

## CONTRIBUTING TO FWCC EMES

The work of FWCC EMES depends on contributions from the Yearly Meetings in the Section and from individual donations. Contributions for the general work can be made using the bank details below.

### By international transfer to:

Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindleyplace, 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

**Holders of UK bank accounts** can also send cheques or CAF vouchers in pound sterling made out to 'FWCC-EMES'.

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE AMARI CAMP PLAY CENTRE, RAMALLAH

There is a separate, FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre account. Contributions for the play centre should be made as follows:

### By international transfer to:

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ, UK  
IBAN: GB48 MIDL 4005 3072 1385 49  
BIC: MIDLGB2141W

It is also **essential** that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre

Account Number: 00091841

Sort Code: 40-52-40

**Holders of UK bank accounts** can also send cheques or CAF vouchers in pounds sterling for the 'FWCC-EMES Amari Play Centre' to the EMES office.

### Please note that EMES does not hold accounts for other Quaker work in the Section

Please contact the FWCC EMES Office or the Treasurer, Laurie Naumann, for further information or to inform us of bank transfers you are making.

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FWCC  
FRIENDS  
WORLD  
COMMITTEE  
FOR  
CONSULTATION



**Europe & Middle East Section**  
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Note: The formal annual report and accounts, prepared in accordance with UK charity requirements, are available as a separate document on request from the EMES office.



## Yearly Meetings in 2008

Yearly Meeting	When	Contact
Denmark (near Copenhagen)	29-30 March	Mogens Clausen <a href="mailto:m.clausen@post.tele.dk">m.clausen@post.tele.dk</a>
Ireland (Dublin)	27-30 March	Ireland Yearly Meeting Office, <a href="mailto:office@quakers-in-ireland.ie">office@quakers-in-ireland.ie</a>
Britain (London)	23-26 May	Gillian Ashmore, Recording Clerk, Friends House, 173 Euston Road London NW1 2AX
Netherlands (Barchem)	9-12 May	Hadewijch Touwen, <a href="mailto:secretariaat@dequakers.nl">secretariaat@dequakers.nl</a>
Sweden (Svartbäcken)	1-4 May	Julia Ryberg, <a href="mailto:julia.ryberg@tele2.se">julia.ryberg@tele2.se</a>
Switzerland (Aeschi)	9-11 May	Johannes Bircher, <a href="mailto:jbi@swissonline.ch">jbi@swissonline.ch</a> Reuelweg 20, CH-3045, Meeikirch
Norway (Moi near Stavanger)	26-29 June	Marit Kromberg, Grønland 12, 0188 OSLO Norway, <a href="mailto:mairt.kromberg@c2i.net">mairt.kromberg@c2i.net</a>
Finland (Tampere)	27-29 June	<a href="mailto:jane.rose139@gmail.com">jane.rose139@gmail.com</a>
France (Pontain)	26-29 August	Libby Perkins, <a href="mailto:libby@rpserve.com">libby@rpserve.com</a>
Middle East	<i>Not yet confirmed</i>	
German (Bad Pyrmont)	31 October-2 November	<a href="mailto:pyrmont@quaeker.org">pyrmont@quaeker.org</a>

## Some other events in 2008

**Quaker Council for European Affairs Study Tour:** 29 March – 6 April 2008

**Quaker Youth Pilgrimage:** 18 July – 15 August 2008

**Grenztreffen,** 4-6 April 2008 Lindenberg Im Schwarzwald, Kerstin Mangels, [zeitschrift@quaeker.org](mailto:zeitschrift@quaeker.org) :

**Latvia Recognised Worship Group:** 9-11 May 2008 Liepaja. Details from Inese Ansule, Clerk [nese172001@yahoo.com](mailto:nese172001@yahoo.com) :

**Border Meeting:** 19-21 September 2008, Netherlands. Contact Hadewijch Touwen, Netherlands YM Secretary, Religieus Genootschap der Vrienden (Quakers) Postbus 2167, NL-7420 AD Deventer, tel (0031) 0571-655-229,

**QCEA/QPSW Conference:** 5-7 December 2008. Brussels, Not privation but appropriate living

## What is FWCC?

The Friends World Committee for Consultation was established at the Second World Conference of Friends held at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in 1937. The concept of a world organization to express the sense of world fellowship of Friends arose as an important part of the evolution of the Religious Society of Friends in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This tentative development gained impetus from the 1920 Friends World Conference in London and the Young Friends Gathering in Jordans, England, held in the same year. No other organisation exists which links together yearly meetings around the world. Authority within the Religious Society of Friends lies at the yearly meeting and monthly meeting/church level, leaving these groups potentially in isolation. Hence arose the vision of an organisation to keep Friends connected and in touch with each other across the diverse spectrum of the Society

FWCC was established to be a channel of communication among Friends, helping us to explore and nurture our identity as Quakers so that we can discover and be faithful to our true place in the world as a people of God. The current mission statement is: 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.

Representatives appointed by affiliated yearly meetings and groups gather in plenary sessions every 3-5 years. Between plenary sessions, the Central Executive Committee which is broadly representative meets annually to continue FWCC's decision-making processes and to guide staff. The World Office in London is the centre of worldwide communications for Friends and supports the work of the Sections. It also represents Friends with outside international organisations such as the UN.

## Europe and Middle East Section

The FWCC Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) was established in 1938 and now consists of 11 Yearly Meetings, several Monthly Meetings and other smaller national groups. Events such as the Annual Meeting, occasional International Family Gatherings, border meetings, seminars, peace and service consultations, the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (in cooperation with the Section of the Americas), and other activities,

encourage mutual understanding, leading towards greater involvement of Friends. Two booklets, Meeting the Spirit and Friendly Advice on Quaker Ways have been produced and there is a quarterly newsletter, Among Friends. A small Executive Committee, assisted by the Executive Secretary, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. In 2007 the new part-time post of Ministry and Outreach Coordinator was introduced (see report). Among many other different interests, the Section also focuses on justice, peace and service issues.

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

### Some Quaker Addresses in Europe

EMES Office: www.fwccemes.org	Marisa Johnson, 22 Percheron Close, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9YX UK +44 1223 237827 e-mail: emes@fwcc.quaker.org
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Europe and Middle East Young Friends www.emeyf.quaker.eu.org	Quaker House, 50 Square Ambiorix, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32 2 2304935 Fax: +32 2 2306370 e-mail: emeyf@qcea.org
Quaker United Nations Office Geneva: www.quno.org	Maison Quaker, 13 Ave du Mervelet, CH-1209 Genève, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 748 4800 Fax: +41 22 748 4819 e-mail: quno@quno.ch
Quaker Council for European Affairs: www.quaker.org/qcea	Quaker House, 50 Square Ambiorix, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32 2 2304935 Fax: +32 2 2306370 e-mail: info@qcea.org

### Report of the work of the Executive Committee for 2007

The Executive Committee will, as usual, have held 3 meetings between Annual Meeting 2007 and Annual Meeting 2008, on 27th - 30th September 2007, on 24th - 27th January and on 19th March 2008.

The Section was also represented at the 2007 Triennial at King's Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, August 11th - 19th, and the E&ME Section representatives had the opportunity to get together for two informal sessions during the Triennial.

The members who serve as the Trustees of the Registered Charity have been: Marit Kromberg (Clerk), Laurie Naumann (Treasurer), Aidan McCartney (EMEYF), Franco Perna (International Member.), Fritz

registered in Moodle, worship together, explore what Quaker community and Quaker education are about—and to consider how that can be manifested in an on-line medium. Some of the participants are new to Quakerism. Others are just learning English, and still others are unfamiliar with technology. What unites them is a commitment to explore Quaker learning and fellowship on-line.

Woodbrooke itself benefits greatly from the extension of vision and experience provided by these growing points. In 2008, we look forward to more work with translators; an Anglo-Scandinavian event; and Woodbrooke-on-the-Road activity which will begin with Deborah Rowlands and Mike Eccles in Sweden to consider our understanding of 'the sense of the meeting'.

Our links with EMES are vital to an enrichment of our spiritual life and the possibilities for development which Woodbrooke seeks. As an organisation, we have thrived during the past year; as Friends, we have enjoyed each others' company; as a worshipping community of many languages and many cultures, we have searched out new ways to describe the infinite variety of God.

*Jennifer Barraclough*

There have been some changes at home. Our Executive Secretary, Jane Rosenberg, who served us well, has moved on and we have relocated our office to 1 Holt Lane, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, HD9 3BW, England. We can now be reached on 0044 (0) 1484 687139 or mail@qva.org.uk. Please get in touch if we can help each other – contact is welcome.

*Martin Smith*

## **Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre**

It has been an exciting and adventurous period of growth in the past year. Woodbrooke has benefited from the new ideas coming from across Europe as Friends find their way into various explorations of modern and historical Quakerism. Our work has drawn together associate tutors, the Woodbrooke Programmes Team, Julia Ryberg as the Catchpool-funded European Projects Coordinator and many other Friends. They have created strong links and extended our awareness of the many facets of learning about Quakers and Quaker insights.

Amongst the events of 2007 to note are the successful Clerks' Training weekend specifically for continental European Friends; the mother/daughter course run by Karin and Inge Herrebout of Netherlands YM; and the courses offered across Europe. These have included Ben Pink Dandelion's visit to German Yearly Meeting to consider twentieth century Quaker history; Julia Ryberg and Moscow Monthly Meeting working together on the spiritual basis of the Quaker process; and Helen Rowlands visiting South Belfast to address the topic of how we build a Society of Friends. John and Diana Lampen spent time with Friends in Midi-Pyrenees, and Woodbrooke was part of the Central European Friends Gathering in Poland.

The Catchpool Fund, whose trustees are keen to build a strong community of Quakers across Europe, has done much to support these events financially and provides regular bursary help to enable a wide range of Friends to attend, whatever their circumstances and wherever the events take place. A particularly exciting development is the establishment of an on-line e-learning group, supported by the Moodle e-learning platform, which allows participants to follow a tutored course, exchange ideas and create partnerships in study. Participants met face-to-face at Svartbacken in Sweden in January, where they were able to get

Renken (Switzerland YM), and Jane Rose (Finland YM). Bronwyn Harwood (Executive Secretary), but also a Trustee, has prepared and attended all meetings. The new Executive Secretary Marisa Johnson joined the meetings in January and March.

### Staffing – Change over of Executive Secretary

The post of Executive Secretary to succeed Bronwyn Harwood was advertised widely and attracted 13 very capable applicants. A short list of 4 candidates was interviewed by Janet Kreysa, Aidan McCartney and Marit Kromberg on September 26th. On October 2nd it was clear that the new Executive Secretary for the period 2008 – 2011 will be Marisa Johnson of Jesus Lane, Cambridge local Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting, if this choice is acceptable to the Annual Meeting 2008.

