Among Friends No 122: Autumn/Winter 2011

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Season of Remembrance

Dear Friends,

I hope you will enjoy this issue of Among Friends, and consider supporting it by voluntary subscription – rising costs and very few donations are making it hard to sustain Among Friends in print. Yet many Friends still prefer to receive it this way.

November is a month of remembrance – All Saints and All Souls festivals, Armistice day and the end of World War I, thanksgiving. What do we choose to remember and commemorate in our countries and cultures? And, as Friends, can we influence what we value in the present by the choices that we make about the memories we want to keep alive? Helen Lockwood argues powerfully that, although our tradition has been sparing

with memorials, there are important opportunities for outreach in claiming a presence in places where we may not immediately feel we belong. And we continue to draw inspiration from Friends who have let their lives speak and shown us God's grace at work in the world. We remember with gratitude the life of Pam van der Esch-Mitchell, a member of Belgium and Luxembourg



Separation Wall - photo of painting by Geoff Braithwaite

Monthly Meeting, and honour her memory by offering our own lives for service. How do we respond when the call to service comes? During Britain Yearly Meeting I was asked to share briefly how I have been challenged to live our Quaker testimonies in my life. I recalled how terrified I had been when feeling called to becoming an Ecumenical Accompanier in Palestine and Israel, a service for which I had little preparation and no previous experience, and yet changed my life. Geoff Braithwaite's article brought back vivid memories of living in Jerusalem for three months. It is daunting and scary to respond to such calls, but I have found that, if we allow ourselves to be open to God's guidance, grace comes and empowers us to do what love requires of us. New opportunities for service in representing Friends through the Quaker Council for European Affairs, and leading Friends World Committee for Consultation in the role of General Secretary are calling new Friends to offer themselves for these roles. Think it possible the call could be for you.

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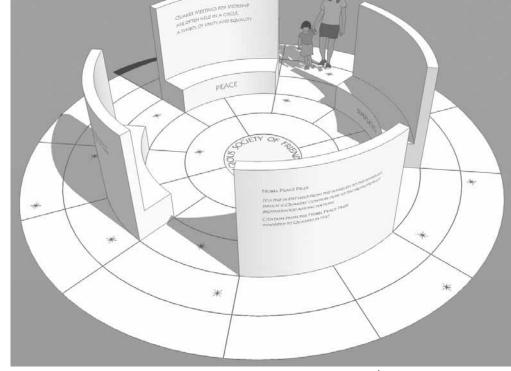
Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary

Arboretum

Helen Lockwood writes:

If we as Quakers don't usually do memorials, why are we constructing one in the National Memorial Arboretum in the English midlands?

This is a 150 acre (60 hectare) site, dedicated to Remembrance. It has a military connotation in the public mind, because there are many memorials to branches of the armed forces serving during and since the Second World War; these stand alongside commemoration to civilian



are rather fewer: to people The future Quaker Service Memorial Design by Rosemary Barnett & image by Grace Jordan

killed on the roads, and – thanks to the Dresden Trust – to those who lost their lives in air raids on Britain and Germany in a demonstration of shared suffering. Trees around the Reconciliation Stone were planted by Japanese and British service veterans who had become close personal friends, in the spirit of "Never Again". One of the first sites to be erected was 'Shot at Dawn' commemorating the 300 British servicemen executed at the Front during the First World War - and now one of the most visited.

Members of Staffordshire Area Meeting wished to commemorate the wartime and post-war service of the Friends Ambulance Unit and Friends Relief Service which led to the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Religious Society of Friends in 1947 in recognition of its relief work. We consulted the Arboretum staff and the Society nationally and received strong encouragement. A six-month exercise in discernment resulted in a memorial designed to resemble a small Meeting for Worship. It consists of four curved stone benches set in a circle, their high backs providing shelter and seclusion. Wording succinctly but explicitly setting out our commitment to peace will be carved into the stonework.

After receiving the support of Meeting for Sufferings of Britain Yearly Meeting and the agreement of the Arboretum, we registered ourselves with the Charity Commission as the Quaker Service Memorial Trust (no. 1142335) and launched our appeal for funds at Yearly Meeting Gathering - just 12 months after our initial consultation with Area

Meetings. We were advised to set our funding target at £85,000 (Euros.100,000), with any surplus not required for construction being set aside for the outreach programme, the larger purpose of our project. At the time of writing, we have £45,000 (say Euros 50,000), received from Trusts, Friends and Meetings across the UK.

