



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.

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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 organisation 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 at 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 the vision arose 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 few 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.

In 2012 FWCC held the 6th World Conference of Friends at Kabarak University, Nakuru, Kenya, on the theme *Being Salt and Light: Friends living the Kingdom of God in a broken world*. Almost 900 Friends attended, from some 52 countries.

In 2016 a World Plenary Meeting (formerly the Triennial/International Representatives Meeting) was held in Pisac, near Cusco, Peru, from 19-27 January. The theme was *Living the Transformation: Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of God's children (Romans 8:19)*. See <http://www.fwccworld.org/fwccworld/>. These plenary meetings will be less frequent in future for sustainability reasons. The next is expected to take place in 2023 in Southern Africa.

Europe & Middle East Section

The FWCC Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) was established in 1938 and now consists of 12 Yearly Meetings, 2 Monthly Meetings and 14 worship groups. Events such as the Annual Meeting, occasional International Family Gatherings, border

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meetings, seminars, peace and service consultations and other activities encourage mutual understanding and the greater involvement of Friends. Two booklets, Meeting the Spirit and Friendly Advice on Quaker Ways, have been produced, and a newsletter, Among Friends, is published three times a year. A small Executive Committee, assisted by the Executive Secretary, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. Among many other different interests, the Section also focuses on justice, peace and service issues. EMES is a member of Church and Peace and in 2016 was accepted by the Conference of European Churches as an Organisation in Partnership.

Europe & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) are well-established, cooperate within the Section but remain fully autonomous.

Some Quaker Addresses in Europe

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Clerk's Report on the Work of the Trustees/Executive Committee in 2018

FWCC EMES is a charity registered in Scotland. There were changes in the Executive Committee during the year. Those serving as Trustees of the Registered Charity for 2018 were Sue Glover Frykman (Clerk, until the rise of the Annual Meeting and thereafter Co-Clerk with Davorka Lovreković until the end of 2018), Martin Touwen (Treasurer), Penny Heymans (Assistant Treasurer, from the rise of the Annual Meeting), Dag Hovda Sture, Lee Taylor, Saskia Kuhlmann (representing EMEYF) and Berne Weiss. Marisa Johnson (Executive Secretary) attended all the Executive Committee meetings, Michael Eccles (Assistant Secretary) attended the Executive Committee meeting in June in Bergen, Penny Heymans (Assistant Treasurer) took part in those in June, September and November, while Julia Ryberg attended as our Ministry and Outreach Coordinator as and when she was able. Co-Clerk Davorka Lovreković attended the Executive Committee Meetings in September and November. Members of the EMES Executive

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Committee also continued to meet on the fourth Monday of the month by Skype for a half-hour Meeting for Worship as a way of deepening spiritual fellowship and building community.

In 2018 the Annual Meeting was held in Bergen (Norway) from 21-24 June with the theme *A New Heaven and a New Earth (Revelations 21:1): Finding New Light in turbulent times*. Some 90 friends from 17 countries gathered to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and to support Norwegians in their 200th anniversary celebration of Quakers in Norway. Per Ingvar Haukeland, a published Norwegian eco-philosopher, teacher and member of Norway Yearly Meeting, gave the keynote presentation entitled, *Heavenearth in the Light of all things new*.

The Executive Committee met via Skype on 25 January, 2-3 March and 12 November. We were due to meet in Glasgow in March, but were obliged to cancel due to snow storms, the closure of Glasgow airport and impossible travel conditions that particular weekend. Face-to-face meetings were held at Åsane Folk High School, Bergen, Norway on 21 June, immediately prior to the Annual Meeting, and at Glasgow Friends Meeting House from 14-16 September. The minutes from all these meetings are posted on the Representatives Forum so that they can be read and shared with their respective Yearly Meetings and Groups. The Executive Committee meets in different parts of the Section in the spring and autumn in order to connect, worship and socialise with local Friends, listen to their concerns, learn about their work and their Meetings, and in that way be more responsive to their needs. If your Meeting or Group would like to invite the Executive Committee to meet in your area, please contact the Executive Secretary or Assistant Secretary.

Staff: Marisa Johnson (Executive Secretary), Michael Eccles (Assistant Secretary) and Julia Ryberg (Ministry and Outreach Coordinator) have continued to work together as a team and Kim Bond has continued to provide part-time assistance from the FWCC World Office in London. We were pleased to welcome Michael Eccles to the EMES team in March. Marisa and Michael each work 3 days a week, which increases the capacity of the organisation, makes it less vulnerable and more robust.

Finance: We are grateful for the continued support of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and especially the funding of the Ministry & Outreach Programme. Support for core activities from Yearly, Monthly Meetings and individuals enables us to continue the work of FWCC EMES and we are most grateful for this. As our Treasurer reminds us, increases in contributions and additional donations to support the work of EMES are always welcome. The independent examiner of our accounts is now Haines Watts Huntingdon. This firm examined the accounts for 2017 (which were presented to the Annual Meeting in 2018) and has been appointed to examine those for 2018, which

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will be presented by the outgoing Treasurer, Martin Touwen, at the Annual Meeting in May 2019.

New-look website: Do check out the new-look EMES website, at <https://www.fwccemes.org/> You might see yourself on some of the photos there!

Spiritual Growth Fund (formerly Small Grants Fund): In 2018, the Spiritual Growth Fund, also financed by JRCT, supported the following projects: i) Ramallah Friends Meeting's initiative entitled "Building for the Future of Ramallah Friends Meeting". ii) The Tallinn Meeting Group's translation and publication of Ben Pink Dandelion's book "Celebrating the Quaker Way", iii) Centre Quaker International (Paris), connected to France YM, for its archive project involving the preservation, listing and digitisation of historical records of the Quaker collection: 1920-2000, and iv) Central European Gathering for travels costs/support/refunds for Friends in a role serving the Central European Gathering, for the period of one year. Details about how to apply for a grant can be found on the FWCC-EMES website: <https://www.fwccemes.org/emmes/emmes-small-grants-fund-sgf>

EMES 10-year strategy: The idea of developing a long-term strategy for EMES was launched at the Executive Committee meeting in September 2017, in connection with the restructuring of the EMES Secretariat and the desire to make the organisation more sustainable and robust. A working group was appointed at that meeting for the task. Contact was made with Yearly Meeting Representatives and Quaker organisations within the Section through EMES' communication channels (e.g. Among Friends, the various EMES Forums, email etc.) to ask for contributions to a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis and visions for the future. The resulting draft strategy was presented to the Annual Meeting in June 2018. Feedback from the small group discussions at the Annual Meeting was incorporated into the strategy document, which was finally approved by the Executive Committee in November 2018. From 2020 the 10-year strategy will guide the work of EMES and inform the 3-year workplans, beginning with that for 2020-2022, to be approved by the Annual Meeting in 2019. The strategy can be downloaded from the EMES website: <https://www.fwccemes.org/emmes/emmes-10-year-strategy-2020-2030>

Amari Play Centre, Ramallah: At the time of writing this report it is expected that the Play Centre will remain open at least until August 2019. Ramallah Friends Meeting and United Palestinian Appeal are currently exploring the possibility of taking more responsibility for this project and we are awaiting news of developments.