We are grateful to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) for a grant which made it possible for us to pay for two executive secretaries in the period leading up to the Annual Meeting and the Vienna Gathering, and the evaluation of the Ministry and Outreach (M&O) Project which have come in addition to the regular tasks outlined in the Job Description approved by the AM in 2007.

While it helped our finances somewhat that the administrative assistant worked reduced hours in the first part of the year and then left his post in September, this seriously increased the burden on both the Executive Secretary and the Treasurer.

### Section Finances

Section finances have remained a concern, and we are grateful to note that income and expenditure in 2007 almost balance. The cash flow situation at the beginning of the new financial year is satisfactory. We are grateful for a one-off donation from a Friend towards the costs of publications. We are also happy to record very generous donations from several sources towards attendance at the Annual Gathering 2008.

The Clerk, Treasurer, and Executive Secretary met with FWCC WO Officers in London to look at financial issues, especially related to fundraising. The Treasurer and Executive Secretary will follow it up. We have noted that the result of the special fundraising efforts among representatives and member Meetings to the end of 2007 amounted to £ 2 162 and came from Friends and Groups within four Yearly Meetings.

Britain YM has informed us that it will increase its contribution by 10 % for 2008. We note that over the years grants from the John Warder Fund

has exceeded the money available from interest and dividends, and the difference has been paid from the EMES general fund. The presentation of the annual accounts will incorporate this.

#### Handbook of Policies and Procedures

The work on our Handbook of Policies and Procedures has progressed, but not very much has been produced in print as a consequence of all the other work undertaken in 2007 and the drastic reduction in administrative support to the Executive Secretary. This work will be a priority for the new Executive Secretary in 2008.

#### Visiting Friend Programme – Ministry and Outreach Project

The 15 month feasibility study on Ministry and Outreach commenced in April 2007. Julia Ryberg has provided an extensive report of the work. The Executive Secretary and Clerk together with Ute Caspers and Diana Lampen have served as an oversight support group. Ute Caspers (Baltic States), Tony Fitt (Central Europe), Elizabeth Morris (Spain), and Julia Ryberg have continued as Visiting Friends.

It has been a very productive period with visits to Moscow, Poland, and Georgia. A retreat was held at Svartbäcken in Sweden from 20th – 23rd September for past, present and potential Visiting Friends, whether appointed by FWCC EMES or in some other capacity. The work on the on-line study group seems particularly promising and has also included a residential weekend.

In the autumn we engaged Mark Bitel, a Friend who is also a professional evaluator, to assist with an evaluation of the Ministry and Outreach Project. Two representatives of the committee, the Executive Secretary, and the Ministry and Outreach Coordinator met with him for a full day to plan the evaluation. It has looked at needs identified, the work carried out, the relationship of FWCC EMES with other Quaker bodies, and drawn together proposals for the future. A full evaluation and report and an outline of the proposed continuation of the project will be presented to the Annual Meeting 2008.

#### News of small groups and regional gatherings

The International Member Committee (IMC) at its meeting in October welcomed new members from Tbilisi, Georgia (7), Belgrade, Serbia (2), and Barnaul, Russia (1). The Tbilisi Friends, with others, have been holding regular meetings for worship for more than 3 years, and the IMC

Burundi is home to many Quakers, and QUNO is encouraging links between Quakers and Quaker Service agencies with the PBC work.

QUNO is known as an honest, informed, and non-partisan organization, and its emphasis on ‘quiet diplomacy’ has played an extraordinary role in the diplomatic community. In 2007, QUNO-NY increased its use of ‘quiet diplomacy’, using the light, open rooms of Quaker House, a short walk from the UN, to provide a safe, ‘off the record’ space for diplomats, NGOs and others to discuss sensitive issues. QUNO stands out amongst other organisations because it is not just a political organisation. It is a religious organisation, and this makes a powerful foundation for its witness in peace, justice and human rights work.

*Lindsey Fielder Cook*

### **Quaker Voluntary Action**

Whilst the spiritual and human verities have not altered since Fox’s day, the context in which we live out our faith has changed – calling for new thinking and development in voluntary service. Quaker Voluntary Action (QVA) is seeks to meet this challenge.

In response, we introduced, in 2007, a new form of our ‘working retreats’ programme – going beyond the original setting of Swarthmoor Hall in the UK. The idea is that a group of six to twelve persons – of all ages – live and work together for a few days doing a practical piece of work, such as gardening or decorating, and engaging in spiritual reflection. Our experience is that such retreats have power to move people forward. We ran four such retreats in 2007 – including two at locations away from Swarthmoor – at Wrexham and Airton Meetings in the UK. We plan to hold at least five in 2008 – including one at Congenies in France (8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April). We would like to expand this work across the EMES area.

QVA also started development of several new projects during the year, including a ‘headhunting’ initiative to find Friends to do important work, support for Quaker ministry in secure mental hospitals and a project for resettlement of offenders. We hope to see progress on these initiatives in 2008. More widely, in 2007, we supported Hungarian Friends with a project in Serbia and supported the Quaker Council for European Affairs in exploring the use of European Union funds for Quaker work.

their level of programme work, while David Atwood, Director of QUNO Geneva, stepped in as a temporary joint director of both QUNOs. QUNO Geneva and New York have been working toward a vision of 'One Office, Two Locations', but the joint directorship gave them an unexpected chance to strengthen links between the offices. Sarah is now back in full time programme work, and the Programme Assistants (PAs, or interns) from 2006-7 have extended their stay to work alongside the new PAs, therefore maintaining programme work despite staff shortages. A new Director has been selected and will join QUNO by March 2008.

QUNO-NY programme areas include 'Emerging Conflicts and Crises' and the 'Peace Building Commission'. Emerging conflicts and crises focus on countries or regions seriously affected by violence, but not receiving proper attention ('under-attended') at the United Nations. QUNO has worked tirelessly to bring forgotten conflicts to the attention of the Security Council. Northern Uganda has been torn apart by violence, its conflict pivotal to the region's security, but at the UN it had become what QUNO calls an 'under-attended conflict'. QUNO led efforts to highlight the suffering by bringing together diplomats, non-governmental organisations, United Nations officials and Africans affected by the violence. Last year the Security Council included Northern Uganda in its discussions and appointed a Special Envoy to Uganda. QUNO continues to focus on under-attended and/or emerging conflicts; it is increasing its attention on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iran, Israel-Palestine, and the Horn of Africa. QUNO is also highlighting the role of limited natural resources in a number of these conflicts.

QUNO is also prioritising its work with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The PBC was recently created to support reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts in 'post-conflict' countries. Such support is critical, since nearly half of all 'post-conflict' countries return to violence within five years of a 'settled peace'. The PBC has a mandate to co-ordinate a coherent and integrated UN approach to peacebuilding within a specified country. QUNO believes the PBC can become a valuable tool for preventing further conflict. But the PBC is a new to the UN, and this is a fragile time to ensure it becomes an effective Commission. QUNO is leading efforts within the non-governmental community to develop strategies of engagement with the PBC. The PBC has selected Burundi and Sierra Leone as its first countries of focus.

welcomed them as a Recognised Worship Group. We welcome these Friends amongst us.

### Ecumenical Connections

Kees Nieuwerth represented FWCC EMES at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly of the CEC in September 2007. Kees worked closely with Church and Peace representatives at this event.

### Conclusion

The calendar year 2007 and the time right up to the 2008 Annual Meeting has been an extraordinarily exciting, but also challenging period for EMES. The Annual report of the outgoing Executive Secretary details the main events and is supplemented by the report of the Ministry and Outreach Coordinator. Our Section has old Meetings in the Middle East where political, economic and social circumstances make life hard for the entire population and also for local Friends who struggle to maintain a witness for peace in a world of violence. Our Section also has new members and groups in Eastern and Central Europe where Quakers are few and far between and where Quaker witness and fellowship is very much wanted. The "old" Meetings are willing but unequal to the task of meeting all these needs without extra support. We are honoured and grateful to be faced with the challenges of growth, and thank all who have supported us in the year which has passed.

*Marit Kromberg  
Clerk*

### **From the Executive Secretary**

In sitting down to review the year 2007 I realise just how different it was from all the previous years in my time as Executive Secretary. There were a number of new challenges and demands to fit alongside the normal routine.

The first and biggest challenge came through the new Ministry and Outreach Project. I liaised with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in relation to funding and dealt with the administrative tasks relating to recruitment, advertising, arranging interviews and so on. In February Julia Ryberg was appointed. She tells the story of the project in her separate report. I just want to add two things: a) what a joy it has been to have her as a colleague and to share in some of the work but b) to note how much

more demanding on Executive Secretary time this project has been than might have been anticipated. The nature of my engagement throughout the year has varied but I calculate that on average a day a week of my time has been taken up with the project.

In early March I travelled to Ramallah. As always joy in meeting with Friends and others there was mixed with the ongoing pain and distress of coming face to face with the dreadful reality of the effect of the occupation on ordinary lives. It was good to see Friends International Centre functioning well with Kathy Bergen, the coordinator, engaging with the local community to organise a wide-ranging programme and arranging for a range of local groups to use the premises for their own events. Friends International Centre Ramallah is a programme of the Ramallah Monthly Meeting and Jean Zaru, the clerk, and Kathy Bergen work closely together.

A particular responsibility of the Executive Secretary is to link with the Management Group of the Amari Camp Play Centre. This time I also met with others in the Amari Camp, in particular the camp doctor who stressed how important this Play Centre is as the only kindergarten in the camp and at the same time asked: "Could European Friends help us with further work with the mothers of the children? We need a programme of peace education which starts at the birth of the child." This was the beginning of a conversation which I am sure will continue. Within the Play Centre Management Group we discussed and agreed a plan to hold a three week summer play scheme for the children. This proved to be the second new and time-consuming challenge for your Executive Secretary. Between early April, following the EMES Annual Meeting, and July I was engaged in extra fundraising, recruitment and training of volunteers, liaising with Muna Khleifi about the local arrangements, providing a detailed handbook of guidelines for the volunteers and so on. We were very grateful for a generous response to appeals for funding. In particular from three bodies which have supported the play centre over many years: Quakerhulpfonds of Netherlands Yearly Meeting, Kvekerhjelp, the Service Committee of Sweden Yearly Meeting and the HH and CB Taylor Trust in the UK. Three young people, from Norway, the Netherlands and UK. with good and relevant experience were selected as volunteers. In June the situation in the West Bank looked such that we might have to cancel but the project did finally go ahead. Staff and volunteers are to be congratulated on the tremendous effort they put into

support of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, a global initiative being undertaken to build policy and programmatic links between these two highly-related areas of concern. In addition, a number of major steps were taken in Geneva and in conjunction with QUNO-NY in relation to the work of UN Peacebuilding Commission.