So why have this memorial? Friends' witness to peace in a world at war still resonates: but two generations later, this particular memory is fading amongst British Friends. Our Nobel Peace Prize is being forgotten. Quaker service families still hold diaries and pictures from those wartime years, but the experiences which they record have slipped from the awareness of the Society; more importantly, the contribution which Friends in occupied Europe were able to make to its reconstruction after the destruction of Nazism and war needs to be brought back to Britain Yearly Meeting. The education programme which the Quaker Service Memorial Trust will be mounting will provide in-reach to the Society and outreach from it, in a setting where thousands of people will be pausing at our memorial to the pacifist service of hundreds of young men and women.

We would very much like to hear from Friends in Europe and further afield with experiences of wartime and post-war Quaker relief and reconciliation work. Contact Anthony Wilson, Clerk, Quaker Service Memorial Trustees by email: qsmtrust@hotmail.co.uk more information visit www.staffsquaker.org.uk.

Is everything divine? Border Meeting September 2011

Janet Kreysa writes:

Sittard, situated in the narrowest part of the Netherlands, close to both the German and the Belgian borders is well qualified to host the Border Meeting of Friends from France, Germany, the Benelux lands and the United Kingdom. We enjoyed the story of two Dutch Friends travelling by train to the meeting, deep in talk about Quakerism, until it was angrily pointed out to them that they were sitting in a "silence zone"! Indeed, the noise that 35 "quiet" Quakers could make as we met must have surprised the nuns at the peaceful Carmelite convent in Sittard. Some Friends had experienced their first Border Meetings over 50 years ago. Others were new but all seemed eager to meet Ffriends from yearly meetings other than their own. Opening worship and games helped to dispel any shyness and we were reminded to be aware of the need to speak audibly and clearly, whatever the language.

We were privileged to have Herman de Dijn, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leuven, Belgium, as our speaker on "Is everything divine? Spinoza and the Quakers". Throughout his professional life Herman has specialised in questions about Spinoza . His two clearly presented lectures, given in English, challenged us to think, and to consider our own relationship with the Divine. What emerged was Spinoza's view of God as being the principle behind the whole cosmos, but not being involved in its actual operations. In finding out about the natural world we share in the intellect of God; someone conducting pure scientific research can "find salvation" in this way. Others can find meaning in life through religion, but that religion should be able to be questioned objectively. The value of a religion lies in its contribution to the virtue of the individual, and the harmonious functioning of the state. If those practising a religion behave with charity and justice, then that religion is valid. We can love God as being the source of everything, and find inspiration and enlightenment through worship and meditation.

We learned that Spinoza, living in Amsterdam and being on good terms with dissenters there, could well have met those English Friends who visited Amsterdam in the 1650s. Popkin's and Singer's book: "Spinoza's Earliest Publication? The Hebrew Translation of Margaret Fell's 'A loving Salutation to the Seed of Abraham among the Jews' ", suggested that the Jew who translated Margaret Fell's letter into Hebrew was likely to have been Spinoza.

We met in small groups to talk (in Dutch, German and/or English), and to present our findings in poster form. Discussions were wide-ranging. Can we accept Spinoza's view that we may love God, but that this God cannot love us as individuals? Can we accept that the soul dies when the body dies? Would Spinoza's



Drawing: Erik Dries, Sittard, September 2011

ideas have been acceptable to Friends in the 1650s, and to us today? What would we do if he applied for membership? The finished posters gave a good impression of our groping to find answers.

The whole programme, unobtrusively organised by Dutch Friends, allowed time for worship and for recreation, and for exercise (walking to Germany and back!) Saturday evening's entertainment, with lots of laughter, reflected great diversity of gifts and of culture. A talk at our epilogue about the suffering of the Palestinian people, and a related reading of Sr Ruth Fox's poem: "Four-fold Benedictine Blessing" helped sum it all up (two verses quoted here):

May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly, and love deep within your heart.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really CAN make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

We left happy to know that plans are already underway for next year's Border Meeting, the second weekend in September in Strasbourg.

Last appeal for participation in the World Conference

Marleen Shepers, Conference Coordinator writes:

Open place applications are still welcome – please apply via www.saltandlight2012.org. Mention the FWCC Conference Preparation meeting on 10th December at Friends House in London.