Intervisitation is an important activity in our Section and we receive regular reports of this. The EMES staff and trustees also engage in visits to meetings, groups and individuals within the Section. Personal links have been and are still being developed

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and strengthened with Friends from the other Sections. Two Friends from FWCC's Africa Section took part in the Annual Meeting in Bergen and it is hoped that this kind of intervisitation will continue.

Partnership with Woodbrooke: There continues to be good cooperation between EMES and Woodbrooke. Woodbrooke still hosts and provides technical and administrative support for the EMES 'Quaker in Europe' online programme, hosts the EMES online information resource and sends a staff member to the EMES Annual Meeting, where they are able to offer sessions and workshops and raise awareness of how Woodbrooke can support meetings. The EMES staff and some of the EMES trustees also serve as Associate Tutors on Woodbrooke courses. Michael Eccles continued to do some work for Woodbrooke in 2018, which has further strengthened the partnership opportunities between the two organisations. More ways of strengthening the partnership are in the pipeline.

The **Quaker Peace and Service Consultation**, which is arranged and managed by EMES, is held each autumn for representatives of the Section's Quaker peace and service organisations and has proved to be an important and popular networking event.

FWCC Central Executive Committee: We value our links with the FWCC World Office and the other FWCC Sections. These links are currently being strengthened through FWCC's commitment to working together as one organisation. The EMES Executive Secretary and Clerk are members/trustees of the FWCC Central Executive Committee, which meets face-to-face once a year and when appropriate throughout the year via Skype/Zoom or telephone conference. In 2018 we met at Moyallon Friends' Centre in Northern Ireland from 29 April-3 May. A Zoom conference was held in November. These occasions for talking about our work, sharing our experiences and planning for the future are very valuable and help us to support each other in the work we undertake.

It has been, and still is, a privilege to serve as Clerk and, latterly, as Co-Clerk and Acting Clerk of FWCC-EMES. My hope is that we, in our Section, and indeed around the world, will continue to grow in love, compassion and care for one another and our planet, and to sow the seeds of peace in our own lives and communities.

Sue Glover Frykman, Acting Clerk

Report from the Executive and Assistant Secretaries

2018 was a watershed year for EMES, seeing as it did the introduction of a new structure in the team employed to serve the organisation. In March 2018 Michael Eccles joined us as Assistant Secretary, working 3 days per week from his base in Birmingham, UK. The Executive Secretary reduced her own working week to 3 days from July 2018. The total

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amount of employed time now available to EMES is 6 days per week rather than 5, a 20% increase in capacity, and the mix of skills and experience at the service of the organisation has increased significantly, while the risks associated with having a lone worker have been mitigated.

The work routine has settled into a productive and pleasant flurry of daily emails, frequent Skype/Zoom calls, and a delightful feeling of teamwork.

There are discrete areas of responsibility. Marisa takes the lead in servicing governance and finances, while Michael leads on work with young Friends - reconnecting with people across EMES who are working with children & young people and seeking to make the CYP forum more active - and on developing our communications and technology of which more below. He attended the Quaker youth work conference at Woodbrooke on the 10th November to strengthen links there. Michael worked with the Ministry & Outreach Coordinator to set up the Introduction to Quakers event in Kiev, Ukraine, of which more can be read in the Ministry & Outreach report.

Throughout the year there have been Secretaries' calls organised by Gretchen Castle, General Secretary of FWCC. These calls are very important for mutual support, and to feel that we are all part of one organisation.

Travel

The Assistant Secretary attended Netherlands, Switzerland and German Yearly Meetings. He also represented EMES at the Quaker World Relations Forum of Britain Yearly Meeting, on the theme of intervisitation. Both he and the Executive Secretary attended Britain Yearly Meeting. Marisa contributed to a panel conversation on diversity.

In late April/early May Marisa attended the FWCC Secretaries' retreat in Northern Ireland, which was followed by the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of FWCC in Moyallon.

In June Marisa attended Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations of Britain Yearly Meeting in Leeds, and contributed to their discernment of how to keep more involved with the European Ecumenical and Interfaith scene. In July she also attended Ireland Yearly Meeting. This was a really very memorable occasion, being the first time ever that IYM had met in Limerick. Ben Pink Dandelion gave a very inspiring talk on living our testimony daily. In September she went to Italy for the annual gathering of Italian Friends, which, though small, was very vibrant. She introduced a reflection on Silence & Testimony, the theme of the gathering.

Marisa attended the QCEA General Assembly in Brussels in early October, after the joyous occasion of Saskia Kuhlmann's wedding in The Hague. She later attended part of

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the meeting of the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations of Britain Yearly Meeting, who were exploring the possibility of connecting Friends engaged in ecumenical and interfaith work across the Section.

Peace & Service Consultation

The Consultation took place in November at Quakerhaus, Bad Pyrmont. Some 20 people attended. The focus was on considering 3 areas of work: Quaker work against the arms trade, psychosocial rehabilitation and civilian peacebuilding. The Consultation was very successful, and has led to continuing work with Peace Committees around the Section. Michael has convened a virtual conference of Friends working on peace, who are looking for ways of overcoming their sense of isolation.

Communications and Technology

Improvements in this area are a main objectives of the 10-year strategy approved at the Annual Meeting in Bergen. Although implementation does not technically start until 2020, we are not letting the grass grow under our feet!

We upgraded our website to make it more attractive and “responsive”, i.e. able to display optimally on different kinds of devices, including mobile phones. We are monitoring usage and continue to receive positive feedback from people who have come to rely on it for information.

Our presence on social media now includes Twitter as well as Facebook. The Forum is very well used by the Executive Committee for its work, and by smaller groups who want to/need to work together. The Assistant Secretary is working on ways to improve the look and access to the Forum to make it a better tool for Representatives and other larger groups, i.e. Peace & Service Consultation.

Michael has also done a survey of the market for online storage facilities and sites that permit file sharing. We used Dropbox for a while, but there were concerns about this facility being based in the U.S. We have therefore chosen Pcloud, which offers a similar service, and is based in Switzerland. We are considering possible improvements to the system we use to email Representatives and other Friends following the work of EMES and looking at other improvements we could make to EMES’ IT infrastructure.

We have taken out a subscription to Zoom for video-conferencing facilities, after positive experiences of this being used by the FWCC World Office.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

We worked with the World Office to develop documentation and practices that enabled us to comply with these new regulations by the deadline of May 2018.

Amari Play Centre

Ramallah Monthly Meeting engaged Dr Mariam Mari, an independent consultant, to evaluate the programme early in 2018, as there is renewed interest in the Meeting participating in the management and delivery of this service. Some big challenges have surfaced during the year that need to be addressed with some urgency. EMES, Friends United Meeting (FUM) and Ramallah Monthly Meeting are working together to see what measures may secure the future of this much-loved project.

Among Friends

Three issues were published during the year, in March, July and November, and positive feedback received.

International Membership Matters

The Executive Secretary attended all IMAC meetings, in January, July and November. Our Section gained three new members (two by transfer) in Portugal, three in Poland and one in Latvia. Our Section continues to have the largest number of International Members.