During the second half of 2007, the Director of QUNO-Geneva, David Atwood, also served as Interim Director of QUNO-New York, during the recruitment and appointment process of a new New York Director. While providing important backing for the New York Office at a critical moment, this experience also built new bridges between Geneva and New York. At the end of November, the head of the Global Economic Issues Programme, Martin Watson, resigned to take up a position at the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development. He has been replaced on an interim basis by Lessie Doré. QUNO was greatly assisted in 2007 by Aletia Dundas, Oliver Robertson, and David Ahmed, Programme Assistants through July, and by Yvette Issar and Siobhan Sparkes McNamara from September. The Quaker UN Committee met twice in 2007, in May in London and in December in Geneva. The terms of FWCC representatives Martin Kunz (EMES) and Tom Head (Americas) were completed at the end of 2007. Their long service to QUNO (since the very inception of the Committee) has been critical in the direction, stability, and effectiveness of QUNO over the last decade and we thank them.

*David Atwood*

### **Quaker United Nations Office and Committee (New York)**

Twice a year, an EMES Representative travels to New York City to serve on the Quaker United Nations Committee (QUNC-NY). The QUNC was set up in 2005 to discern and choose programme priorities for QUNO programme work. All members of the QUNC are Quakers, who represent the diversity of Quakers both globally and theologically.

This has been a challenging year for QUNO-NY, following the resignation of their newly appointed Director, Rob Callard and programme staff member Jessica Hubber. In addition, staff member Sarah Clarke was on maternity leave. Yet QUNO has been flexible and has adapted remarkably. The remaining staff worked hard to continue

### Quaker United Nations Office and Committee (Geneva)

The Quaker UN Office in Geneva in 2007 undertook a very active programme of work as part of its three core areas—Human Rights and Refugees, Global Economic Issues, and Disarmament and Peace. This report is but a brief summary of some of the highlights of this work. Further information can be found on the joint QUNO web-site on [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org). In addition, a number of general features of the Office and the Quaker UN Committee are worth noting.

The Human Rights and Refugees Programme continued its work on 4 core areas: conscientious objection; indigenous peoples; women in prison and children of imprisoned mothers; and refugees. Of particular importance has been progress being made in attention to the issue of women in prison and children of imprisoned mothers in a number of settings, stimulated by the pioneering work of QUNO in this area. In addition QUNO has continued to serve as a convenor and venue for informal, off-the-record discussions on many issues in addition to work on these substantive priorities. QUNO's short analytical report on the first year of the new Human Rights Council, called *Neither Mountain nor Molehill*, has been much appreciated and widely used.

Work on intellectual property rights (IPRs) and trade in services were again the major features of the Global Economic Issues Programme. The stakeholders of the programme are the less advantaged countries, who often lack resources for the negotiations that are taking place, mainly at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization and other United Nations related Organizations. This work has particularly focused on providing a range of types of assistance, including expert papers and off-the-record meetings, to the representatives of these countries in Geneva.

There was an evolution in the direction of the work of the Disarmament and Peace Programme in 2007. While there continued to be a substantial amount of work undertaken on issues related to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and on other weapons-related questions, a new work project was begun in

giving the children a very good experience in circumstances which were not always easy. Evaluation reports have been written. We learned a great deal from this first summer camp. Marisa Johnson and I shall be visiting Ramallah together in February and shall be holding further discussions with all associated with the Play Centre. Wise decisions will need to be made in relation to the future. It may well not be possible to make such a play scheme an annual event.

At the Annual Meeting at Woodbrookershuis, Barchem in the Netherlands the new FWCC EMES publication *Friendly Advice on Quaker Ways* was launched, along with a reprint of *Meeting the Spirit*. Friends who were at the Annual Meeting in 2007 will recall the concerns about the financial situation for EMES and the need to make cuts in expenditure. This included a halving in the hours of administrative support to the Executive Secretary. Up to September Ben Miller Williams worked just 8 hours per week. He then left to further his career in music production in London and was not replaced. I have to report that with all the demands on the Executive Secretary's time it does not seem feasible in the long term for this same level of work to be undertaken without administrative back-up. As I retire from this work I am aware of the needs of my successor and recommend that it is urgent that way be found to re-instate administrative support for the Executive Secretary.

Over the years I have enjoyed being part of the wider staff team of FWCC. The four Section Secretaries with the FWCC General Secretary maintain contact and joint work has been enhanced by use of telephone conferences. We all, with the Clerks of the Sections, serve on the Central Executive Committee of FWCC. In 2007 I have been particularly involved in the review of the work of the International Membership Committee. Europe and Middle East Section is unique amongst the sections in that in recent years there has been a significant increase in the level of new enquiries and requests for International Membership and for recognition of new small worship groups. We have sought to clarify where responsibilities lie in relation to new enquirers and groups and how best FWCC can provide links and ongoing support. The International Membership Committee has restructured for 2008 and is due to report, with recommendations for the future, in November 2008.

Planning and administration for the Annual Meeting of FWCC-EMES is a normal part of the Executive Secretary's work. However even this has been significantly different in the past few months. The decision to hold a

joint EMEYF/EMES Gathering in Vienna in March 2008 for up to 150 Friends has had a major impact not only on my workload but also on the life of Martine Kuipers of Netherlands Yearly Meeting who bravely volunteered to assist as Registrations Secretary. A joint planning meeting with local Friends and EMES and EMEYF representatives was held in Vienna in July, We agreed that budgetary and time constraints would not allow the planning group to meet face to face again but a great deal of time and effort has continued to be expended in putting the event together. There is of course still work in progress but I am glad to report at the end of 2007 that money raised or promised towards bursaries just about matches the bursary support needed.

In conclusion an unusual and demanding year; one in which there were some stresses and some aspects of routine administration have not been dealt with efficiently but ultimately a year to look back on with a sense of having been blessed. As ever I recognise the blessing of Friendship and connection around the Section, the sense that although small in number Quakers make a difference in a remarkable variety of settings.

I give thanks for the privilege of having been invited to serve as FWCC  
EMES.

*Bronwyn Harwood*  
*Executive Secretary*

## **Ministry and Outreach Development**

This report is written at the end of 2007, 10 months into the 15-month Ministry and Outreach Development feasibility study. Funded by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, it has allowed Ministry and Outreach Coordinator Julia Ryberg to work with Bronwyn Harwood, the Executive Committee and a support group to investigate how ministry and outreach can be developed throughout the Section. There are three primary areas of focus: 1) development of the Travelling in the Ministry Programme, 2) development of the on-line medium for learning and fellowship throughout the Section, and 3) networking and co-operation with other Quaker organisations.

Travelling in the Ministry has been undertaken by a number of Friends, including appointed EMES Visiting Friends and others, the Ministry & Outreach Coordinator and the Executive Secretary, to the following places: Russia, Siberia, Georgia, Poland (for the Central European

European (or Western) energy security has on conflicts in other parts of the world. We will be looking at the demand side of the energy equation to find what European citizens can and must do and to identify the advocacy messages necessary to bring this about.

This has been a difficult project to develop – it ties in with our economic justice, our social justice, our human rights and our peace agendas but it also occupies a space that is new to QCEA: environmental issues. It is a project that runs the risk of being pulled into too many directions; but it is one that Friends are clearly engaged with. A recent day conference in the UK, organized by our British Committee, drew a crowd of over 100 Friends.

QCEA Council engaged in detailed and careful discernment, asking a small committee to review the initial proposal and to bring it back to Council later in the year. The result of this process is a well focused proposal; a partnership with the UK based Living Witness Project and a clear sense of leading in this new area of work.

### Looking forward

QCEA has been working at European level for nearly 30 years; in 2008 we will be publishing the 300<sup>th</sup> edition of Around Europe (our monthly newsletter) and we are celebrating this with a double edition. The last few years have been characterized by increased interest and increased support from Friends – 2008 is the first study tour in over 5 years which is booked up. We are grateful for this support and the interest Friends show in our work – we can only speak legitimately for and on behalf of European Friends if we have that interest and support. We hope to welcome many of you to Brussels on future occasions such as study tours and conferences; we organize a conference every other year – and 2008 is a conference year. This time, it will be on energy security and conflict. We hope you will want to come.

*Martina Weitsch*

their effectiveness, there is still a long way to go before they are implemented widely enough.

Finally, we have had, again, the opportunity to speak at several conferences on criminal justice issues – reflecting that QCEA is now a recognized actor in this field. Developing cooperation with the WHO – Europe on this subject is also a sign of this.

#### Civilian Capabilities in the context of European Security and Defence Policy

QCEA's main focus is on European policy development; the European Security and Defence Policy is therefore a major area of interest.

QCEA has been working through a network of NGOs (the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office of which we were a founder member) on this issue since 2003; the main thrust of this work has been:

- To provide good, simple information about what the EU is doing in this context
- To work with decision makers on enhancing the civilian capabilities of the EU
- To work with decision makers to ensure adequate and appropriate funding for peacebuilding
- To work with decision makers to further the engagement of civil society in this area of EU activity.

2007 saw a number of developments in this area of our work. We published our report: Peace and Peacebuilding – Some European Perspectives which provides among other things a clear overview of the activities of the EU in this field; we were involved in a collaboration with both the German and the Portuguese presidencies of the EU to involve NGO field experts in briefings of decision makers on specific geographical issues; we were able to encourage one such briefing on the role that civilian unarmed peacekeepers can and do play. We were able to bring over from Sri Lanka an experienced practitioner who works there for Nonviolent Peaceforce, another NGO member of the network and an NGO which has significant Quaker involvement.

#### Energy Security

2007 saw the development of a new project which will come fully into our programme in 2008. The focus of the project will be to examine the connections between energy security and security; i.e. the impact

Gathering), France, Spain, Latvia, Serbia and Denmark. In a number of instances, the travelling has been done in conjunction with interviews for international membership and/or delivery of workshops in co-operation with Woodbrooke. A three-day residential for 24 Friends who travel in the ministry was held at Svartbäcken, Sweden in September 2007. The purpose was to nurture and support those called to travel and to investigate the spiritual underpinnings of travelling in the ministry. It is hoped that gatherings for learning and nurture can be offered regularly as more Friends become involved in this vital ministry.