Contributing to travel funding: Almost daily I am receiving e-mail messages from Bolivia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ghana, Hungary, India, Rwanda, Uganda, Myanmar or Nepal. Delegates who are waiting to hear about the available travel funding for them to attend the World Conference. Needless to say the demand is high. Many are now registering 'pending travel funding' so that they are assured of their place. They will be bringing colorful handbags and beads from Ghana, Andean scarves and bags, embroidered bags for laptops, Blue mountain coffee from Jamaica to sell at the World Conference to help them pay their registration fee. Could you help them with a place at the World Conference by contributing to the travel fund?

Nancy Irving, General Secretary of FWCC, and I were in Kenya for ten days in September to work on preparations for the World Conference together with the FWCC-Africa office staff and the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC). We were in Nairobi, at Kabarak University and in Vokoli (Western Province) where we attended a Local Arrangements Committee meeting and a Quaker Church meeting on Sunday.

This is a big task for our Kenyan Friends and we were delighted that while we were in Nairobi we could get, for the next six months, a full-time Local Coordinator on board. Cornelius, a young Kenyan Friend, will be working closely together with the LAC to ensure that all local arrangements are in place to receive such a big international group of Friends.

We hope that you can join us. And since you'll be traveling all the way to Kenya you may want to enjoy some **Kenyan Friends' hospitality** before or after the World Conference. This will benefit the local economy and Kenyan Friends will benefit from being exposed to you. These tours are open to all, not just World Conference delegates. Information to book pre or post conference tours is now available on the website www.saltandlight2012. org - Friends Church visits in Western Province, Service Projects, Safaris or just a couple of days with Friends in Nairobi.



Auditorium where we will welcome you next year Photo: Marleen Shepers



En route from Nairobi to Karabak University Photo: Marleen Shepers



Children at worship in Vokoli Photo: Marleen Shepers

Pam van der Esch-Mitchell

A Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Patricia Ann Margaret (PAM) van der Esch - Mitchell London, 18 February 1925 - Brussels, 8 April 2011

Pam Mitchell was born in London but grew up in Victoria, Canada where she lived a very active life: riding, climbing and skiing with her father. Pam was a gifted student and at 17 she went to study history at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and from there to do a Masters at Bryn Mawr in Philadelphia. Her thesis was about the similarities between the teachings of Jesus and Communism. As part of her studies Pam went with the Christian Youth Movement to help build railways in Yugoslavia.

Having been awarded a scholarship to the London School of Economics, Pam moved to London in 1947 where she wrote her thesis on the Spanish Civil War one of the first books published on the subject - and gained a Ph.D. in History.

At the LSE, Pam met Bastiaan van der Esch, whom she later married, and the couple moved to Paris to undertake research. Pam continued to write while looking after the children: Phyllis, Mark, Andrew and Michiel.

The family lived in The Hague, Paris and then Luxembourg. Here Pam attended the young multinational English-speaking Protestant Church. She was a founding member of the 'International Bazaar', which was to become the major charitable fundraising event in the Grand-Duchy and which still continues today.

It was when the family moved to Brussels in 1980 that Pam first encountered the Quakers. She began to attend Meeting for Worship with the small Quaker community and soon after was accepted into membership of Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting.

From 1986 onwards she served several periods as Clerk. She was also a vey committed Peace Secretary, representing Friends at the European Ecumenical Conference on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Assisi; at Pax Christi; at the Centre for European Policy Studies; at the Friends World Peace and Service Consultation in Namur; and at the 1991 FWCC World Conference.

BLAND VENNER

Pam served for very many years as prison visitor. She was very impressed when for the first time she met a number of young Jehovah's Witnesses who had been imprisoned for refusing to do military service or to accept alternative social work organized by the Military.

Both inside and outside of Meeting, Pam never tired of testifying to what she felt was right. Women's Rights were one of her strong concerns. So, when the Taliban in Afghanistan made life very difficult for women, Pam joined the "Women in Black" who, with only a few participants would stand in protest opposite the European Commission's Berlaymont Building once a week. Pam was also one of the first Presidents of the Association 'Femmes d'Europe', which raises funds for humanitarian causes.

Pam was respected and loved by Friends in Belgium and Luxembourg and throughout Europe for her integrity, her forthrightness, her generosity and her hospitality.

We give thanks for the life of Pam van der Esch-Mitchell.

