  
60 years of Border Meetings.  
Learning the skill of microphone techniques,  
60 years of Border Meetings.  
Walks and excursions or you can grow sleek  
Through Odehtics’ daily beatings.  
Loyal friends and new recruits  
Now in shorts, not ties and suits.  
Looking ahead but still tied to roots.  
Thank you we call to  
those who planned it all.  
Till the next of our great  
Borders Meetings!

Sunday morning opened with a Worship Sharing Meeting on **What have I learned this weekend and what action(s) would I like to take as a result of what I have learned?**, followed by a weekend-closing Meeting for Worship.

Ministry during Worship Sharing encouraged continuing mutual feeding of spiritual growth in the diaspora of Quakers in Europe in the languages of Europe. “We are a European family of Quakers, not just British



Quakers.” Native speakers of English, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Arabic, and Russian participated in the Meeting which was conducted in English, with occasional ministry in the other languages.

Sowing seeds in Border Meeting today, particularly through action with young people such as ‘Holiday from War’ <http://www.ferien-vom-krieg.de/> bringing together young people from different groups who might never meet, in order that they may get to know one another, reducing possibility of radicalization and fear of ‘the Other’, will bear fruit in years to come.

### The Power of Small Acts.

Border Meeting was first held 60 years ago as a way of reconciliation between former enemy countries of World War II. Today, with that ‘mission accomplished’, it was legitimate to ask, “Is Border Meeting still relevant?” The answer was a resounding yes! In contrast to geographic and political borders of the past, new cultural, religious, ethnic and racial borders continue to arise in such a manner that Quakers have a faith-based part to play in continuing to work towards a humane world for all without borders.

Putting such faith into action, a group of friends participating in this Border Meeting used free time in the program late Saturday afternoon to purchase 115 grocery bags of food and toiletries which they then distributed on Sunday morning during Meeting for Worship to hundreds of Eritrean and other refugees being neglected and harassed by authorities in Brussels’ Parc Maximilien.

But there are as many varieties of Quakers as there are Quakers, some say.

Heard in the Meeting room before the closing Meeting for Worship:

- “Please no popcorn ministry!”
- “What’s wrong with popcorn?”
- “I rather like popcorn which is quite healthy, actually.”
- “God created corn and man’s ability to pop it!”
- “Are we questioning God’s creation?”

The matter was referred to the Meeting for Sufferings to hold either a Meeting for Clearness, or more appropriately



*Quakers Without Borders putting their Faith into Action Photo: Dan Flynn*

when reflecting on God’s gift of grains that give Life, a Threshing Meeting.

Before closing the 60th anniversary Border Meeting 2017, we asked Friends if there were any offers to host a Border Meeting in **2018** and Peter Monheim and Janet Kreysa of German Yearly Meeting announced that the Light had already guided them to once again reserve Jugendakademie Walberberg, Wingert, 53332 Bornheim-Walberberg <https://www.jugendakademie.de/> this time from Friday to Sunday, **7 – 9 September 2018**.

Not to be outdone, Martin Touwen of Netherlands Yearly Meeting reported that Dutch Friends were seeing heavenly guidance towards hosting the 2019 Border Meeting once again at the Beziningshuis Regina Carmeli in Sittard, <https://www.reginacarmeli.info/> this time from Friday to Sunday, **6 – 8 September 2019**.

Lest **2020** be left in the lurch, voices from Friends in Alsace could be heard about meeting once again in Centre Culturel Saint-Thomas in Strasbourg, <http://www.centre-st-thomas.fr/>, the precise dates yet to be confirmed.

As for Belgium hosting in **2021**, divine guidance will come, we are sure.

The question of whether Border Meeting was still relevant and should continue was answered with a resounding... Ja. Oui. Ja. Si. Da. Yes!

Stay tuned for more revelation through Border Meeting in the manner suggested by the title of Kenneth E. Boulding’s The Evolutionary Potential of Quakerism [http://epoq.wikia.com/wiki/Boulding\\_1956](http://epoq.wikia.com/wiki/Boulding_1956) cited by Gretchen Castle.