The on-line medium is being developed in the creation of an on-line introductory Quaker course. Eleven Friends from that many countries (The Netherlands, Spain, France, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Latvia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Russia and Georgia) worked on-line during the autumn of 2007 to explore what it is to be Quaker in different European contexts and to begin the construction of the on-line course. Step 2 takes place in the spring of 2008, when the course will be tested by the Step 1 participants and another Friend who speaks their language. Step 3 will involve translation of the course into and offered in those languages and others by Friends equipped for on-line facilitation. Step 2 participants will take part in a residential consultation at Svartbäcken, Sweden, 1-3 February to explore what it is to be on-line Quaker learners and facilitators. Woodbrooke offers a Translators Gathering in July 2008 which will provide an opportunity for the on-line course texts to be worked on and issues of translating in a Quaker context to be explored.

In terms of co-operation with other Quaker organisations, interaction with Woodbrooke has been the most apparent and active. Alongside the EMES role, Julia Ryberg works for Woodbrooke as their European Project Co-ordinator. There has been considerable synergy, both in travel and in the on-line work, which is funded jointly by EMES and Woodbrooke's Catchpool Fund. Further intentional and focused contacts are underway with Friends House Moscow, Europe and Middle East Young Friends, International Membership Committee, Britain Yearly Meeting and with Friends from the programmed tradition working in Eastern Europe.

An external evaluator is assisting us in the important task of evaluating all three areas of focus. Evaluation began in October 2007 and will continue in the first months of 2008. What will we have learned in the 15-months about how travelling in the ministry, on-line interaction and co-operation with other Quaker organisations can serve Friends and enquirers across

the Section? The findings of the evaluation work are important in their own right, but they will also provide the basis for funding proposals for future Ministry and Outreach development.

*Julia Ryberg*

*Ministry and Outreach Co-ordinator*

### **Amary Play Centre, Ramallah**

The Amary Play Centre is considered one of the important assets of the Amary Refugee Camp. Not only is it providing Educational Services to some of the 5-year old children of the Amary Refugee Camp but it also a healthy and suitable environment for the children to spend a year. The Play Centre and the team are well appreciated by the community in the camp and well respected

The Play Centre is receiving positive comments from the schools that our children go to after they complete their year with us. They all consider the pupils from our centre as more knowledgeable than the children coming from other kindergartens. This is thanks to the big efforts the teachers are making to give the children the best they can. The most senior teacher, Wafiyeh, and the two assistant teachers Reema and Arij work together to take care of 43 children this year. We collect fees of 100 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) from each child for the whole year. Some families are not able to pay this fee, in which case it is waived. With this money we pay for the running costs of the Play Centre, curriculum books and other expenses. The teachers' and co-ordinator's salaries are paid from donations collected locally and from all over the world.

The children learn the Arabic and English alphabets and basic mathematics. In addition they learn to recognise all the basic colours and concepts a child of 5 years of age should know. The children spend quality time at the Play Centre, they play with their peers and have fun.

All children come from Amary Refugee Camp. Milk is provided twice a week for the children and every while and then we provide sandwiches. For special occasions like Eid Adha, Eid Fitr and Christmas, the children receive small presents.

During the summer holiday in 2007, for the first time a three Weeks Summer Camp took Place in July. Three volunteers came from abroad and in addition, two local translators were recruited to help

A concern that came out of Annual Meeting 2006 was to engage in service work as a group. This has developed into a desire to fundraise among Friends to support service work in our region and beyond. Plans are in the pipeline for a Young Friends gathering in summer 2008 to try to make a practical difference in people's lives as we feel we are called to do.

Finally, there is great excitement within EMEYF around the joint gathering with EMES at Easter 2008. I hope you enjoy the fellowship of the Young Friends who are there.

*Aidan McCartney, EMEYF representative to EMES*

### **Quaker Council for European Affairs**

QCEA 2007 – moving forward on criminal justice, civilian capabilities and energy security

2007 has been another very active year at QCEA. We have been working on a wide range of issues – too many to reflect all of them here. Our own full Annual Report and Around Europe (both on our website<sup>1</sup>) give a fuller picture. Here, we focus on some of the highlights.

#### Criminal Justice

We have been working on criminal justices issues since 2004 and the women in prison project has become a real success story: taken up both by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and by the European Parliament, there was much work on advocacy throughout the year to ensure that the core of our recommendations were reflected in the reports in both of these fora. The gender critique of the European Prison Rules (which we published in early 2006) continues to be widely read and quoted. There is a real chance that there will be an appendix to the European Prison Rules relating to women and that many of our recommendations will be picked up there.

Since early 2007 we have focused our research on alternatives to custodial sentences; the report is due out shortly and shows that whilst there are many possible alternatives, which show promise in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> The annual report will appear after it's approval by QCEA Council in April 2008

Practice Book for Switzerland Yearly Meeting. - We are saddened at the deaths of four of our members, but, on the other hand, have gained four. A landmark has been the diamond wedding anniversary of Hans and Mary Hutchinson Bruderer four days short of New Year's.

*Fritz Renken*

## Europe and Middle East Young Friends

Europe and Middle East Young Friends continues to network among Young Friends throughout the region. New faces are coming to EMEYF gatherings and bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Though numbers involved are small, EMEYF still plays a vital role for many Young Friends living in countries where they are part of a very small Young Friends group or in some cases the only Young Friend.

Spring Gathering 2007 was held in Russia, a country that in the recent past has had a larger number of Young Friends with activities throughout the year. These numbers have decreased and it was important for EMEYF to support the small group that remains by having Spring Gathering there. The Gathering was also attended by a "Foreign Worker" from an evangelical programmed Yearly Meeting in the USA, living in, and ministering to the people of Electrostal near Moscow. This was an enlightening link for many participants who had little knowledge of Programmed Friends.

The Annual Meeting was held at Quaker House, Brussels in November. The main thread running through our meeting was communication and networking. We heard of passionate representatives from EMEYF attending QCEA council meetings, German Yearly Meeting and a workcamp in Serbia. We were eager to reach out to the Middle East, a region where we have few contacts, apart from our British based Syrian Clerk. We decided to hold our Spring Gathering in Syria in 2009 in an attempt to get to know this part of our region better.

Annual Meeting also discussed how those already involved in EMEYF could be nurtured and encouraged in their lives and ministries. We recognise that it is not practical, or the best use of the world's resources to meet too often but we can support each other through personal contact between meetings.

communications between the children and teachers and the volunteers. It was a very useful experience for everyone, the children, the teachers and the parents. Most importantly, for the volunteers themselves, because it was their first visit to the Middle East and to Palestine.

In September 2007, a volunteer from Philadelphia (Rossi) helped to make drawings and paintings at the Play Centre. She worked for four weeks, with the children and on the painting and drawing of the walls of the Play Centre; the entrance and the background. Every single child contributed to the paintings. The Play Centre looks very nice with all the bright colours.

In June 2007 Arij, the second assistant teacher, got married and is expecting a baby in June 2008. In December 2007 Wafiyeh, the senior teacher, went to Mecca in Saudi Arabia for the Haj. Now she is called Hajja Wafiyeh.

*Muna Khleifi*  
*Co-ordinator*

## Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

There are currently six committee members: Fran Woolgrove (Clerk), Caroline Evens (Treasurer), Rachel Bryers, Jenny Foot, Nigel Hampton and Kristin Skarsholt. The committee has met three times between April 2007 and January 2008; twice in Kendal and one conference call with all committee members participating.

Plans for the 2008 pilgrimage are well underway. The pilgrimage theme is "a journey through conflict to peace", and it will take place 18th July — 15th August, and will start and end in Glasgow. From Glasgow, pilgrims and leaders will travel to Yealand Conyers. They will be based there for 10 days, during which they will explore the '1652 Country' and have some 'community days' with outside facilitators, exploring topics such as 'Pilgrimage' and 'Building Community'. Their next stop will be Dublin, where they will be involved in a service project and will be able to explore the city. At Moyallon Quaker Centre in Northern Ireland they will have some retreat days and visit places such as Quaker House, Quaker Cottage, Stormont and Maghaberry Prison Visitors Centre. The pilgrimage will end in Glasgow.

We are disappointed that we haven't had more applications for leaders or pilgrims from European Friends, though the applications we have had are

excellent. The Section of the Americas, on the other hand, had many for both. The last two years the host section has had difficulty filling their places, and the visiting section has been able to take up more places. We are wondering if there is anything we can do to reverse this trend, as getting to know Friends from other traditions is such an important part of the experience.

Fran and Nigel both attended the Triennial in Dublin in August and appreciated the chance to meet so many in the world family of Friends. They were especially pleased to see some members of the SoAs QYP committee and meet with them during the week.

EMES QYP committee members are grateful for the ongoing financial support from EMES to cover committee expenses and enable us to meet together to plan this exciting event.

The committee continues to consider child protection procedures and is still concerned about insurance of public liability for the committee members.

*Fran Woolgrove  
Clerk*

## **Reports from Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Groups**

### **Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting**

Two members of our Monthly Meeting died in 2007: Elisabeth Baker & Vera Caslavka. A large Memorial Meeting was held for Elisabeth Baker in September and Friends and friends from several countries attended. A Memorial Meeting will be held for Vera Caslavka early in 2008. Together with QCEA, Belgium and Luxembourg MM has written a Testimony to Elisabeth Baker and I enclose this with this report. The Council of QCEA has still to formally accept this Testimony.

During the course of 2007 we were also very happy to welcome two new Friends into membership and our list of Attenders continues to grow. Meeting for Worship in Brussels on Sunday mornings is usually attended by between 10 and 25 Friends and Attenders. The Antwerp and Luxembourg groups continue to be small, but there has been some growth in Luxembourg recently. In Luxembourg, Meetings for Worship are held

## **Switzerland Yearly Meeting**

This year has been one of double celebration: Our Yearly Meeting traces its formal beginnings back six decades to 1947, which also happens to be the year when the American Friends Service Committee and Friends Service Council were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Press releases went out to Swiss newspapers, and in November a commemorative gathering took place in Bern, with a lecture on the topic of "Silence as Contribution to Personal and Spiritual Development." The annual January retreat at

Montmirail had been devoted to the theme of Friends seeing truth as basic to life. A journey of discovery traced Quaker influence back to an informal international gathering in the Swiss capital in 1934, to the first moves towards the founding of an independent Yearly Meeting and to finding out that the first Swiss known as a Quaker had been a lay missionary and educator a century ago.