Russian-speaking Gathering

A group of Friends from Russia, Georgia and the Ukraine met in Kremenchug, Ukraine from 21st to 23rd October to explore Thomas Kelly's essay "The Gathered Meeting". A full report of the event and pictures will be in the next edition of Among Friends.

Pilgrimage to Palestine – the Kettle Sings

Geoff Braithwaite writes:

Six of us attended the Quaker Voluntary Action working retreat in Israel and Palestine from 6th to 15th April. Two days based at Tel Aviv in Israel followed by seven near Ramallah in Palestine enabled us to experience the situation at first hand and to contribute something practical to the community.

We carried with us a card signed by well over 100 Friends saying:

TO ALL FRIENDS IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL FROM FRIENDS ATTENDING **MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS IN LONDON** ON 02/04/2011

We send you our greetings, our love and our prayers for your peace – we are with you.

At meeting for worship in Ramallah on 10 April, the message formed part of the spoken ministry and Friends were invited to picture all those who had signed the card sitting with them in worship. News of 'Sufferings' public decision to recommend Friends to boycott goods produced by Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories ('the Friend' 8th April) had already reached local Friends. The Clerk, Jean Zaru, asked us to convey the gratitude and joy of the Meeting back to 'Sufferings' and to all Quakers in Britain ('the Friend' 15th April).

The same joy and gratitude sprang from the Palestinian and Israeli people whom we met who support policies of 'nonviolent resistance'. Some had already heard the news; for others it was groundbreaking and greeted with enthusiasm – even applause.

To me it felt we were on a pilgrimage together – a new and vital part of the life journey of each one of us as we listened and absorbed the nature of life under occupation.

In Israel we met the women's movement 'New Profile' and Amos Gvirtz, lifelong pacifist and socialist. his home on one of the settlements, we also visited an Israeli, passionate for people to understand his position – his real fear of random 'terrorist' attacks on Israeli communities and a firm believer that the wall saves lives.

In Palestine we met up with three nonviolent resistance movements (including BDS - boycotts, divestment and sanctions), a women's community project in the isolated and poverty-stricken village of Rantis, the Mayor of Al Bireh (the municipality adjacent to Ramallah), Friends International Center, American Friends Service Committee, the Director of Ramallah Friends School and members of the students' council. We attended the launch of a new book by Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, 'Refusing to be Enemies -Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation'. To quote Jean Zaru ('Occupied with Nonviolence' 2008) "Resistance is the refusal to be neglected and disregarded".

We spent four half-days practical work: three on Palestinian community projects and one at the Friends Meeting House and International Center. And we had some time - much needed - for personal retreat and reflection.

We met many Palestinians, both formally and informally. Every single one of them had their own stories to tell of suffering oppression under occupation. As we met people, it was harrowing to hear of their or of family members' daily hardships and experiences of being in jail without trial. It was like an entire people being 'kettled'. (And it's far worse in Gaza.)

What struck me most was:

- the steep tree-covered hills of Palestine mounts of olives - except for those which had been seized and cleared for the numerous illegal, Israeli settlements;
- the unimpeded confiscation of land for new settlements (we saw the start of yet another one) and the arbitrary re-designation of much Palestinian land as 'agricultural' making it illegal for people to build their homes on it;
- olive groves destroyed for 'security' reasons -"Palestinians might be hiding in them";
- the clusters of black water tanks on the roofs of Palestinian houses where running water is turned on by the Israeli water authority on just two days, or in some areas just one day, per week in stark contrast to the uninterrupted water supply to the whole of Israel, including the settlements;

- the settlement roads reserved exclusively for Israelis and the check points controlling these;
- the extra check points installed to disrupt daily life and to instil fear and despair in the powerless at the hands of the powerful, for example (1) the families whose land was once a 10 minute walk away but where only one member per family is now allowed access through a distant, designated check point; they have to get up at 3.00am each morning and then are not allowed to take food and water - only money with which to purchase these things (and any casual labour) once on the Israeli side or (2) soldiers at check points who, at whim, let the whole thing gridlock. It is not uncommon for pregnant women to be kept waiting so long that they give birth at these check points; people's arrival at work or school can vary by 3 hours and we heard of a case where a man needing kidney dialysis treatment twice a week died as a result of such tactics.
- Similarly, night time armed raids on houses, e.g. families woken and frightened by soldiers who then take away the father. When he returns a few hours later, all the soldiers have said is "We just wanted to know who you are".
- And the suffering of Palestinians in public office. The Mayor of Al Bireh was imprisoned twice; his wife spent a year in jail; the brother of another officer was imprisoned for 5 years; several other officials, much longer. All ended in release without Their steadfastness did much to keep the Palestinian people together following the second intifada.