**The evolutionary potential of Quakers Without Borders**

## Epistle from the Third National Gathering of the Italian Quakers Network

*Lucia Biondelli*, Clerk Italian Quakers Network, writes from Borgo Basino Forlì, Italy 1-3 September 2017

To Friends, wherever they be, greetings from Forlì's hills where we met coming from Bologna, Rimini, Northern Italy, Lazio and with the valuable presence of Friends from Cambridge and Hamburg, a total of sixteen attending.

Six participants shared their testimonies of peacebuilding in Israel and Palestina, actions rooted in Quaker spirituality within a context of international cooperation for education and non-violence. Facing increasing barbarism of daily conflict within occupied Palestinian territories we reaffirm our determination to keep alive hope in the value of dialogue and of taking responsibility personally for choices leading to positive developments.

The group examined together the challenge of forced migration hearing how some migrants have been helped in Italy and in Turkey. Facing global problems marking our time we recognize models of courage and faithfulness in time honoured ideals of Quakerism and we acknowledge the need for 'creative' alternative actions - "Let your life speak!".

Marco Bertaglia offered an introduction to "non-violent communication", Marshall B. Rosenberg's approach. It offers strategies to improve our capacity for empathic listening. It helped us examine our schemas of interaction pointing out stereotypes, judgemental

attitudes and prejudices

Walter Branchi guided us for a meditative "music to listen to". Electronic music with its invented and sustained sounds linked with listening to natural environment sounds. Giving full attention to the world around helped us focus on inner life.

In the course of the Meeting for Worship for Business Marisa Johnson told us dates and themes of: 1. QCEA/QPSW conference (1-3 2017, Bruxelles) "Sanctuary everywhere". 2. EMES gathering (21-24 June 2018 in Bergen, Norway) marking the 80th anniversary of EMES "A New Heaven and a New Earth" (Rev.21,1) finding New Light in Turbulent Times. Good news from Weh (Camerun) and from Fabian Lang: the building of the roof of the Health Dispensary continues, we are supporting this project and looking for funds. We decided the next national gathering shall take place on the first week end of September in a location to be decided. A Meeting for Worship closed the Gathering.



*Borgo Basino Forlì*



*Photos by EMES*



## News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Greetings from Woodbrooke. As we approach the end of 2017 it provides us with time to reflect and think about what has happened over the past year and also what lies ahead. This year we have seen changes on site at our study centre in Birmingham, UK; there are three new bedrooms with improved accessibility for visiting guests and earlier in the year we launched a new and updated website, alongside a new logo and brand. As we continue to develop we hope Friends around the world will continue to seek out new learning opportunities from Woodbrooke for themselves and their meetings.

As ever we will be continuing to offer **Woodbrooke-on-the-Road** events to meetings who need it around Europe. Our travelling teaching service gives meetings the chance to have a day of learning with experienced and skilled tutors aimed at providing new insights into Quaker history, theology, spirituality, testimony and community.

Visit [woodbrooke.org.uk/wotr](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/wotr) for more details.

In 2018, we will be growing our **online learning programme** following a successful 2017 which saw nearly 350 participants taking part from over 24 different countries. For many Friends, online learning provides opportunities to engage in learning to discover more about Quaker tradition, theology and process, and explore contemporary issues to support witness in the world.

If you would like to find out more visit [woodbrooke.org.uk/online](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/online).



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### Courses to look out for:

- ***Politics: finding your way***  
Monday 29 January – Sunday 11 March  
[woodbrooke.org.uk/politics-finding-your-way](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/politics-finding-your-way)
- ***A Quaker Response to Animal Suffering***  
Monday 5 February – Sunday 18 March  
[woodbrooke.org.uk/a-quaker-response-to-animal-suffering](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/a-quaker-response-to-animal-suffering)
- ***Quakers and European Politics***  
Friday 9 February – Sunday 11 February  
[woodbrooke.org.uk/quakers-and-european-politics](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/quakers-and-european-politics)
- ***Reality and Radiance: a retreat with inspiration from Swedish Quaker Emilia Fogelklou***  
Monday 19 February – Sunday 1 April  
[woodbrooke.org.uk/reality-and-radiance](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/reality-and-radiance)

### Catchpool Fund

The Catchpool Fund exists to enable Friends and meetings from Europe (excluding Britain Yearly Meeting) to participate in Woodbrooke learning. We offer support towards course costs (and can also help with travel costs) for people who want to come to Woodbrooke or participate in an online course. For more information, in a range of languages, please see [woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/financial-support/catchpool-fund/](http://woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/financial-support/catchpool-fund/) or contact [learning@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:learning@woodbrooke.org.uk)

To find out more about Woodbrooke's learning programmes, our bed and breakfast facilities and our meeting spaces visit [woodbrooke.org.uk](http://woodbrooke.org.uk).