The theme of our annual meeting was "Working for Peace at the UN and the EU: what does this mean for us?" Rachel Brett and David Atwood of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva - which was opened, with its New York counterpart, in 1947 also - described their work, while Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch of the Quaker Council for European Affairs in Brussels spoke about the role of the European Union as peace builder and what this means to Friends in terms of the EU Doctrine of Intervention for Citizens' Protection, pointing to the cardinal dilemma of special situations of military action for peace. In a related matter, we had expressed our concern at the existence of the Guantánamo Bay prison in a letter to the President of the Swiss Confederation who graciously replied, sharing our thought. - Marking a cheerful counterpoint, the children made little gifts for sale, netting a respectable sum destined for the Al Amary Camp of the Friends Play Centre in Ramallah, Palestine.

How should we look at the future of our Yearly Meeting? On this, our clerk gathered members' opinions and has put together an analysis under four headings: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Reports from our various groups tell of activities, events, and discussions with the aim of outreach. We look forward to having regular reviews along these lines so as to guide our thinking and planning. A working group has been looking into the possibilities of composing a Faith and

together led us to share, in a spontaneous way, our experiences. Communication flowed in a natural way. And we had so much to share!!!

Ana from México writes: “This year has gone very quickly and suddenly we have realized Christmas time has come and we feel a certain longing for all the Christmas activities of our meeting in México“. She has chosen Philippians 4:7 to share with you: *“Then the peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding, will keep guard over your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus”*.

*Ana, David, little Lola, Josefina y Carmen*

### Sweden Yearly Meeting

Our Meeting continues to grow, at a small but steady rate. As before, the Internet is of great help in making us known. More than one new attender has come to us after testing themselves on Belief-O-Matic! At the same time many of the old stalwart Quakers have left us and we discover that we are ourselves becoming the stalwarts. We do our best to handle the change of generations. In this, the work with, and finally the publishing of “Kvakarboken”, the first ever Swedish book of Quaker Faith and Practice, has been extremely useful. Similarly, the All Ages Summer Gatherings at Svartbacken play an important role.

One major change that has taken place is Julia Ryberg’s, our secretary’s, increasing international engagements. This means that the fraction we “lose”, we “gain” in experiencing her in a new and exciting context. We are also happy to have reached a satisfactory agreement about the continuing lease of our premises in Stockholm, Kvakargarden, where we have been for 50 years.

The theme of our Yearly Meeting in May was Femininity and Masculinity among Quakers. Quite a lot of our time has been spent considering how to canalize our peace testimony. The paths we have hitherto used have started to seem unsuitable.

*Kerstin Backman and Lars Longueville*

by arrangement, as regular Meetings seem to be difficult to maintain. In Antwerp, Meetings for Worship were held twice a month until September and after that once a month. Regrettably, at the end of the year it was decided to go back to Meetings ‘by arrangement’.

Our website is presently undergoing a revamp and we hope it will soon be on-line again and be more helpful and informative for those who visit it. Quite a number of visitors and new Attenders come to us via the website.

The Children’s Meeting continues to thrive, with a fluctuating but growing number of children attending each month. From early 2008 we shall have two groups for younger children and a small but keen teenage group. We have about 20 children and young people on our list. We also welcomed one new baby into the Meeting in 2007 and he is already attending Meeting for Worship (the complete hour) with his father!

We continued our support of the Quaker Council for European Affairs in Brussels, and the Protestant Social Centre in Antwerp. However, after an assessment of our finances we found it useful to remind Friends that donations were welcome. Our finances are now more stable but not lavish.

In 2007 we held our first Residential Weekend in Kortenberg Abbey just outside Brussels. This was a great success and was attended by 25 Friends. We shall organize our second residential in the spring of 2008, also in Kortenberg and hope that it will be just as successful. In November 2006 we welcomed Quaker Quest to Brussels for our first Study Day, and our second Study Day was held in December 2007 on a wide variety of issues around the theme of Community. We shall be following up many of the issues raised at our Residential Weekend also under the theme of ‘What do we each bring to the Quaker Community?’ and will be held from 25 to 27 April.

2007 saw the setting up of a ‘Life of the Meeting Committee’ – with approximately the same remit as Elders and Overseers. The Friends appointed to this task have been able to support the clerks and take on much of the work of organizing the residential weekend, study day, memorial meetings and the pastoral oversight of our growing community. A number of longer-term issues relating to the spiritual growth and health of the Meeting are under consideration. The bookstall and newsletter are now under the general supervision of this Committee.

The report of our representative to FWCC Triennial in Dublin brought back many impressions, not all of them reassuring and this has also raised questions in our minds about the wider Quaker world community and our relationship to it. We feel very challenged, and, to be honest, somewhat shocked, by the attitudes and beliefs of some other varieties of Friends. This will also be a thread in our discussions and reflections at the Residential Weekend 2008.

*Phil Gaskell, Clerk*

## **Britain Yearly Meeting**

### Constitutional Changes

2007 has seen some major changes in BYM. In January our new BYM trustees, who had been meeting together for several months, assumed their legal responsibilities and freed Meeting for Sufferings to “take a visionary and prophetic role for the life of the Yearly Meeting”. In May, our Recording Clerk, Elsa Dicks, retired and Gillian Ashmore took up the post. And Yearly Meeting 2007 finally decided that we would replace the names “Monthly Meeting” and “Preparative Meeting” with ones more easily understood, and so we now use “(Local) Quaker Meeting” for the worshipping group, and “Area Meeting” for the old Monthly Meeting. At the same time some historical names have also gone, to be replaced by more accurate geographical descriptions. We still need to find new ways of working with our new roles. The Long Term Framework is a tool for setting the agenda for work throughout BYM from which Trustees will develop the operational plan. All the members of BYM and its constituent meetings are currently taking part in a discernment exercise to determine the key concerns and priorities of BYM during the next few years.

### Outreach and Inreach

National Quaker week in September was an event in which all meetings were invited to participate. Quaker Communications Department produced information packs and offered help and advice about advertising and press releases and many local meetings developed exciting ways of bringing Quakerism to public attention. Although response differed from meeting to meeting, most found the event very worthwhile. After Quakers appeared on prime time national radio, Friends House received 101 enquiries. Quaker Quest, an outreach programme which began in London, is being taken up in more and more meetings round the country. So too is the outreach programme provided by BYM from Friends House. This

In December another very important occasion was our travelling out of Barcelona to hold Meeting at the home of a member, who, with her husband, was an early member of Barcelona Meeting, and then to celebrate her eightieth birthday with her. Our French attender also sang us to us.

We look forward to slowly continuing to build and nurture the Meeting and our small community and its visitors, and to find ways to be more effective outside of it.

*Caroline Wilson*

## **Spain, Madrid Worship Group**

Another year has gone by. Although we have little news to share, it is always a pleasure to be in contact with Friends. Our Meeting always meets three times a month. Our Bible Study has gone through different stages. At the moment we are studying St. Matthew’s Gospel.

On November 11, Esther Kleve from Norway came to Madrid to spend a long weekend with Carmen. It was a real pleasure to have her at our Meeting for Worship and to show her Madrid and Toledo.

The highlight of 2.007 for Madrid group has been to make the first encounter of Madrid and Barcelona’s Friends be a reality. The theme of the encounter was: “Get to know each other in the things that are eternal” It took place on the last weekend of October. Elizabeth Morris from Britain Y.M. and EMES Visiting Friend also attended. She wrote after it:

“As Visiting Friend for Spain, I was happy to be invited to attend this conference especially as it was the first meeting of Friends from Barcelona and Madrid. We met on Saturday morning, 27 October, at Carmen’s studio in Madrid. We started the day with 4 Friends. Then another 5 joined us during the morning.

After Meeting for Worship I told Friends about the recent FWCC Triennial which took place in Dublin. Then Barbara Hollerbach told us about her work with Friends on the Alternatives to Violence project.

We spent a good deal of time getting to know one another – walking in the Pardo Park, having meals together and discussions Our time together was a profound spiritual experience as we followed the words from one of the Advices and Queries: “Seek to know one another in the things which are eternal.” We did not follow the program as the excitement of being

## Spain, Barcelona Monthly Meeting

2007 was again a year of change for Barcelona Meeting, as we discovered early on that the place we had been holding Meeting had never really been intended as a permanent offer. We managed to find a place, however, where a couple of us work, and where we are very welcome to use the all purpose chapel on both first and third Sundays. We hope this to be quite definitive for the moment and are very grateful for it.

Attendance at Meeting varies quite a lot, ranging from three up to around twelve, and this unpredictability of attendance makes it difficult to do business or makes it feel sometimes that the Meeting grows and nurtures/is nurtured in quite an irregular way. We also receive quite a lot of visitors, since Barcelona is an ever more attractive place for people to visit. All of this enriches the Meeting, but also means that it sometimes feels as if we struggle to go deeper into Quakerism. Having started to meet twice a month definitely feels like a positive commitment.

In February we were delighted to attend Rosa Serra's viva. Her PhD was on Quaker assistance in relation to the Spanish Civil War. We hope at some point to work on getting this translated into English and published.

In both July and August, months where it is often not really possible to hold Meeting, it was held in homes of members of the Meeting. In August the Meeting was held as one of housewarming at the new home of a very committed attender and her partner in Igualada, and was really felt as such.

We were very happy in November that several of us went to Madrid to spend a weekend with the Friends there, and enjoyed being with them and also Elizabeth Morris, our visiting Friend.

In November we were also saddened by the death of Mariano Leonat, the initial founding member of the Meeting, whilst at the same time recognising that he had suffered from many complications of old age for some time, and was perhaps ready to die. In Meeting his life was witnessed to by those who had known him well.

work has stimulated meetings to examine their community and to think about how others see us.

Summer Gathering was another opportunity for Friends to gather and live in community to nurture their faiths. 750 Quakers of all ages spent a week at Stirling University in July, sharing in various activities, inspired and challenged by speakers on the theme "Faith into Action" and reflecting more deeply and personally in smaller groups. Many of us were able to bear witness to our faith in worship at Faslane.

### Faith into Action

In this, the 200th anniversary year of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, we have looked at the challenges faced by Friends in the 19th century and those facing us today, such as issues of fair trade and economic justice. We have been strongly reminded of the call to action which our faith demands. Both in the central work of BYM and in meetings around the country, such work is continuing to grow. At Yearly Meeting a strong concern for Civil Liberties was discerned and further work on this is taking place, including a consultation with all meetings. Individuals and Meetings are working with Asylum seekers and Refugees. A fast growing awareness of our concern for the Environment is leading to more work in this area, started in the time-honoured Quaker way by groups active in local meetings.