Last but not least, we are grateful for the continuing support of Kim Bond with travel arrangements, dispatching Among Friends and being there to help, cheerfully, with whatever is needed.

Marisa Johnson and Michael Eccles

Ministry & Outreach Development

The Ministry and Outreach Coordinator has continued to support the spiritual life of Meetings in our Section for most of 2018.

Early in the New Year, Julia set up a ministry support group for a Friend in the Section embarking on the Equipping for Ministry course at Woodbrooke, and made arrangements for Michael Eccles (Britain YM) and Natasha Zhuravenkova (Friends House Moscow) to visit the Quaker groups in Tallinn and Riga on EMES' behalf.

In February Julia attended the Central European Gathering planning meeting in Brno, Czech Republic. There were about 12 Friends from all over the region, including one young woman from Slovakia who is taking part in the current *Quaker in Europe* course in Czech. It was her first face-to-face encounter with Friends.

In March and April Julia travelled to Glenthorne. The first trip was in connection with a conference of Experiment with Light (EwL), where she shared how EwL is used among Friends (including outreach) in the Section. The second event was a gathering of QUIP (Quakers United in Publication), where she spoke on the subject of translating original

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writing by European Friends into other languages (rather than only from English into other languages).

Also in April, Julia attended the Central European Gathering. During this gathering Julia was able to arrange two Meetings for Clearness for two Friends who had applied for International Membership. Together with Arne Springorum (current clerk of CEG) and Esther Köhring, Julia delivered a Woodbrooke-on-the-Road event to German Friends in Bad Pyrmont on the role of clerk.

In June Julia spent a week in Paris for the Eurosatory protests, organised by the Stop Fuelling War organisation, led by Karina Knight Spencer. She found it a very intense and rich week. Julia attended Meeting for Worship, which was unusually well-attended because of the Eurosatory, and a talk at the Quaker Centre about Palestine, given by clerk of the Paris Meeting, Dale Andrew.

In September Julia and Michael Eccles led a weekend event in Kiev to introduce Quakerism to interested local people, and Friends who had travelled from much further afield, including Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Slovenia and Poland. Around 25 people attended. Local Friend Nadyezhda Ivanovna Spassenko was instrumental in planning for the event, which was much appreciated by those who participated. Friends House Moscow helped with the recruitment of participants. Julia also attended the All-Poland Gathering in October, which was dynamic, well arranged and well attended from all over Poland and the Ukraine.

During the year the Cambridge Companion to Quaker Studies, for which Hans Eirik Aarek and Julia co-authored a chapter, was published.

Julia represented EMES in the global group planning for World Quaker Day 2018.

Quaker in Europe

An 8th and 9th run of the Quaker in Europe course in Czech took place during the year. Work has to begin on revising the content of that course, to make it more up-to-date. The material is mostly from 2008 and was revised somewhat in 2011.

In summary, the Ministry & Outreach Programme has worked towards:

- Support for outreach – for instance, a Quaker Quest session held during the meeting in Brno.
- Helping Meetings to discern and adopt a programme of development, for instance, the CEG exploring the possibility of setting up with Woodbrooke a comprehensive programme of study/development that Bader funding could support. Also, support to Polish Friends about their translation/publication efforts funded by the Spiritual Growth Fund.

- Maintaining and expanding our online provision and increasing provision of virtual networks: thinking about a programme of study that could well include online components.
- A structured plan for travel in the Ministry
- Increasing provision of virtual networks
- Fostering partnerships between Meetings
- Helping Friends in Europe to connect to other Liberal Meetings

Sadly, Julia was not able to come to Bergen for the Annual Meeting because of serious illness in the family. In the autumn she suffered a bereavement and has had to take time off work to recover from these stressful and painful events. We hold her in the Light, and look forward to a time when she will be ready to return to her role and our team.

Amari Play Centre, Ramallah

Education:

The Centre provides children aged 5 years (boys and girls) with a basic curriculum that is offered in most preschool education institutions. The children learn the Arabic and English alphabets and also learn words and basic writing in both languages. In addition, they learn numbers from 1-12 and how to organise groups of numbers. The children also learn songs, from traditional songs to songs related to their age group. Storytelling forms a good part of the educational system and the selected stories have aims and instil good values in the children. They also learn about social behaviour and communication skills, how to work in groups and how to express themselves. The children are taught to take good care of their surroundings and to care for others and provide help for those who need it. Educational material and books are also provided. Quakers values are instilled in the children's daily behaviour and approach.

Food:

Milk and snacks are offered to the children, and sometimes hot meals.

Celebrating festivals and occasions:

All the Muslim and Christian festivals are celebrated, in addition to public ones. Picnics form a good part of the activities, and they are always organised with a theme in mind: sometimes on the seasons, or the environment, the olive harvest season or visits to small local factories in the area.

In April we organise an open day, in which the children practise drawing, songs and playing games together. We also we offer a healthy meal consisting of chicken and rice. On 21March we celebrate Mothers' Day. The children are taught some plays to act and some songs to sing, in addition to traditional songs they learn for this special occasion. We invite the children's mothers to come and see their children acting and singing. The mothers bring cakes that they have baked and everybody shares the special occasion together.

Visits from the Friends School (students from year 3):

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In December, the students from year 3 at the Friends School in Ramallah visit the Play Centre to celebrate Christmas with the Play Centre children. They bring chocolate as presents and sing for the children. At the same time the Play Centre children sing for them and in the end they all sing together.

Other visits:

Quakers who happen to be in the area always contact me to visit the Centre and each year in March a group of teachers and students from George Town School in the USA visit the Play Centre and bring some crayons and drawing books for the children. They sing with them and watch the activities.

One mother told me one day *“although we are living in the refugee camp and our life is not easy and hard in many ways, but I feel I am lucky to be able to send my children to the play centre for their preschool learning. This opportunity is a gift from God to our children that I value very much.”*

In general the services provided are in line with what is adequate for preschool aged children.

Muna Khleifi, Supervisor

Church and Peace

The past period has certainly been an eventful one for Church and Peace. The International Office moved from Laufdorf to Wethen, which was quite an operation. A new, young and enthusiastic General Secretary, Lydia Funck, was appointed, as well as a new Administrative Assistant, Marina Hueber, both of whom have already proved to be a very good team.

Developments at the European level concerning the militarisation of the EU continue to be extremely worrying. Church and Peace is following them closely and making its objections known. Wherever possible this is done in close cooperation with QCEA. In particular we have opposed the diversion of funds from civil to military use (viz. the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, IcSP), the creation of a fund for weapons research and production in the EU budget, aspects of future military cooperation (PESCO), plans to combine twelve foreign policy instruments including IcSP and the development fund in the future EU budget and to make it an instrument to limit migration, particularly from Africa.

At the beginning of June, Church and Peace as an “Organisation in Partnership” of the Conference of European Churches (European Council of Churches) took part in the General Assembly of CEC at Novi Sad. Kees Nieuwerth was there for several days as the responsible person for the workshop “Sharing God’s earth and its riches”, as he was (until the Assembly) the moderator of the CEC Thematic Reference Group (ThRG) on Economic and Ecological Justice. Antje Heider Rottwilm, together with a Greek colleague, was responsible for the workshop on “No peace without justice! No justice

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without peace!” as a follow up to the CEC ThRG on Peace and Reconciliation, which she was part of.