*Photos by Woodbrooke*

# News from Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)



Kate McNally and Andrew Lane, QCEA, write:

Here are a series of short updates from Quaker House Brussels. Thank you for your continued support, and please contact us if this connects with your work or if we can be of any help.

## Ending immigration detention of children

Sylvain Mossou and Andrew Lane were hosted by Friends at the Quaker Centre in Prague in September during an international conference on child detention. Being able to stay at the Quaker Centre meant that we could afford to send two of the team, and to meet twice as many governments as otherwise. During the conference QCEA's child detention report was praised by the Council of Europe. They commended us for publishing new information about where children are detained, but also for considering a gender perspective – how immigration detention impacts girls and boys differently.

In the coming weeks, we have several more important opportunities to tell governments about alternatives to child detention, including an international EU summit on child rights in November. Sometimes this work is difficult, but we must be bold and learn from the great many Friends who have worked for improved detention conditions. Elizabeth Fry is well known amongst Friends in Britain for her work on detention conditions in the 19th Century. It is less well known that she also travelled to France, Germany, Italy and Russia to spread her message across Europe.

## Helping the Helpers

Kate McNally is continuing to coordinate, connect and support European Friends responding to the arrival of migrants. This has included some practical projects in Brussels and twinning different local projects so they can learn from each other.

One project that has particular momentum at the moment is Help the Helpers. This project is run by a group of Quaker psychotherapists from 4 countries who each specialise in trauma treatment. *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.* (1 Corinthians 12:4).

People who work with migrants often develop secondary psychological trauma, resulting from their work with traumatised people. Left untreated it can lead to mental health issues and addiction. There are some programmes to address the trauma experienced by migrants, but almost none to support the volunteers working with them.

These Friends have developed a protocol to help volunteers who work with migrants treat their own trauma and give them skills to help others. They are currently looking for funding to start a pilot project in the spring. Find out more from [Kate.McNally@QCEA.org](mailto:Kate.McNally@QCEA.org).

## Movie afternoons

Our space at Quaker House also allows us to offer a ministry of presence to the people living in Brussels' European quarter. In recent months, teenagers from a local asylum centre have come to watch films at the House. Local Friends from Brussels meeting have also attended – making more of a community feeling.

It is something small that we can offer that does not take much time to organise, but that gives the teenagers time outside of their centre. The most difficult part has been choosing the movie. The teenagers often don't have a common language and some cannot read sub-titles. So we've shown films with very little dialogue, *La Torture Rouge*, *the Artist* and *Shaun the Sheep*.

This could be perfect for your local Meeting or Worship Group if you have somewhere you can show a movie. Our local asylum centre was very pleased to hear from us.

## New research project: Anti-migrant hate comments on online newspapers

When the QCEA team meet with politicians and officials to ask for improved human rights protections for refugees, we almost always hear the same word: Populism.

They are telling us that prioritising, or appearing to prioritise the human rights of migrants, is deeply unpopular with the public, and therefore not politically possible for them. We have therefore asked ourselves:

Can we do anything to address anti-migrant views in the wider voting public?

We are realistic about what we can do as a small organisation, but we also want to be ambitious. In the next few weeks we will publish a research report in the comment sections of online newspapers. We believe that many European newspapers are spreading fear about migrants, but stay within the law by not using words that would incite violence. However, the public comments underneath their articles do cross that line.

QCEA staff and volunteers have selected the biggest selling newspapers in 7 European countries and reviewed all the public comments on articles about refugees and migrants written since June 2017. We have recorded all the comments that incite violence (e.g. saying that migrants' boats should be sunk) or dehumanise migrants (e.g. calling them cockroaches).