Then there was:

- the view of gleaming Tel Aviv and the Mediterranean in the distance which Palestinians are forbidden ever to visit;
- and THE WALL.

Those inside the 'kettle' are clearly angry and frustrated and despairing at the oppression and injustices they all suffer. They are on the boil and there are times much publicised in the media - when the lid blows off, Israelis get killed or hurt, followed invariably by 'disproportionate' reprisals when progress towards peace is halted or receives a setback. Many maintain that Israel has an overriding interest in keeping the "The opponent prefers violence by the conflict alive. opposition, because they can deal with that." (Quoted by Kaufman-Lacusta)

BLAND VENNER

But within it all the kettle sings. I could not believe the improvements being made to the face of Al Bireh, getting cleaner and smarter by the minute: new buildings; trees being planted along streets and in new traffic islands (one of our half day projects); a bustling and bright new municipal park and so on. Two more of our projects involved removing rubbish from semiderelict buildings and clearing the surrounding ground ready for the creation of small museums, craft outlets and teashops for tourists to outlying villages. The plan is to have themed tours taking in these places and one can readily see the attraction for visitors to learn about life in Palestine in this way.

More than that, I was deeply moved by the dignity of the people under such oppression, attained through their constant, untiring efforts to achieve their goals by nonviolent resistance. The Palestinian, Israeli and international nonviolent resistance organisations, such as those we met, provide a very impressive body of influence. If this can be turned into people power (as it was following the first intifada but, so far, not under the present leadership), support for the Israeli occupation and military interventions can and will weaken both internationally and from within Israel.

How can we help? In addition to the boycott called for by 'Sufferings', Friends can undertake speaking engagements, write articles and talk with friends. Then there is the Friends International Center. is a central venue for Christian, Muslim, local and international groups, for lectures and for concerts; its energetic coordinator, Kathy Bergen, has made it into a remarkable success story. It is a vital Quaker presence but on the brink of closure through uncertain future funding. It needs our support.

I feel spiritually deepened by my brief experience of sharing life under occupation: my life has been changed. Thank you QVA. I hope many more will feel drawn to visit Palestine, whether with QVA or independently.

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Pilgrims' Progress to join Ekta Parishad

Kate de la Mare, outgoing Clerk of France Yearly Meeting, and her husband Sébastien are travelling overland from France to India to join the year-long preparatory march starting on 2nd October 2011 which will culminate in a great walk towards Delhi gathering about 100,000 walkers by October 2012.

The walk is organised by Ekta Parishad ('Forum for Unity' www.ektaparishad.com), which federates hundreds of smaller movements & organisations working for the poorest peoples to regain autonomy in their lives by asking the 'powers-that-be' to respect peoples' rights to manage, at village level, their life resources - land, water and the forest - see http://www. fwccemes.org/news/friends-to-join-the-great-ektaparishad-walk-in-india for more information, or you can follow their progress through their blog (in French): http://marchedoucementsurlaterre.blogspot.com/.

By mid-October Kate and Sébastien had reached Turkey and wrote a letter to their f/Friends and supporters. Here are some extracts from it:

The last few days before leaving home (Brittany) were very busy:

Over the equinox week-end and together with others we led a workshop based on Joanna Macy's 'work that reconnects'. 32 people attended (22 adults & 10 children): In this experience i felt i was beginning, at a relationship level, to practice what Rajagopal has called a 'bottom-up or non-violent economy'. We tried to listen to the children and be led by their example of authenticity and flexibility without compromise.

On 29th September we left Saint Jacut for Saint Dolay (25km south) for a 20hr time of cultivating consciousness (in the ways taught at Plum Village) with a small group of friends. The following day these friends gave me a yak-hair shawl - since when i have not been a single day without savouring its soft warmth reminding me of dear ones at home.

At the feast-day for the Creation at the monastery at Saint Dolay we were offered a time to share about our forthcoming journey, and a number of people expressed tender, even tearful, thanks.