At the end of June we had a very good Annual General Meeting (AGM) and International Conference at Hoddesdon, in the UK. The theme was ‘Justice and Peace shall embrace (psalm 85:10) - Journeying together for reconciliation in a fractured Europe’. Some 100 participants from all over Europe travelled further on our joint Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The AGM welcomed the steps of the General Assembly of CEC in Novi Sad towards non-violence in response to armed conflicts.

Next year will also be exciting. First of all in February (23rd) a regional day will be held at Bull Street Meeting House in Birmingham. The theme will be ‘Let us do what leads to peace and builds up our common life’ (Romans 14:19) - ‘Peace is not a fairy tale - we need to make it happen’. Also in May (17th-19th) the AGM and International Conference will be held in Berlin to celebrate 70 years of Church and Peace. The theme will be ‘I will give you future and hope (Jeremiah 29:11) – 70 years of living non-violence – resisting militarisation. We will mark seven decades of Church and Peace work and renew our commitment to living the Gospel non-violently and with hope.

Kees Nieuwerth

Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace

2018 was a turbulent year for us, and 2019 promises to be even more so. Despite 23 years having passed since the end of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is still a large amount of ethnic tension in the region, which is continually fanned by politicians. This tension and hatred are being transmitted to the new generation. There is little “talk therapy” here. Psychological issues are being dealt with using drugs, which make people unresponsive. On top of all this, Croatia has become an entry point for migrants wishing to settle in the European Union. This has created large amounts of violence and police repression at the borders.

We, as a small organisation, are attempting to do what we can with extremely limited resources. Our main goal is to increase capacity through teaching people without previous education in these fields to be “barefoot therapists” aka “peer supporters”. We use a method known as Pragmatic Empowerment Training (PET), which is highly participatory. Details are given on our website. This works not only as education, but also as psychological supervision and therapy by another name. One part of our PET work is to translate the training into self-paced online courses. We succeeded this year in putting our first course, that on the caregiver-client relationship, into that form (<https://www.cwwpp.org/course-1-the-caregiver-client-relationship.html>). We also have a limited number of clients, again onsite and online.

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This year, we have continued to work in this region as well as online. The migrant situation is of great concern to us. During the year, we travelled to Belgrade regularly and observed conditions there. At the end of the year, we were on the verge of starting an online group in the Velika Kladuša-Bihać region of northwest Bosnia. Conditions at the Croatian border with Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are horrendous. People are being pushed back with large amounts of violence by the police. They are being exploited by smugglers and by workers in official camps. Non-governmental organisations are increasingly being excluded from such camps.

Further, we are working with several groups to set up programmes in Bukavu, DRC, this with the Evangelical Friends Church, in South Africa, and in the Middle East. We are facing a financial crisis, as our primary donor is stopping funding after 2019 as his funds have been used up. We will continue as long as we can.

Charles David Tauber

Reports from Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Groups

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting

Today, BLYM Meetings for Worship are held weekly in Brussels, every other week in Ghent on Sundays and once a month on Wednesday evenings, and nine times a year in Luxembourg. On the first Sunday of each month in Brussels there is community singing before Meeting for Worship with a 'bring and share lunch' after Meeting. On the third Sunday, there is a 'brown-bag lunch' deepening-spirituality gathering, currently using material from Woodbrooke's 'Becoming Friends: living and learning with Quakers' course. We also maintain a rich library containing a great deal of Quaker and related literature in both English and Belgium's three official languages: French, Dutch and German.

We believe that one of the best ways to grow our community is to meet together and share experiences both in and out of Meeting for Worship. Apart from the monthly 'Becoming Friends' group, the best opportunities for members of the geographically dispersed BLYM to meet are the annual residential gathering and an annual community day at which we explore topics of concern to our Meeting, but also simply enjoy each other's company!

Of course, one opportunity to meet Friends from other Yearly Meetings is the annual Border meeting, organised in rotation by the various participating Yearly Meetings of Netherlands and Germany – in this way every third year, individual members in Belgium organise the Border Meeting.

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As reported last year, our Ministry and Oversight Group was laid down at the of 2017 and we have been struggling to discern a way forward, faced with the reality that many of our group are already extremely busy with responsibilities within the Meeting. This is an ongoing matter of discussion, reflection and prayer within the Yearly Meeting and will be the topic of the Community Day to be organised in March 2019.

In terms of specific changes within our Yearly Meeting, one of the main and highly encouraging changes in 2018, was the fact that we agreed to recognise the small but lively Ghent group as a member Meeting of our Yearly Meeting. Though the group is largely composed of seekers, it does count several Members of the Society among its numbers and these committed Friends offer support and guidance to the newer members of the group who are still discovering Quakerism. The group is entirely Dutch-language and as such we have been able to renew and grow our contacts with our neighbour Yearly Meeting in the Netherlands, which has been a source of great joy and learning.

Of course, as elsewhere, one of the main concerns to many of our members is the ever-present worry of how Brexit will affect us and our many friends and colleagues working in the European arena, some of whom are eligible to apply for Belgian nationality, but many of whom are not! Various Friends have been extremely active, participating in demonstrations, debates and other public actions, alongside QCEA or on an individual basis.

Also high on the agenda of the Meeting are the other concerns of the meeting. As with other Meetings, we have two collection boxes in Brussels, one of which is to offer donations to a chosen monthly cause. In the course of adopting our budget for 2018, we agreed that the funds raised for any cause actively supported by a member of the meeting would be matched by meeting funds. Our Meeting donated money to several charities in 2018, including Les Biscuits, European Bureau for Conscientious Objectors (EBCO), Parents en Exil, Friends House Moscow and the Afghanistan Library bus. However, one project that found considerable support towards the end of the year was Diwan, a four-bedroomed house in Brussels that provides a warm, clean and dry place to sleep for 10-12 people per night. The house is available on a temporary basis to a group of some 30 volunteers to shelter people who have no other protection. Between 12 November and 31 January Diwan House has provided approximately 910 nights of sleep in a warm, dry bed and 1840 meals. Many of the migrant guests have stayed on several occasions so it is difficult to know how many different individuals have stayed at the house.

Another project, close to the heart of our Meeting, is the 'Helping the Helpers' project that aims 'to provide training and an ongoing community of self-care support to individuals who serve forced migrants and survivors of violent displacement around Europe.' The project is grounded in Quaker values and has so far run one course with 9

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participants originally coming from Turkey, Palestine, Singapore, Australia, the UK, Belgium, Algeria and Rwanda and working in Greece, France, the UK, Ireland and Turkey. Between the three residential sessions run over the course of a year, participants meet on a monthly basis with psychotherapists to discuss specific opportunities they have had to apply the skills they have learned. It is hoped that these monthly sessions will help to ensure that the skills learned in the residential sessions can be applied in the daily work of our Helpers.