We are particularly grateful to Ireland Yearly Meeting QCEA committee who helped us find volunteers from Dublin City University who spoke Russian, Czech and Slovak. The report will be available on the QCEA website and we will provide a summary of our findings in the next edition of our Around Europe newsletter. Our work will then develop, and may include some quiet diplomacy with the newspapers themselves. There are examples of good practices that we can highlight, and we have faith that there are many web managers who will be willing to make improvements.

### **Making the case for Peacebuilding**

Friends who read the QCEA newsletter 'Around Europe' will know about the trend towards military cooperation and investment in the arms trade by European governments. When we meet politicians and officials they often challenge our arguments in favour of peace spending, by asking for concrete evidence that peacebuilding works.

Over that last 6 months, Olivia Caeymaex and Dilia Zwart have been collecting this evidence and have written a short book that will be published in January.



*QCEA and Peace Pilgrim*

*Photo: Kate McNally and Andrew Lane*

The work is divided into 11 sections, based on different government ministries, e.g. agriculture, education and justice. A range of expert Friends in Europe are currently giving feedback on the draft. After it is published we will be presenting it in several European capitals, including the team meetings of some foreign ministries and European Commission departments. Access into government departments is sometimes difficult, but Olivia is working hard to build new relationships. For example, she recently spent four days with officials at NATO – not easy, given that there are radically different understandings of basic concepts like peace and security.

### **Peace Pilgrim needs a bed as he walks around Europe**

Taraus Herrera is walking around the surface of the world for peace. He is starting by walking to every European capital, and many other villages and towns along the way. He walks about 20km a day. Everywhere he stops he spreads his positive message of peace and hope to whoever he finds.

He has already walked from London to Cardiff to Dublin to Edinburgh to Brussels. So far he has stayed with more than 40 Quakers. During October he spent 4 days at Quaker House Brussels and has now headed south and will be staying with another Friend when he reaches Paris. If you would like to host Taraus, please contact [Andrew.Lane@QCEA.org](mailto:Andrew.Lane@QCEA.org) or find him on Facebook.

## Diary Dates 2017 and 2018

More dates for 2017 and 2018 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).

**23-26 November 2017: EMEYF Annual Meeting,** Brussels, Belgium [emeyf@qcea.org](mailto:emeyf@qcea.org)

**1-3 December 2017: Sanctuary everywhere – a QCEA/QPSW Conference,** Brussels, Belgium, <http://www.qcea.org/home/events/conferences/>

**6-8 April 2018: Grenztreffen,** Maria Lindenberg, St. Peter (Hochschwarzwald) [grenztreffenCHD@quaeker.org](mailto:grenztreffenCHD@quaeker.org)

**12-15 April 2018: Central European Gathering,** Budapest

**26-29 April 2018: QUIP Conference: Writing at the Edge,** to be held at Glenthorne. [www.quakerquip.com](http://www.quakerquip.com)

**10-13 May 2018: Sweden Yearly Meeting,** Svartbäcken, [kvakargarden@kvakare.se](mailto:kvakargarden@kvakare.se)

**25-27 May 2018: Netherlands Yearly Meeting,** Bennekom, [secretariaat@dequakers.nl](mailto:secretariaat@dequakers.nl)

**21-24 June 2018: EMES Annual Meeting 2018,** Åsane Folk High School just outside Bergen, Norway. “*A New Heaven and a New Earth*” (Rev.21,1) *finding New Light in Turbulent Times*. All are welcome! This is not just for representatives. Join us celebrating 200 years of a Quaker presence in Norway and 80 years of EMES.

**16-18 November 2018 Peace and Service Consultation,** Quaker House, Bad Pyrmont, Germany

### Woodbrooke on-line Meeting for Worship

A regular opportunity to join in a virtual Meeting for Worship on Fridays at 1pm Greenwich Mean Time November till March, 1pm British Summer Time April till October. Martin Layton will be running a Meeting for Worship using Adobe Connect, an online meeting space accessible on any browser. All you have to do is go to <https://woodbrooke.adobeconnect.com/quiet-room/> to take part. See <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/>

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

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**Deadline for Among Friends 141: 1 March 2018**