We travelled to Nantes (60km SE) with our friends Gaelle, Bruno and their 2 children İrene and Sylvain a precious farewell from our new little community at Gueveneux. They left us with rolls of Corsican wool felted in Brittany, and cut by Gaelle ready for us to sew into warm capes/sleeping blankets. Hard then (27 C) to believe we would actually need them...

İt's now over a week since we arrived in Turkey - visas are not so easy to obtain for Brits (understandable I feel in view of our nation's actions the middle east),

we are using the time to learn Turkish (also a major language in the immigrant population at Redon, so maybe the All-knowing has a plan...?)

We sleep in the hazelnut groves above the city and are very glad for our warm capes... to which (following heavy rainfall) we have added a small tarpaulin - machine sewn while we waited, sitting on little stools outside with glasses of Turkish tea.

Yesterday we discover the covered market in full activity as we go through the old town and are delighted to find there many small farmers selling their produce.... nothing out-of-season in this market, nothing not local.

The landscape is dramatic here, the city squeezed in along the coastline, and from the shore, as from the gardens above the town, the light-play with sea, sky, moon and clouds is often breathtaking.

How I enjoy the relaxed everydayness of religion here: I see no false piety, but generous tolerance of difference, women all in black bar eyes, nose and hands walking arm-in-arm with women with or without headscarves, at prayer times men of all walks of life praying elbow to elbow – overflowing from the mosques right into the gardens (where others are relaxing), then simply and naturally strolling off about their daily affairs. There is a graceful ebbing and flowing from mundane tasks to religious practice... like so many men of a certain age, the man at the internet cafe is often outside his shop sitting on a little stool with his rosary. In this land I feel I am experiencing a culture where the Quaker testimonies to religion in all of life, to community, to equality and to service are at work... is this what it felt like to live in Pennsylvania in the 19th century, I wonder?

News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

The Quaker in Europe online project continues its life among Friends in different parts of Europe. The fifth run in French has participants from France, Belgium, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. A fourth run in Czech is planned for early 2012 and translations into Esperanto are completed. An evaluation of the *Quaker in Europe* project is underway and will be completed by the end of January 2012. It will help us determine what changes may need to be made in the course content and format. The evaluation will also help Woodbrooke as it explores how e-learning can be developed and more widely used in its course offerings.

If you are interested in learning more about the Quaker in Europe on-line course, please contact Julia Ryberg, European Project Coordinator by emailing Julia. ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk.

Woodbrooke on-the-road has once again been travelling to various parts of the section. In October, Zelie Gross and Michael Booth spent a weekend with Belgium and Luxembourg MM at their annual residential weekend exploring the theme Growing as a Community Grounded in the Spirit. The mixed age weekend included a range of participatory activities and input with different ways of drawing on the theme and living it out coming to the fore. In November, Harvey Gilman is leading a day with French Quakers (and friends) at the Quaker Centre in Paris, focusing on Deepening the Spiritual Life of the Meeting.

In early 2012, Woodbrooke is beginning some partnership work with Ireland Yearly Meeting to support a team of IYM tutors to deliver Training for Clerks around the yearly meeting. And finally, next year two German speaking tutors will be travelling to work with Friends in Germany Yearly Meeting with a focus on Training for Elders.

Woodbrooke is always willing to run events in any part of the section and we sometimes have funding to support this work. We can often work in a local language for either a day or weekend event. If you've thought of having an event in your Monthly Meeting, YM, or worship group but have worried about either the costs or the language please get in touch, as we don't want either of these things to prevent an event from taking place. Contact offsite@woodbrooke.org. uk to start a conversation about your event!

BLAND VENNER

News from Birmingham:

A fundraising appeal has been launched to build an extension to the dining room of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. The vision for this space is to create an environment similar to the former common room -a place for fellowship and sharing, a place to relax and view the garden. A generous grant from the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and donations from meetings and individuals mean that we have just over 25% of the funds left to raise.

We welcomed Simon Best to the Programmes **Team** in September as Tutor for Nurturing Friends and Meetings. Simon had previously worked for the Children and Young People's department at Friend's House in London, and graduated from Woodbrooke's Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies in 2010. He gave the George Gorman Memorial Lecture at Britain Yearly Meeting earlier this year.

We are very excited to be embarking on several new projects for our educational programme in 2012 including a new partnership of hosting courses and retreats at Swarthmoor Hall, the 'birthplace' of Quakerism ,and a new leadership programme for Young Adult Friends.

The Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies held the prestigious annual George Richardson Lecture in October to coincide with the Quaker Studies Research Association conference. The lecture, entitled 'Towards a Revision of W. C. Braithwaite's The Second Period of Quakerism' was given by Rosemary Moore, and will be published in the Quaker Studies Journal. The Centre's leader, Ben Pink Dandelion, will be teaching at USA's Pendle Hill in November.

Thinking of attending a course? Catchpool Fund bursaries are readily available if financial help is needed. Contact Julia Ryberg, European Project Co-ordinator, for information on the Catchpool Fund at julia.ryberg@ woodbrooke.org.uk or +46 (0) 175-715 30. See www. woodbrooke.org.uk for general information and to request a course brochure.

Celebrating 30 years of Greetings to Friends in Europe **EMEYF**

Marielke Nieuwerth-van den Akker writes:

As you all know, the Europe and Middle East Section is full of small meetings and worship groups, spread out across the European continent and the Middle East. A good number of these meetings have a young Friend or two, but little more. Consequently, it can be a lonely experience for young Friends with no one in their age bracket to share their spiritual experiences with. For almost 30 years now, EMEYF provides a community for such young Friends by organising at least two gatherings a year, sometimes three. Over the years we have provided community to young Friends as far apart as Norway and Egypt. Aside from being a spiritual community, EMEYF has offered opportunities for practical learning and sharing and continues to do so. For those young Friends who take on formal responsibilities, EMEYF provides the opportunity to learn about 'Quaker roles' (Elder, Treasurer, Secretary, Representative, Gatherings coordinator, Clerk, etc) in a safe environment and provides the opportunity to contribute to the life of other Quaker bodies in the section.

2015 is the 30th anniversary of EMEYF and a great opportunity to celebrate our community. This anniversary allows us to inspire people by telling the story of EMEYF and inspiring people to engage with Young Friends across the section. EMEYF has become a family to many people and provides a spiritual and nourishing community that has formed firm bonds of friendship. We would like to explore our history and develop a way to tell the story of EMEYF in a creative medium and for this, we would like to draw on the memories and experiences of the people who have helped to shape EMEYF through the years. We continue to explore our path forward and would welcome input from all those who have had some involvement in EMEYF through its time. We invite any one that has been part of EMEYF in any way in the past 30 years to contact our Secretary on emeyf@ qcea.org so she can help us to gather their stories and explore the possibility of organising a reunion to celebrate our anniversary.

& the Middle East from the new EMEYF secretary

Hannah Slater writes:

As the new EMEYF secretary, I am writing to introduce myself to Friends in the Europe and Middle East section. My name is Hannah Slater and, as a young Friend myself, I am delighted to take on this role and look forward to the new experiences, acquaintances and challenges that it will bring. I thank my predecessor John Nicholls for his extensive handover notes and conversations, which I hope mean that the transition will go as smoothly as possible for all concerned.

In October I moved to Brussels to take up a new job as a programme assistant at QCEA. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the excellent work of the organisation, and in particular on the Middle East programme which I will be working on, and to deepen my understanding of and engagement with the Quakers. I grew up in the loving environment of Warrington Meeting in England, living for some years in the house there while my father was the warden. In 2007 I spent seven months volunteering for BQEF (Bolivian Quaker Education Foundation), teaching English and Art in a Quaker school on the Bolivian altiplano. It was in Bolivia that I first saw the differences, and similarities, among international Friends.

Brussels is a European city and it gives me great pleasure to live here, in the heart of Europe. As with international Quakerism, the diversity of people in the city encourages me to be mindful of cultural differences, whilst also remaining conscious of the things that unite us as people.

EMEYF's annual meeting will take place from the 18 - 20th November at Quaker House Brussels. It is an opportunity for young Quakers from Europe and the Middle East to discuss business and worship together, rekindling old friendships and making new ones. I look forward to sharing the weekend with young Friends from the section and putting some names to faces. If you would like to contact me regarding the annual meeting, or EMEYF in general, please feel free to contact us at emeyf@qcea.org

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Appointment of Two Representatives/Heads of Office

(Starting date: October/November 2012, to be agreed)

Quaker Council for European Affairs invites applications for two full-time representatives to run its Brussels office. The task is a double one:

- raising Quaker concerns with the institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe;
- keeping Friends informed about European policies and issues which they would wish to influence.