One of the concerns of our meeting, as no doubt in many other Meetings, is our slowly dwindling membership. We no longer have a children's Meeting, but we frequently have one or more visitors from abroad. We are therefore concerned to improve our outreach and while we have not yet reached a consensus on how we are going to do this in concrete terms, we are hopeful that in the course of 2019 we will discern the way forward. In the meantime, however, Meeting has recently published two booklets: *Approaches to Meeting for Worship* (2014) and *Ministry in our Meetings* (2017), and two small pamphlets for visitors (2017): *Quakers: A Simple Faith* and *Quakers: A Journey into Silence*. The bimonthly BLYM newsletter also serves as ministry and notices in print, open to all Quaker contributors in all languages, and is currently distributed electronically to 70 current or former BLYM members/attenders and to over 140 other Quaker addresses worldwide.

Ruth Harland, Clerk

Britain Yearly Meeting

The context for Quaker work and witness in 2018 remained turbulent, with the complex realities of Brexit unfolding, continued migration across Europe and the starkness of the urgent need for change to a more sustainable and just way of living. Quakers in Britain have agreed to seek a future where:

- Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker
- Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age
- All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline
- Quaker values are active in the world
- Quakers work collaboratively
- Quakers are well known and widely understood

Challenging objectives, indeed! The commitment to diversity is being explored, and will be one of the major themes for YM in 2019. Sustainability in the face of climate change is seen as an integral issue for all our work. As part of the response to the COP 24 summit in Poland, Quakers, with other faith groups, are calling on the UK Government to set a 'net-zero' emissions target for 2050, and commit to a bold policy to meet it.

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Climate justice is seen as deeply rooted in our concern for the world and all who live in it, albeit requiring tough personal and local action to live out this commitment.

The major peace programme in East Africa, Turning the Tide, continues its valuable work, and BYM continues to support the Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme in Palestine and Israel. It was agreed that BYM should have no involvement in companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.

Quakers are campaigning for equality through three specific areas of social justice in Britain: migrant and refugee rights, housing conditions and a more compassionate criminal justice system.

British Quakers marked the end of World War One across the country in many ways, trying to raise awareness of our peace testimony, the witness of conscientious objectors and the work of the Friends Ambulance Unit. 2018 also marked the 50th anniversary of the Kindertransport movement, which sparked resonance with the plight of many young refugees and asylum seekers today.

At Britain Yearly Meeting in May 2018, we welcomed over 40 F/friends from round the world, including representatives from EMES YMs. A significant decision was to revise BYM's Book of Discipline through 'a spirit led process of revision from much loved foundations'. As part of the discernment, F/friends were encouraged to read similar books of discipline, faith and practice from other Yearly Meetings. Many voices, experiences and identities are missing from our current book. Since the last revision, our Quaker community and the world around us have changed. We have agreed that we need a book of discipline that reflects more closely who we are now, and explains how and why we do what we do.

There were two notable lectures during Yearly Meeting: Diana Jeater spoke about 'Bearing Witness or Bearing Whiteness?' in our work and witness in the Salter Lecture and Chris Alton, a young activist artist, gave the Swarthmore Lecture: 'Changing ourselves, changing the world'. He told us 'we must imagine this future, for if we cannot imagine it, we cannot speak it into existence'. (<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/resource-library/swarthmore-lecture-2018/>). Do have a look at the BYM website for videos and the Epistle and minutes (<http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/all-meetings-1/yearly-meeting-2018>)

A Quaker Take is a series of podcasts on ideas, faith and activism, both in Britain and internationally - <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/podcast>

BYM's Quaker World Relations Committee has continued to interact with the world family of Friends, as well as to articulate the diversity of the Quaker world to British Friends. We hosted two Friends from Kenya, and the USA at Yearly Meeting, and

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organised a programme of visits to meetings around the country; Melinda Wenner Bradley contributed a number of workshops and sessions on Godly Play/Faith and Play, including a thousand strong all-age worship at Yearly Meeting. We have continued to broaden our connections with British Friends, whether by inviting Friends to join the online QWRC network for an exchange of views and to pool our understanding of international Quaker developments, by meeting in different parts of the country and engaging with local Friends, or by asking for support from individual Friends or Meetings to host Friends from overseas as part of intervisitation.

Yearly Meeting 2019 will be held from 24-27 May 2019 in London; we look forward to welcoming F/friends from EMES.

Ann Floyd, Clerk of BYM's Quaker World Relations Committee

Czech Republic, Prague Meeting

In 2018 Czech Quakers have been concentrated in Prague, with the closure of the Brno Worship Group and less activity in Plzen because of family commitments. Our average meeting attendance this year has been 7, with an increasing number of local and foreign guests attending. Children continue to be important members of our gatherings.

In June we again opened our doors to visitors on Prague's Night of Churches. Some local churches agreed to display our publicity on their premises and we shared singing, silence and conversation with 5 interested people.

Our links with Bader Philanthropies continue (www.bader.org) and of the 3 longer term projects we started to support from this funding in 2017, one, the Single Parent project (see Annual Report 2017), was completed and we are now looking at ways to continue it further. Linked with this, using our Quaker centre as a base, we have been providing boxes of basic foodstuffs for families in need of such support, and with a local social networking organisation, Hearth Net (www.hearth.net), act as a centre for the exchange of goods and gifts.

Our second Bader funded project, the Prague Peace Trail (www.praguepeacetrail.org) is already up and running and there has been considerable interest. Visitors to Prague can follow a route taking them to places linked to local people who worked for peace. It is in Czech and English and is currently fully available only as an application, but we hope to fund a paper map. And now, as well as offering our Quaker T shirts for sale, we also have a classy black cloth bag advertising the peace trail.

The third project, (supported from both Bader funding and the EMES Spiritual Growth Fund) is the development of Quaker-friendly materials for children, under the guidance of one of our very regular attenders, who is following a course at the Department of

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Quaker Studies, University of Birmingham, UK. We look forward to the presentation of some of her work so far in the near future.

We funded a new project proposed by a Czech Quaker, based in Brno. It is called *Variety and understanding in the children's library* and involves purchasing examples of foreign literature for children that deals with gender and ethnic/racial/cultural diversity and then to present this literature to the public through reading programmes and several workshops for children from 3 to 8 years of age and their parents. The first workshop took place in November, was attended by 10 children and their parents and was received very warmly. They read *And Tango makes three* and discussed and drew various forms of families.

Regarding projects currently at the planning stage, with 2 local organisations we are preparing an event to commemorate the Prague Kindertransport which saved the lives of 668 Czech children in 1939. A short video clip will be posted soon on the Prague Interactive Map Prague Shared and Divided (<https://migrationonline.cz/en/about/project/prague-shared-and-divided>). In spring 2019 we will be co-organisers for 6 monthly events commemorating the refugee crisis in 1938/39, including the significant Quaker involvement, as well as drawing parallels with the current situation in Europe and the world.

We also agreed to fund a project, *A Sudanese and a Czech in conversation about Islam, migration and life in Europe*. The facilitators, a Czech Quaker attendee and a Sudanese, resident long term in the Czech Republic, will go into schools to help facilitate dialogue on Islam, diversity and migration.