*Mary Waldmeyer*

## Czech Republic, Prague Worship Group

This has been a year of change for the Prague Worship Group. Attendance peaked in the early part of the year with up to ten adults often attending our bi-monthly Meetings for Worship, and typically we met once a month for Meeting for Business, and Meeting for Worship, followed by worship-sharing, on the other Sunday. However, attendance started to decline in the summer and remained low for the rest of the year.

Some of our members have joined various Quaker events, including a visit to Woodbrooke study centre in the early part of the year and attendance at German Yearly Meeting and the Central and Eastern Europe regional gathering in Poznan, Poland. Many Friends from outside the Czech Republic visited us and attended Meeting for Worship while they were in Prague.

2008 promises to be a year of transitions as several Friends have moved, or are planning to move, away from the Prague area. We continue to welcome new attenders and visitors from near and far.

*Pavel Marusinec*

## Denmark Yearly Meeting

In May 2007 we were impressed by a recent report written by QCEA: "Effective Counter Terrorism, A Critical Assessment of European Union Responses", dated February 2007. The report, which was addressed to the decision makers in the European Union and especially those in the European Parliament, was, we thought important for the education for the public at large and more especially the Danish public.

We thought the report was important because it gave a basic understanding of the topic and deconstructed the case for terror. It also proposed dialogue at all levels from the top down. We wanted to arrange a platform where there could be dialogue between "them" and "us" so we could start to break down barriers, remove fears and give those who may be inclined to resort to terrorism greater confidence to consider they have a normal future and they do not need to embrace terror.

We planned a public meeting for November 14th 2007 and the report was translated in to Danish. We had support from the Danish Peace Academy, IKS (Islamic-Christian Dialogue Centre) and Ahmadiyyaat Islamic Congregation in Denmark. We invited relevant researchers, officials and Secretaries of State to participate in the meeting and in the process hoped to inform them about the contents of the newly published report. We hoped some of them might join in a dialogue on the question: "What to do about terrorism?"

Despite the Prime Minister of Denmark subsequently declaring a general election on November 13<sup>th</sup> the meeting went ahead as planned. One of the authors, Matthew Loffman from QCEA, Brussels presented an excellent summary of the report at the beginning of the meeting, Imam emeritus Kamal Yusaf gave an address which investigated the relationship between Moslems, Christians and Jews in history, and the importance of raising the children in love and respect with a view to reducing the risk of terrorism. Also Muhammed Jamil talked of his forty years experience of

Disabilities runs a theatre studio and master classes for children with special needs. Centre for Adaptation and Education for Children of Refugees and Forced Migrants offers lessons in English, Russian, Mathematics and various cultural activities to 7-17 year olds from Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and other CIS countries. Big Change Educational Fund for Orphans and "Nash Dom" (Our House) offer educational support for children from orphanages and foster families, and psychological consultations are offered for foster parents. Centre for Judicial and Legal Reform supports new restorative justice programmes in Moscow schools, drawing on school reconciliation services in place in many other cities (Moscow, Kazan, Novgorod, Lysva, Perm, Tomsk, Volgograd).

FHM supported the printing of a self-help Diabetes Handbook for Pensioners in Georgia, where health care is in a deplorable state. Translation of the British Quaker Faith and Practice is ongoing. 12 chapters were translated by the end of 2007. Nine chapters of the Russian text are available as an e-book with a search facility. FHM also supported the publication of 300 copies of Advices and Queries in Georgian. In 2007 FHM has moved to a new office; Natasha Zhuravenkova (Moscow Monthly Meeting) started work as a new staff member.

As well as continuing to maintain the Russian-language Quaker website quakers.ru, FHM began the technical preparations for a special FHM Russian-language website.

Interviews for International Membership for Friends.

Two members of FHM staff, Peter Dyson and Sergei Grushko, travelled to Barnaul (Siberia, Russia) and Tbilisi (Georgia) to conduct interviews for international membership on behalf of FWCC International Membership Committee. After their successful interviews the Siberian Quaker and the Georgian Quakers are now recognised!

*FHM Staff*

for our community. This year we celebrated for the first time a Quaker wedding in Moscow.

*Misha Roshchin*

### **Russia, Friends House Moscow**

On 23rd March 2007 Friends House Moscow celebrated its 11th anniversary. The event brought together individuals and representatives from NGOs whose projects FHM has supported over the past few years. The event provided an opportunity for people from different parts of Russia representing organisations involved in different spheres of community building to meet one another in person and learn more about one another's work.

Projects supported by FHM in 2007 include the following:

Alternatives to Violence Project. The "AVP Russia" facilitators ran basic, advanced, T4T (training for trainers) and one-day workshops with teachers, university students in psychology and pedagogy faculties, school students and military conscripts. This project also worked in regions outside the Russian Federation – in Ukraine and Lithuania. FHM had the experience of writing a successful grant application for AVP Russia. The "Training Conscripts in Effective Interpersonal Conflict Resolution" project application was accepted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The "Odessa Mediation Group" continued to arrange workshops with a range of state and private organisations such as children's homes, prisons, social support agencies and schools in Ukraine.

The Alternativshchik Newsletter, the first of its kind in Russia, contains articles about the laws on alternative national service, activities of alternative servicemen across Russia, alternative national service and conscientious objectors' issues in other European countries and historical articles about pacifism. The newsletter aims to promote the sense of a common concern among the isolated groups of COs scattered across Russia and to enable human rights groups to follow the lives of alternative servicemen more directly. The newsletter is a continuation of the "Eleventh Block" website.

Five project applications have been accepted by the Molly Bown Legacy for Needy Children: Krug (Circle) Day Centre for Children with

dialogue and cooperation between atheists and people from different religious communities in Denmark.

There was limited public response and on the day thirty people showed up, which according to Matthew was what could be expected even with well-known speakers in Brussels. Those present were interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the Islamic faith, including the controversial parts. The presentations made during the meeting and the report in full text is available on [www.fredsakademiet.dk](http://www.fredsakademiet.dk).

We are trying to promote the report amongst teachers and within colleges so that peace education gets a foothold in our public schools, colleges and universities. We feel this is needed, as peace education is almost non-existent in Denmark at present, despite conflict resolution is being taught.

Our relations with the Latvian Recognized Meeting continue in loving friendship. The Latvian Friends find it helpful to look at Denmark YM's proceedings and its ways of resolving issues. We exchange visitors at our mutual Yearly Gatherings.

Our website, which is in three languages, has visitors from more than 70 areas around the World.

*Nino Brodin and Mogens Clausen*

### **Finland Yearly Meeting**

Finland Yearly Meeting was pleased to welcome three new members this year, and receive a transfer from another yearly meeting. Now we have 18 members. A short radio broadcast about Quakers in Finland has also generated much interest from enquirers. This has underlined the importance of our website as an interactive and communicative resource. Work has been going on to update the website and we see it as 'work in progress' serving our anticipated needs now and in the future.

At the weekly meeting in Helsinki, we now often have ten people or more. Additionally we have active worship groups meeting monthly in Tampere (5-10 persons), Turku (4-8 persons) and Oulu (3-6 persons). In November we held our business meeting in Tampere for the first time ever, which resulted in a gathering of 18 people from Tampere, Turku and Helsinki. This was in pleasing contrast to the normally much smaller attendance at business meetings in Helsinki. We were heartened by the

energy and focus of the meeting and left with a feeling that gradually the communication problems of a widely dispersed group of Friends are resolving. A bi-monthly e-newsletter with contributions in Finnish, English and occasionally Swedish also seems to be finding its level.

We said goodbye this year to a much valued and long term member, Irma Rikberg. We also said goodbye to our long-term spiritual home and retreat centre, Viittakivi, which has been sold to a private company. Viittakivi throughout its life was a folk high school and international retreat centre, with very strong links with Quakers throughout, though never officially a “Quaker establishment”. Fortunately we were able to hold our annual gathering there in July and say our farewells. Characteristically the weather was perfect and many of us were able to revisit our favourite places and talk about our shared memories. Viittakivi was more than just its buildings and the setting, it was a place that deeply influenced many who were part of it over the years, and in that very practical sense it will continue to live in the world.

One of our members is participating in the Ministry and Outreach online project and we are hopeful that before long we will have a similar online course in Finnish. We go forward into 2008 in faith and hope.

*Anne Herbert*

## **France Yearly Meeting**

The ‘rapport moral’ is an annual requirement of French charity law, and this year our Clerk, Axel Jensen, wrote, “Have we made progress in recognising the Divine in everyone and in the conduct of our Meetings for Business? In general, yes, but it is less sure whether we have succeeded in spreading this sense of the Divine further afield.” In his report, he also paid tribute to Louise Elias who for years and years has willingly done all the administrative work for the Assemblée de France - accounts, circulating minutes and La Lettre des Amis, typing up reports, keeping lists etc. in Congénies where she is throwing her energies into the life of the Groupe Languedoc-Roussillon and the Maison Quaker de Congénies.

La Maison Quaker de Congénies has much pre-occupied France YM. Axel has guided us through the intricacies of French charity law, and the Centre Quaker de Congénies is now a legal entity, finally signed at France Yearly Meeting in August. (Dare I say so; we toasted the event with champagne or Perrier water!) Thanks to the generosity of Netherlands

entering marriage and the commitment of marriage from a Quaker point of view.

A small group, appointed by Norway Yearly Meeting, has been looking into a governmental Hearing on Marriage between couples of both sexes and couples of the same sex. Norwegian Quakers are embracing a possible new law that gives couples of the same sex an equal right to marry as heterosexual couples.

A very stable group of patient, or should I say impatient Friends, are working on a long-term basis trying to legalise a Peace Tax Fund for Norwegian citizens. This will enable us to redistribute the part of our taxes that is being used for military purposes, and instead use them on peaceful projects. The group is inspired by the international movement working on this important issue, and are making small, but significant steps forward. At least some politicians are willing to listen.

Kvekerhjelp is the Norwegian Quaker Service organisation. It continues its long-term strategic work in The Middle East and in Africa. The focus is on development, peace and human rights based on the Change Agent Method.

Norway Yearly Meeting takes part in other organisations’ working for peace, and dialogue and understanding between groups of different beliefs and cultures. This involvement gives us a wider horizon, enriches us in many ways, and enables us to reach further than we otherwise would be able to do, belonging as we do to a small group in a small country.

*Marit Zeiffert*

## **Russia, Moscow Monthly Meeting**

This 2007 year was a rather quiet one for our only Quaker community in Moscow. In late April we passed a wonderful week with Julia Ryberg and Bronwyn Harwood who organized for us a very useful and exciting workshop and one gathering of Moscow members and attenders.

At this moment we have 15 members and around the same number of attenders. Our weekly silent worship starts at 5.00 pm on Sundays and after that we usually organize discussions on different themes important

investigate whether we could station a Quaker Representative at the United Nations Environmental Programme at Nairobi? France Yearly Meeting also supported this second concern.