The posts are based in Quaker House, Brussels.

The posts are open to two separate individuals, male or female, who are members of the Religious Society of Friends, or to a couple, at least one of whom is in membership of the Society. The persons appointed will need to be:

- very familiar with the life and work of their own Yearly Meeting;
- fully understand Quaker testimonies and values;
- experienced in the management of a small professional organization;

- able to communicate simply and clearly, both orally and in writing, about Quaker concerns with European issues;
- able to speak and write in English for diverse audiences in many countries.

While a good knowledge of English is essential for the posts, knowledge of other European languages, and in particular of French, is a distinct advantage. The persons appointed must have experience of living in Europe and either have or be able to obtain the right to live and work in the European Union.

The posts are suitable for people at different stages in their career; for this reason salary and conditions are open to discussion. The length of the contract is also negotiable, but is expected to be between 3 and 6 years.

Application forms may be obtained from the Clerk of the Search Group, Jethro Zevenbergen:

Jethro Zevenbergen Akkerwinde 217 NL – 2906 XM Capelle aan den IJssel The Netherlands tel. +31-10-8222091 (home) / +31-6-16658230 (GSM)

jethro@zevenbergen.antenna.nl

QUAKER YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

Travelling cheerfully over the world

Mid July - Mid August 2012

The Pilgrimage brings together 28 young Friends from America, Europe and the Middle East to travel and learn together on an inspiring four week journey to the Netherlands and England including '1652 Country' in community with a team of 4 leaders.

Will you be aged 16 - 18?

Would you like a chance to:

- be part of a community of young Friends
- dive into your spiritual journey
- form lasting friendships
- explore our inspiring Quaker roots
- share and experience different cultures, Quaker traditions and worship
- nurture spirit, body and mind

For further information about becoming a pilgrim or an adult leader please contact:

> Rachel Miller 11 Garth Brow, Kendal LA9 5NN, UK Tel: +44 (0)1539 737010

Email: qyp.emes@gmail.com

Diary Dates 2011

More dates for 2011 and beyond are available on the website: www.fwccemes.org. Please send items for inclusion in the diary to Marisa Johnson at emes@fwccemes.org.

10 December 2011: Preparation for European Participants at World Conference of Friends, Friends House, London. Information from Sheila Gatiss sig. cam@talk21.com

23-25 March 2012: Grenztreffen CH-D-F in Lindenberg, Black Forest. Information from Brigitte Seger seger.brigitte@sunrise.ch

12-15 April 2012: Ireland Yearly Meeting. More information from office@quakers-in-ireland.ie

17-25 April 2012: World Conference of Friends, Kabarak University, Kenya: www.saltandlight2012.org

17-20 May 2012: Netherlands Yearly Meeting. Information from secretariaat@dequakers.nl

25-28 May 2012: Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends House, London: karlg@quaker.org.uk

26-28 May 2012: Norway Yearly Meeting. More information from kveker@kveker.org

Wanted: General Secretary for FWCC

FWCC is seeking a new General Secretary to begin in January 2013

The General Secretary of FWCC works in partnership with the Central Executive Committee and the four geographical Sections of FWCC to carry forward FWCC's mission: Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

The four primary areas of work are connections and communications among Friends, Quaker United Nations work, ecumenical work through Christian world communions, and office administration. The position entails extensive international travel, speaking to Friends groups of all sizes, networking, and a great deal of written communication.

More information from FWCC website: http://www.fwccworld.org/content/general-secretary-recruitment-0

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.

Are your details correct?

If you are receiving a copy of Among Friends by post, please let us know of any change or corrections to your mailing address. Also please inform us if you no longer wish to receive a copy.

EMES will only use your contact details to send you copies of Among Friends unless you have explicitly requested to receive other EMES related communications.

FWCC-EMES. P.O.Box 1157, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9XQ, UK emes@fwccemes.org

Subscriptions

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If you wish to make a bank transfer, please use the details below: **From outside the UK:** (Payment in Euros can now be made to a German Bank. Details from the Secretary)

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

IBAN: GB11 CPBK 0800 5150 0732 10 BIC: CPBKGB22

It is also essential that you quote the following details:

Account Name: FWCC-EMES Account Number: 20180696 Sort Code: 08-60-01

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

Deadline for Among Friends 123: 1 March 2012