Our literary work continues, with a planned translation into Czech of a Dutch cartoon book for children, *Gewoon Quakers*, about the history of Quakerism. We are also in the process of updating the Wikipedia pages about Quakers for a Czech audience.

We continue to be active in the Central European Group (CEG) which, as in previous years, had 2 preparatory meetings in Brno, Czech Republic, and the AGM in Budapest in May. One of our joint goals is to make more use of Woodbrooke courses and Woodbrooke on the Road. In October the EMES Nominations Committee spent a weekend in Prague for an internal workshop and a workshop shared with the Meeting on Sunday after Worship about the nomination process.

Some of us have started getting involved in the Czech Extinction Rebellion, a new movement, to bring awareness to the impending climate catastrophe supported by many Quakers worldwide. We have been making good use of the Quaker Centre in Prague as a meeting venue.

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We are saddened by the news that reached us at the close of the year that Alfred Bader died in Milwaukee, US on December 23. The grant we received through his family foundation made a lot of our activities possible in the first place and we are humbled by their support and trust in us.

As always we are grateful for the support given us during the year by the EMES Ministry & Outreach coordinator, Julia Ryberg, and our CEG Elders, Cathy Butler and Jalka.

The traditional end of year carol singing in a Prague farmers' market and then under Charles Bridge was again successful and we had an enjoyable gathering on the Saturday evening in the Prague Quaker Meeting room, with food, games and then the packing of soaps to support the One Million Soaps Project (<https://onemillionsoaps.org>). Thus, we ended our year together on a joyful and fragrant note!

Liz Coling, Clerk

Denmark Yearly Meeting

The YM website is: <https://www.quakercloud.org/cloud/kv-kerne-vennernes-religi-samfund> and the email address is kvaekerne@gmail.com

Estonia – The Tallinn Meeting Group

In 2018, the Tallinn Meeting Group met monthly in Tallinn, holding a total of 17 worship meetings. Three friends have joined us this year and one left. We meet on the first Sunday of each month at different locations, or as needed.

The year's largest project was publishing Ben Pink Dandelion's "Elades Kveekerite viisi". Riho and Rafael attended the EMES Annual Meeting 2018 in Norway from 21-24 June. The theme was: A New Heaven and a New Earth (Rev. 21:1): Finding New Light in turbulent times.

Our small group welcomed several friends from different countries, Joan Lambert from Switzerland, Nigel (Kelly) from the UK and others. We look forward to meeting Tanasus Herrera in his pilgrimage visit in the near future.

We are preparing to translate and publish part of a book called "Quaker Spirituality". This book brings out the best of Quaker spirituality from Fox to Kelly. It is quite a challenge for us to translate and publish this book.

Roland Rand

Finland Yearly Meeting

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In 2018, Finland Yearly Meeting gathered regularly within three Worship groups: Helsinki, Tampere and Northern Friends. The Helsinki and Tampere groups held meetings on a weekly basis and the Northern Friends more irregularly. Generally, the weekly meetings drew together a group of people varying from 3-10. In addition, the Yearly Meeting organised gatherings in spring and autumn where f/friends throughout the country got together for spiritual nourishment and Yearly Meeting business. These joint weekends near Tampere were greatly cherished for their warm atmosphere and importance for the whole yearly meeting community.

One question that often comes up in discussions is how we could better include people of all ages in our meetings. This is something we see as very nourishing for both the groups and new visitors. Tampere Meeting has been happy to have children join in from time to time. This has led to thoughts about starting a “Quaker Sunday School“, which could take place once a month together with Meeting for Worship. This initiative could prove helpful for adults who would like to find a new type of Sunday school for their children as well as enjoying Silent Worship themselves.

On the theme of how to more include young people, the Helsinki group had three student groups from local schools visit during the year. Toni Hämäläinen from the group also visited a high school religion class twice to tell teenagers about the Quaker faith.

Friends in Finland find ecumenical work and bridge-building with other beliefs important, and many also work actively in other groups promoting equality among people and other Quaker values. These include the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, St Thomas Mass and Rainbow Mass. Most recently the Tampere group was active in the Parish election of the Lutheran Church, helping form a nominee list “Church for All“, which sought to promote e.g. equal marriage efforts within the Church. Several nominees on the list were selected, including one of our active attenders.

From time to time, we have Friends from abroad enrich our meetings, especially in the capital. Last year these included an American Friend, Ruth, who studied abroad in Finland, and in December the peace pilgrim Tanausu Herrera visited us along his imposing trek through Europe promoting peace and understanding.

For some years now, f/friends in Finland have been active in their support work for the Rwandan village Mutura, which a few of us have visited. As part of this support a new initiative has begun to support the studies of a local university student, Salvator Dukundane, at the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology.

The challenges our Yearly Meeting faces are similar to those of other YMs. In general, the numbers of our active members and attenders are quite small and spread over long distances and other commitments. However, it is heartening to see that we now have a

much wider age range of active individual F/friends. Often, we don't get to meet each other as much as we would like, but many of us are still in regular touch and care deeply about what is going on in each other's lives.

Leena Lampela, Clerk

France Yearly Meeting

Friends in France Yearly Meeting are experiencing a new momentum. Friends in France share the Light in their daily lives, in worship and in collective action.

This year, the Publications Committee successfully brought to fruition our book 'Expérience et Pratique', with chapters on French Quaker history, discipline, advice and queries, and testimonies from individual Friends; this useful and inspiring publication helps and guides us in our outreach and in-reach work. Two more publications are in preparation, heralding a renewal of FYM editorial activity after a long pause.

Attached as we are to print, Friends in France are trying to 'live boldly' online as well; our website and social media presence allow us to inform and engage with others in creative new ways. Isolated Friends use social media to keep in touch; a Skype worship group unites Friends unable to attend meetings.

In 2018, the worship group in Nantes (France's 8th largest city) was formally recognised by FYM. Inspired by the need to reach more French speakers, the group has published online translations of Quaker writings, including Ben Pink Dandelion's *Celebrating the Quaker Way*. Many families attend Nantes Meeting, which has led us to reflect on how we can be more inclusive of children. Special care was taken at the Annual Gathering in Paris to set up a proper Children's Programme, which ended with lively participation in a programmed worship session.

French Friends were also inspired this year by Stop Fuelling War and their protest at the Eurosatory Arms Fair (11-15 June 2018) in Paris. Bravely and peacefully, Friends from across Europe stood witness to counter the normalisation of the commerce of armaments. This is Faith in action.

Friends in France currently face two major challenges. The first is the need to find a better space for the International Quaker Centre (IQC) in Paris. The IQC in Paris has a long and rich history. Located in the Rue Vaugirard, it welcomes Friends every week from all over the world and countless visitors, seekers and Friends have attended the Paris Meeting there over the years. The IQC also houses France Yearly Meeting's archives, which have been catalogued and reorganised by Judith Roads and Dale Andrew. Despite the convenient location in Paris, the building has many drawbacks and is ill-suited for public access. After a long consultation process and much consideration, Friends agreed that a move was in order to better welcome the public. This situation is

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hard on all Friends, as much time, effort and love have been invested in the Centre over the years but we are confident the Search Committee will be able to find a new home for the centre.