Both these concerns were introduced by our representatives to the Triennial in the Working Group on Environment and Sustainability, which agreed to forward them to the Plenary Assembly asking for these concerns to be put before the Central Executive Committee of FWCC. We are eagerly awaiting the response of this Committee.

It may not surprise you then that our 2008 Yearly Meeting theme, particularly at the request of our children, will be: “Sustainability: where is your limit?”

*Kees Nieuwerth, clerk*

## **Norway Yearly Meeting**

There are not many Quakers in Norway, and some of us live far away from the nearest Quaker group. For most of us it is essential to meet other Friends once in a while, so there is a lot of travelling among Norwegian Quakers. It is wonderful to take part in a meeting for worship, even if it is small, and even more so when we meet as many as 65 for a long weekend, as we did for our yearly meeting this summer. 15 of them were children, with their own programme, some of them young Quakers, and like always, we had the pleasure of meeting Friends from abroad.

The theme of the yearly meeting was the same as for the Triennial Meeting held in Ireland in August: Finding the Prophetical voice - in words and practise - in our time. The answers are often found when you give yourself time to listen to God’s voice within, or when you give room for an open dialogue based on respect and tolerance. Difficult indeed, as our lives are often very busy and we have too much on our minds.

In both Oslo and Stavanger quite a few Friends have taken part in the study programme Hearts and Minds Prepared. In Kristiansand there has been a stable study group for many years now, where a variety of religious literature has been discussed.

This year Norway Yearly Meeting arranged another seminar about marriage, discussing different aspects about living together as couples. This was a follow-up-seminar from one held in 2006, which was about

YM, German YM and many other donors (individual or as Meetings or trusts), the first floor and the whole house is ready to receive visitors and guests (what is the difference? As St. Paul wrote, “Welcome the stranger as he - or she may be an angel in disguise.”)

The autumn retreat will take place in early October, and a young Canadian, Kyla Johnson, will be our first Friend in Residence from 15th October, initially for 3 months. (But funds are still needed. During France YM, there was a visit and Meeting for Worship at Congénies. One friend from the Netherlands, hearing the wind rustling in the poplars outside near the burial ground, felt that the spirit of God was indeed blowing into the house through the open windows. Another Friend, while rejoicing in all that has been achieved, pointed out that there are bound to be difficulties and ups and downs ahead. It was a moving Meeting for breakfast after a particularly stormy committee meeting years ago, “Tout est difficile, et c’est parceque c’est difficile que c’est intéressant.” (Everything is difficult, and it is because it is difficult that it is interesting).

The role of our visitor, Judith Roads, is much appreciated as she travels around the Hexagon region by region, putting people in touch with each other and updating our contact lists. “Only connect” is especially necessary in France where Friends and ‘sympathisants’ are so scattered. The theme of Yearly Meeting was, “Servir”, ably presented with much depth by Barbara and David Forbes. However as the last line of the Epistle notes, “To serve is all very well, but we have yet to find a Clerk for 2008!”, and at the time of writing, end September, it is still true.

*Libby Perkins*

## **German Yearly Meeting**

### Identity

Quäker House Mouse, Hanna Jordan’s irrepressible, irresistible rodent, has been commenting on the peculiar ways of German Friends for many years now. In a cartoon in the July “Quäker” he/she remarked that, “Quakers believe strongly in the fact that they don’t really believe anything in particular”. This question of who we are and what we have to say has troubled and exercised many Friends, especially as we consider how to respond to the increasing numbers of enquirers finding us through the internet and other means. Members of the public flocked to an open

meeting for worship and to the Quaker information stand at the Lutheran church congress in Cologne in June. Despite, or even because of, our vagueness about belief, some continue to attend, and eventually become members; this year the total membership increased slightly (to 267).

Seminars arranged to explore particular topics have been helpful. Before the annual Yearly Meeting a group was inspired to explore together with theologian Eugen Drewermann “Overcoming fear and anxiety; becoming a blessing to one another.” A Woodbrooke seminar in Bad Pyrmont, where Dan Ben Pink Dandelion shared his knowledge of Quaker history and Quaker identity helped those present to greater understanding and clarification of their ideas. Woodbrooke has contributed much to the life of the yearly meeting: the European clerks’ seminar, the workshops for translators, and personal visits to Woodbrooke have all been much appreciated.

Regional gatherings have considered, and continue to consider, the nature of God, and the importance we attach to the life and death of Jesus. But it also proves vital just to enjoy being together and worshipping together, as at the annual family gathering in Hirschluch, at the retreat in Immshausen with the difficult-to-translate title “im Sein, sein” [In Being, being ], and at the young people’s now-annual Easter camp in the hay-hotel in Benkendorf.

Our work is in peace and social responsibility, and its basis is in spirituality.

The Peace Committee’s vigil outside the British Embassy in Berlin in support of the Faslane protests against the British nuclear weapons programme attracted favourable comment from members of the public. And the Peace Committee open-meeting on the question of attitudes to security (sub-titled “be patterns: be examples”) proved to be a source of inspiration. Friends attended the 50th anniversary of the Central Organisation for the Rights of Conscientious Objectors to Military Service (still an issue in Germany where young men are called up for compulsory service).

Quäkerhilfe ([www.quäkerhilfe.org](http://www.quäkerhilfe.org)) has worked hard to find ways of continuing to support a range of development projects in the face of financial constraints .

We had invited a speaker, Ari van Buuren, a theologian who works as a pastoral worker in an Intercultural Pastoral Care Unit at the University Hospital at Utrecht. It was a revelation to hear from him that patients in this hospital would be given pastoral care by a team consisting of a Muslim, a Hindu, a Humanist and a Christian pastoral worker. Patients would be visited by either of them irrespective of their own conviction. Each of them works from his own tradition, but by listening carefully to the prophetic voice of others our own tradition may be enriched. Ari quoted the Dalai Lama who once said that every religion is a medicine, but no medicine helps against all ailments.....So the challenge is to mobilize spiritual forces in one another...

We had good meetings for business attending to matters of concern to our small Yearly Meeting. The Woodbrooke-on-the-road course on outreach we had during autumn 2006 is beginning to bear fruits. Our attempts at outreach through new leaflets and booklets in the Dutch language shows positive results. Several meetings held open days attracting visitors and new attenders. The unusually high number of some five (!) new members who joined our small Yearly Meeting in the course of this year also made us feel thankful.

The visitors from abroad, the reports of Dutch Friends having visited other Yearly Meetings, the selection of epistles from Yearly Meetings elsewhere in the world which was read and the power point presentation of the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in the United States in 2006 reminded us of being part of the worldwide family of Friends.

We are continuing our efforts at outreach. We have also formed a small committee that is to start work on revising our Dutch Faith and Practice, which as we all know takes lots of time and dedication....

Netherlands Yearly Meeting also forwarded two concerns to the Triennial in Ireland.

The first one was to ask Friends to continue compensating for the CO-2 emissions involved in (air)travel to international gatherings such as the Triennial e.g. by planting trees in Africa, as is done by FWCC-EMES in Kenya.

The second one was to ask Friends to include the challenging concerns on environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and climate change more fully in the work of the Quaker United Nations Offices. Perhaps we could

In addition to speaking to groups and meeting with individuals at the Center, Jean Zaru continues to meet with groups and individuals in her home. Jean was invited to attend the FWCC meeting in Ireland. In addition to the many activities in Ramallah, Jean was the keynote speaker in Berkley, California at the invitation of Friends of Sabeel North America and in Miami, Florida at the International Women's Peace Colloquium. France Yearly Meeting nominated Jean for the Niwano Peace Prize. Nabeel Ajlouni represented the Monthly Meeting at the Netherlands Yearly Meeting. Kathy Bergen was invited to attend the FWCC/EMES consultation in Brussels. Joyce Ajlouny is spending the year in the US with her family, working as the Director of the Friends Schools from there. We are delighted to have Waleed Zaru and his wife, Rana, and their two daughters, Mai and Yara, back in Ramallah and part of the Meeting again.

We want to express our gratitude to Friends everywhere who have partnered with us in different ways to make our ministry and outreach possible.

*Jean Zaru, Presiding Clerk, Ramallah Friends Meeting*  
*Kathy Bergen, Program Coordinator, Friends International Centre*

## **Netherlands Yearly Meeting**

For our Yearly Meeting we decided to address the same theme as that of the Triennial: "Finding the Prophetic voice for our Time: are our deeds enough, or do we need words as well". Our meeting was enriched by visitors from Britain Yearly Meeting, Switzerland Yearly Meeting, German Yearly Meeting and Ramallah Monthly Meeting.

We exchanged views on the theme and told each other about people who inspired us, people who are prophets to us, and our hopes, dreams and inspirations. We were challenged to dress up a participant of each group as a prophet while reporting on our group work. Some important questions arose such as: How do I respond to prophetic witness? Do we have the courage to confront people? Are we willing to listen to the voice of the prophet within us who could possibly lead us onto new challenging ways? Do we pick the fruits or are we the fruits?

Nabeel Ajlouny from Ramallah shared his grave concerns for peace in the Middle East with us and reassured us that he also saw reason for optimism to resolve the conflict in the future.

Several Friends are actively involved, as organisers, as trainers and as learners in PAG (AVP).

A gathering of the Rhine-Ruhr region considered the theme of caring for prisoners. For many years now, the best-attended regular meeting in Germany has been that held monthly in the women's prison in Willich, where a small group of Friends and a large group of prisoners share together in worship and fellowship.

Regional gatherings looked at "Spirituality and responsibility for the world around us" and "The spiritual basis for our peace work". And at the Yearly Meeting in Bad Pyrmont in October, Dan Snyder's Cary Lecture, and individual discussion-groups, explored the interrelationship between spirituality, prayer and political activism.

### Looking to the future.

We were saddened by the deaths of several faithful Friends, but their work and inspiration go on. We looked to the future in updating our "Ordnung des Zusammenlebens", in considering the ethical investment of our funds, in ensuring that our library is well-run, and our historical documents properly archived. And most importantly in the development of our premises in Berlin, which reopened on August 23rd. The Yearly Meeting has invested in this flat, known for about the past 80 years as "Quäker Büro", giving it a complete overhaul, partly restoring the previous architecture, and adding additional light both from without and within, to create a new office and German Quaker communication centre. It is a great privilege to be able to invite Friends and visitors into an enlarged room for meetings for worship. We can now host seminars and groups of up to about 30 in one room, with additional seating space in the library and kitchen. We treasure the inherent values and experiences passed on through the generations and hope that these premises will continue to help us serve as God may lead us to serve. Planckstrasse 20 could well become a focal point for international projects. And there are already plans for it to be a meeting point for us to engage in the common search for the truth with other faiths and denominations.