The second challenge concerns our current lack of a Peace and Service Committee. During the annual gathering in Paris, presentations on Quaker relief efforts after the World Wars and testimony from Northern Europe Friends on their Service committees and Alternative to Violence Project work inspired the gathered Friends to agree on a minute asking Friends what the next step should be in renewing a Peace and Service Committee in France. Friends are participating in a consultation on our vision of a future Peace and Service Committee

The road ahead beckons us to live in the Light.

Michael O'Connor, Clerk

Georgia Worship Group

The year 2018 was peaceful for Georgia as a country and for Georgian Friends as well. Tourism is developing in the country, giving more jobs to local people. Many small vineyards have been opened in the various regions of Georgia. Regarding archaeological excavations, the history of traditional winemaking in Georgia amounts to approximately 8000 years.

In 2018 a few visitors from the United Kingdom attended Meetings for Worship with Georgian Friends. It is very helpful for the isolated Georgian Friends Worship Group to have visitors from other countries. A Georgian Friends representative continues to attend the meeting of the centre for religious tolerance at the Public Defender's office. Through that organisation the voice of Georgian Friends is heard to others in the country.

Georgian Friends Worship Group

German Yearly Meeting

Friends in Germany - probably like Friends everywhere in the world - worry about the increasing hatred in the world, racism and right wing prejudices. We wonder what we can do to provide shelter for displaced people and how we can stop our own resentment and that of others.

We also worry about the preservation of our environment and the future of our climate, especially thinking about the very long, hot, dry summer of 2018. What are we called for? We were inspired by the ideas discussed at the EMES Annual Meeting in Bergen, Norway. Before we get active, it might be helpful to let silence guide us - from what we want to do, to what we are inspired to do.

The discussion about Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont is still very controversial. No

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solution has yet been found. But it was the silence in our business meeting that helped us on our turbulent way, to accept unanimously the next steps in the search for the future for our Quaker House. We are grateful to EMES for helping us to organise a seminar on clerk tasks and Quaker business meetings in the spring, focusing on the needs of the community instead of insisting on individual views.

Our peace testimony stirs quite a few of us. An organised group of Friends participated in peaceful actions against nuclear weapons stored in our country. We support Friends who oppose a campaign of the German Bundeswehr to recruit minors to join the army. And we are impressed by a very young Friend who is planning a regional march to call for peace between Israel and Palestine.

Far more participants than expected joined our Yearly Meeting in Bonn in October 2018 (220 participants, a quarter were children, adolescents and young people). We are particularly pleased to have 15 new members this year. This year's theme was to share what shapes and moves us.

In this year's Richard Cary Lecture, our South Korean Friend Cho-Nyon Kim showed us the encounters and intersections between Taoism and Quakerism. Both religions are pragmatic rather than dogmatic and stand for the mystical experience of everyday life. In all human beings there is an Inner Light, or even an Inner Teacher, or a way to the Buddha-nature or a contact with the Tao. We silently wait for inspiration, a word, a call, which then leads us into action.

Karin Hönicke, Representative

Hungary, Budapest Worship Group

For information see <http://kveker.eoldal.hu>

Hungary, Evangelical Friends Church in Tolna

In July 2018, Joseph Fehér and I attended EFC ER Yearly Meeting in Canton, Ohio. The meeting was very blessed and we are grateful to be part of Evangelical Friends Church! After this, in August, we were together with Voicu and Ana's Youth Group from Sibiu, Romania. Our EFC Youth Conference in Tolna Mission Centre was also very blessed. Most of August was spent visiting 5 countries in Africa: Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. We gave more than 2,000 pairs of glasses to our EFC Church members in Africa. We visited many churches, schools, a children's care home, a hospital and many families. We were able to preach the Gospel and were encouraged by each other in every church and we prayed for each other in many families. In September, we started our EFC in Pécs in the community centre.

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Every month we visit our churches in Croatia and Serbia. We also evangelised in the streets together with our friends (missionaries) from Germany in Pécs, Komló, Kölked and Tolna. The street mission is a unique mission with our German Friends (Thomas, Ralf, Tibor and their Mission Group). Our General Assembly was held in Tolna in November. Our pastors and co-workers gave reports about their mission work. We continued to renovate our EFC Gipsy Mission Centre in Kölked as well.

Mihalovics Mary's funeral was held on 28th December 2018. She was our pastor Joseph's wife in Kölked and was a very kind and hospitable co-worker in our mission. We are very grateful for Mary's life. We held Christmas Church Meetings in every church and we gave away about 700 calendars, 200 Christmas Packs and 200 Christian booklets.

We are very grateful to our Brother Church in England, London, Christian Fellowship in Richmond, for praying for us and supporting our mission! We are glad to be supported by the Trinity Bible Society in London. *Our new plan* is to plant a new Church in Budapest this spring. This is a big challenge for us!

Thank you for your prayers, your partnership and your spiritual support!

Pastor Antal Frei

Ireland Yearly Meeting

Friends in Ireland, following a process of discernment that included a Special Yearly Meeting held in March 2018 and Ireland Yearly Meeting held in Limerick in July 2018, have decided to allow same sex Quaker marriage where Preparative or Monthly Meetings feel able to witness this. This has been and continues to be a painful and challenging process for Irish Friends who have different views on same sex Quaker marriage.

EMEYF held their spring gathering in the Moyallon Centre. During the week they met with Junior Yearly Meeting, young Irish Friends aged between 14 and 28, and held a joint session thinking about the theme of Integrity and sharing the perspective of Young Quakers around Europe.

Almost 200 Friends, attenders and visiting Friends came together in Limerick in July for Yearly Meeting where our theme was "Discerning and Living our Testimonies Together". Ben Pink Dandelion, Director of Postgraduate Quaker Studies at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, gave the public lecture on the theme of Living our Faith Daily: the practice of testimony. Another Friend spoke about her concern for peace and her hope that Ireland would declare itself a "Country of Peace". Following this, some Friends decided to hold a threshing Meeting to be held in the autumn. Over 4 days Friends engaged in lively and informative sessions, took part in special interest groups,

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renewed old friendships and met new Friends, all organised by a small Meeting with a big and welcoming heart. We heard about individual Friends who are working with refugees in Ireland and about others who help to raise much needed funds for projects that Quakers are involved with in different countries overseas.

In October, a group of Young Friends went on a Volunteering Pilgrimage to Greece to support those who find themselves living in Athens as migrants or refugees. The group worked alongside a charity called Cosmovision by helping out in a day centre, teaching English, playing games and making crafts with the children and helping to prepare food. During the visit, the group increased their understanding of what it is like to be a refugee/migrant, sought to bring joy to the people they met and, in reaching far beyond their everyday lives, felt extremely blessed in the work they were called to do.

In November our Yearly Meeting Clerk, Heather Bewley represented the Religious Society of Friends and read a prayer at the inauguration of President Michael D Higgins for a second term of office.

Meetings continue to support and nurture spiritual growth in many ways, including holding monthly friendship lunches, prayer meetings, fundraising events, studying the Bible, Quaker testimonies and reflecting on the advices and queries.