Another important forward-looking move was the open meeting of the Committee for Children and Young People, "Our children: our future". Their conclusions plead for a more-pronounced Quaker ethos in our activities for children, for more activities in which all age groups can share, for greater continuity in planning, and for improved

communication right across the Yearly Meeting. In order to implement all this a paid part-time worker will be appointed.

#### Our international contacts

Friends from Germany and Austria played an active part in Border Meetings, with the Swiss/French/German meeting looking at "The inner light in those around us", and the "far-western" meeting, held near Cologne, looking at "Beautiful dreams- beautiful realities?" Our borders do happily seem very flexible; participants came to Cologne from as far east as Vienna and as far west as Oregon, USA.

We appreciated being able to attend several European Yearly Meetings, the FWCC-EMES Annual meeting, Britain YM's Summer Gathering and the FWCC Triennial.

And we have discovered an interesting statistic. More than 300 Friends who were born in Germany now live, work and worship in Great Britain. That is more than the number of Friends living, working and worshipping here. We wonder what Quäker House Mouse is going to say about that.....?

*Janet Kreysa, Björn Rohde-Liebenau*

### **Austria Quarterly Meeting**

We are now less than ten active Friends. Over the last year our Meetings for Worship have continued in a shared office in the centre of Vienna. were also Students from Earlham College have been among our many visitors We heard more about the tormented Middle East, Palestine and Lebanon from personal experiences.

Our quarterly meetings have been characterized by deeper interactions between us. One lengthy interaction concerned the proper Quaker process for the transfer of a Friend's membership to our meeting. We became more aware of right ordering in the manner of Friends (such as not spelled out in detail by our own YM) during this interaction and we grew in ownership of our founded Quaker tradition. We also got to know each other and ourselves better along the way.

Our Open House on "Islam and Peace" with Zeinab Elibol as speaker was well attended and left us a memorable quote, "the refusal to communicate should not outlast three days."

With effect from 1 January 2008 Tony Manasseh has been appointed to take over as clerk from Sabah Baz. [bmm.lebanonquakers@gmail.com](mailto:bmm.lebanonquakers@gmail.com) Our Meeting invites and welcomes all Friends travelling in the Middle East area to visit.

### **Ramallah Monthly Meeting and Friends International Centre, Ramallah**

#### The Ramallah Friends Meeting

During the past year the Ramallah Friends Meeting and the International Centre in Ramallah (FICR), a ministry of the Meeting have initiated many activities.

The Meeting has had the opportunity to worship with Friends from around the world and others of different faiths. This has enriched the life of the Meeting in many ways. There is always a time of fellowship and sharing after Meeting for Worship. Contributions from abroad have enabled the Meeting to reach out to the community in hardship cases. Wednesday evening "potluck suppers" has become a time for members of the Meeting, attenders, and sojourners to get to know each other better and welcome others for a meal and evening of fellowship.

The First Advent celebration is becoming a regular event. It is a time to include the members of the Ramallah community in a Christmas celebration. This year the Friends School choir sang Christmas carols and then led the singing of carols with the audience. A time of fellowship followed in the Annex after singing of Christmas carols.

We have welcomed many groups from Europe, Australia, Canada, and the US, all of them requesting Jean Zaru, the Presiding Clerk of the Ramallah Friends Meeting to speak to them. For many group, Jean is the only Palestinian who speaks to them from a theological and spiritual base. Many individuals also visit for a variety of reasons – some want to know more about life under occupation, some want to talk about a particular topic, while others want to know more about what the Centre is doing.

We have hosted several concerts in the Meetinghouse. In April Michel Barenboim, the son of the famous Daniel Barenboim, gave two solo violin concerts of Bach Sonatas and Partitas. He mesmerized the audience with his talent and his personality.

the government and a range of religious and faith groups. This is of particular importance as Ireland becomes a more multi-cultural society.

We look forward to renewing contact with European Friends in Vienna at Eastertime.

*Rachel M Bewley-Bateman*

### **Latvia Recognised Meeting**

No report received. Extracts from correspondence:

From 3 - 6 May we assembled for the first Latvian Annual Gathering which we hope will evolve into a steady tradition. Our theme: "Finding prophetic voices of our time" was attuned to the FWCC Triennial. There were 17 people present: 9 Latvians with visitors from Germany, Denmark, Austria, Great Britain, Norway and Hungary. At our business meeting in September 2008 the group minuted that it would use the name: Latvia Universalist Monthly Meeting.

### **Middle East Yearly Meeting:**

#### **Brummana Monthly Meeting**

No annual report submitted. Extracts from correspondence:

In August 34 local Quakers attended a gathering of Brummana Monthly Meeting.

This is the largest gathering since 1975 the start of the civil war. We met to discuss Quaker issues and how we can further support Brummana High School, Middle East Yearly Meeting and spread the Quaker values in our community. Peace was an important topic discussed.

We are currently working on establishing a Quaker Library and archive centre at Brummana High School.

The Middle East Yearly Meeting that was postponed twice due to the eruption of hostilities in our country and the region remains our high priority as we try to gather Friends from around the world in what has become a F(f)riendly world gathering in Brummana as we did in 1993 and 1995. We pray that we can still work for that as we go forward.

Our traditional border meeting with Hungarian Friends saw us in Budapest early in the year; it gained a good Quaker focus from the Rufus Jones film shown by Wiglef Puerschel. Several of us participated in the East-European gathering offered by EMES this year in Poland. We also met our Bavarian Friends again during a weekend in Weikersdorf.

Quakers and ecumenism was the subject of a contribution by Ewald Eichler to a course on ecumenism arranged by the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria at the Jesuit-led Kardinal-Koenig-Haus. Our own Open House on the subject met with no interest.

This year's Triennial of FWCC impressed us as a model of the world in a nutshell: a mixed multitude of Friends about to comprehend and to open up religiously.

*Ewald Eichler*

### **Hungary, Budapest Worship Group**

2007 was a very busy year with lots of travels and some real progress.

I feel we have received more support from EMES than our numbers would have justified. Thank you for the trust!

After the traditional happy re-union with Austrian Friends in Budapest in January, two of us were enabled to attend the Clerks' Gathering on Quaker Business Methods at Woodbrooke in February.

Cathy Butler and Zsuzsa E. ran a four-day workcamp in Vojvodina, Serbia, where British, Dutch and Serbian young people combined forces, renewed a playground and brought some good cheer into the village of Kishegyes/Mali Idjos. They were then invited to Vukovar, Croatia by Charles Tauber and got a little insight into the horrible damage the war had caused.

Zsuzsa attended Latvia Annual Meeting, which was to be a learning experience.

May saw five of us in Poznan, at the Regional Meeting, learning more about Quaker spirituality and witnessing an outreach experiment.

At the invitation of our twin-group in Britain, four of us spent a joyous long weekend in Wem, Shropshire in August, where we did a role-play

after the manner of Jung, focussed on 'Water' in music, film and poetry, attended a Meeting for Worship in Shrewsbury and enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the Creamore Fellowship of Friends. They are returning the visit next October.

In September two of us were enabled to attend the Visitors' Gathering in Swartbacken, Sweden, and soon afterwards two of us from Budapest were trusted to be visitors to two young applicants for membership in Belgrade. A special blessing was that Vera Várady, "our Serb" came with us and offered her flat in Novi Sad to be a venue for the first ever Meeting in Serbia!

Zsuzsa is taking part in the internet learning course.

Currently we are making preparations for the next Border Meeting, which will be an extended Meeting on the Danube, in Komárom, Hungary, on 12/13 January 2008, where Bratislava and Belgrade will be invited as well as Vienna and Budapest. I am looking forward to the handshakes and hugs in the middle of the bridge.

Visitors included Cathy Butler (perhaps three times!), Charles Tauber and colleagues from Vukovar and Major Thomas from California.

The group is growing slowly but surely. Girl-friends bring their friends and the average age is getting younger. We are trying to involve those who find it difficult to get to the Meeting by asking them to invite us.

Our expectant mother is regularly visited. Excursions are sometimes organised. A second Meeting in the month has been arranged.

I think we are a loving and caring Meeting with amazingly generous members.

*Zsuzsa Eastland*

## **Ireland Yearly Meeting**

It was a privilege and a pleasure to welcome over 300 Quaker representatives from around the world to the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial Meeting which took place from 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> August 2007 in the King's Hospital School, Dublin. We were delighted that visas were obtained enabling Friends from 41 countries to attend. The event was the culmination of years of planning and we hope that the memories will last for many years to come. The excitement for some

Friends of being able to physically touch a seventeenth century Quaker document in the Friends Historical Library and for others of us to welcome Friends from Africa, India, Peru and so many other places was something special. We knew that our prayers had been answered.

Ireland Yearly Meeting 2007 took place in Friends School Lisburn, Northern Ireland, just after Easter. We were pleased to welcome a number of Quaker and ecumenical visitors. Our epistle 'To Friends Everywhere' was agreed and circulated for the first time in two languages: English and Irish. In 1998 Ireland Yearly Meeting agreed to review the 1962 edition of our book of Christian Experience. A committee was appointed and a great deal of prayer and consideration went into the task. During the past year the text was finally agreed of the draft book '*QUAKER LIFE AND PRACTICE – A book of the Christian Experience of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland*'. This is now being prepared for the printers.

Yearly Meeting's Committee is continuing its review of committees of the Yearly Meeting. It is useful to look at what we are doing, why, and how we might do things better. The first Quaker National School opened in Waterford in September, alongside Newtown School which was founded by Friends in 1798.

In Northern Ireland, the Ulster Quaker Service Committee changed its name to Quaker Service on incorporation and continues to develop and expand its services to meet the needs of a changing society. The work of Quaker House Belfast has also been adapting to changes in society and personnel. The establishment of the Northern Assembly at Stormont, Belfast, in May was of particular significance. There is still plenty of work to be done in community building and healing of memories. The work of peace-building also continues through fostering justice, human security and non-violence. The Moyallon Residential Conference Centre near Portadown, welcomes both Quaker and other groups. A pre-Triennial Conference was held there and appreciated by delegates.

On the ecumenical scene, Dublin Monthly Meeting is pleased that the Dublin Council of Churches has now welcomed the Roman Catholic Church into full membership.

In October three Friends met with an Irish Government delegation to discuss matters of mutual interest. This was part of a process initiated by the Irish Government to increase and improve communication between