Ireland YM Representatives

Latvia: Liepaja Worship Group

The core of this group is five people, which has come together regularly once a month for several years. In 2018 year we changed our location and we now meet in a very nice and harmonious place in the city centre, where everybody can join us following also the information on our website. Although only one of us is a Quaker and others have their own affiliations, we have found silent meeting to be a unifying stage for our meeting once a month.

Inese Ansule, International Member

Malta Worship Group

We have had a quiet year as all our grand plans for outreach here fell through but have had regular Meetings for Worship, often joined by visiting Friends. The core group here has stayed at just three of us with, at the moment, no native Maltese; this is a highly Catholic island with a love of rites and noise so people seem to be daunted by a largely silent meeting, still we are here for any who might need us!

Piers Headley

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Brummana Monthly Meeting

The Quaker families in Lebanon continue to appreciate Quaker faith and practice, they keep in touch with each other, and silently live and exhibit their beliefs through their

work. However, travel these days has affected attendance of the Sunday Meeting for Worship, albeit Monthly Meeting members try to make time to attend and make visiting Friends from abroad feel welcome when they come to Brummana.

This year we had Saleem Zaru, the Clerk of the Ramallah Meeting, pay us a visit and we were very happy to see him and to learn from him about the conditions of the West Bank under occupation, and to know that the Ramallah Friends are managing well. We have maintained e-mail contact, a minor step towards re-establishing our old close ties.

We enjoy the company of QuIET members from Britain and Ireland who visit Brummana twice a year to attend the School board meetings. This year, Graham Leonard, a long-time friend and Friend came through Lebanon on his way to Jordan, and briefed us on his interesting project to improve education in Jordanian schools. At the request of Tavistock Meeting, which is helping four Syrian families to migrate to the UK, we met with the head of one of the families who was waiting for his visa in Beirut and introduced him to Quaker faith and way of life, which he seemed to appreciate. We are happy to see the School continue to progress and move forward, and to see the Brummana Sports Club Tennis tournament, a summer activity started and associated to a large extent with the Meeting and the School continue to thrive.

Lebanon and the neighbouring countries continue to suffer from the violent events in the region, yet our hope for a just peace to encompass the Middle East, as well as the rest of the world, remains strong.

Sami Cortas, Clerk

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Ramallah Monthly Meeting

Ramallah Friends “Quakers” Meeting (RFM) is located in the centre of Ramallah City, Palestine. It plays a significant role in the spiritual life of the community, embracing local and international individuals and groups of diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds. The historical Meeting House built in 1910, and its Peace Garden, is a symbol of serenity and a ministry of hospitality.

Meeting for worship is held every Sunday morning. It is especially appealing to individuals of all backgrounds seeking spiritual renewal stemming from the meeting in silence. Mid-Week Meetings occur regularly on the third Thursday of the month. Attendants are welcomed to share the fellowship and hospitality.

RFM is also known for the talks given by Jean Zaru on topics of interfaith dialogue and non-violence, to name a few. These talks attract international student and scholar study groups. The meeting is considering expanding these talks to a more formal programme of lecture series sometime in the foreseeable future.

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In 2018 RFM hosted many groups through attending the meeting for worships or in private meetings with Jean or other local speakers. Among those groups are Swarthmore College student-faculty study group, the student group from Kivu Gap Year, and Max Carter's Group, which as usual did a spring cleaning of the Meeting House and garden. The Quakers Voluntary Action group, during their annual olive season trip, visited the meeting and assisted in olive picking at the RFM.

In summary, we are delighted to have had the opportunity to host the following groups as they participated in the life of the Ramallah Friends Meeting.

Quaker Organisations: FUM, FWCC-EMES, QVA (UK), Britain Yearly Meeting, Germany Meeting Quakers, Quaker Service Norway, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Max Carter Group.

Local Organisation: SIRAJ Bethlehem, SABEEL, Swedish Theological Institute (Jerusalem), Holy Land Trust, Grace Tours, Wi'am Center, Danish House in Ramallah.

Educational Organisations from the USA: Swarthmore College, Princeton, Westmont College, Westtown School, Kivu Gap Year.

Educational groups from other countries: Middle East Studies Program (Jordan), Swedish Theological Institute (BILDA).

Additional religious groups: Catholics, Mennonite, Presbyterians, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Friends of Sabeel (Rev. Naim Ateek), Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, The Society of Biblical Studies, Swedish Lutheran Church, UCC (USA), Quakers from the UK, Sweden, Germany, Ireland and the USA.

As another year passes, RFM maintains its commitment to its mission and ministry of hospitality, just as it did one hundred years ago. In the midst of the busy streets of Ramallah, the space of the historic building and the peace garden portray a sense of tranquillity and have a heartbeat of their own.

The continued support of our friends and Friends locally, and abroad, has been humbling and overwhelming. Ramallah Friends Meeting strives to continue on its path of nurturing peace and cultivating hope in a community torn by violence and injustice.

Saleem Zaru, Clerk

Netherlands Yearly Meeting

At the last three Yearly Meetings we have asked ourselves how we are "Living the Transformation" as Friends. We realised that it is getting more difficult to act jointly with a dwindling number of Friends and that support to Friends must primarily be given by their local Meetings. At our Autumn Meeting we tried to identify ways to strengthen our local Meetings to do that. We hope that a newly developed website will enhance the sharing of information and mutual support.

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Several Dutch Friends are active in peace work. Another “Walk of Peace” was held in which people of all denominations took part. Two Friends are developing the concept of Inclusive Peace, acknowledging that inclusion of marginalised groups and the right sharing of resources is crucial to achieving peace. Dutch Friends supported the Stop Fuelling War protests at the Eurosatory arms fair in Paris, in June 2018. Two Friends continued their courses in nonviolent communication and NLP in Israel, the West Bank and Kosovo.

Several Dutch Friends actively helped refugees, e.g. through language courses and helping them integrate. Refugees in Calais and Dunkirk were supported with clothes and food, often in collaboration with people from other churches. A Friend delivered the goods in person and stayed for some time in the camps.

Dutch Friends support the church asylum in The Hague by holding a continuous church service so that a family is prevented from deportation. The wider aim of this is to achieve a better execution of the so-called “Children’s pardon”, the right of children to asylum after having been in the country for over 5 years.

Having to make choices and setting priorities can be painful. We started to reduce the administrative burden and concluded that maintaining property as a small Yearly Meeting is not an aim in itself. We therefore decided to sell the Quaker Centre in Amsterdam. We started to move our Yearly Meeting archives to the International Institute of Social History, which offers better preservation conditions and access.

In the year of #MeToo, Dutch Friends had to face reports with allegations of sexual abuse in the Quaker schools between 1936 and 1971. We have expressed our sorrow that this could happen and installed a Confidential Committee to offer support to former pupils. The committee will also develop procedures against improper behaviour by and among Friends.

Exchanges and cooperation with Friends in other Yearly Meetings has always been important for Dutch Friends. Our support to QCEA in Brussels remains strong. We were glad to hear that British Friends have the intention to not let a Brexit from the European Union affect their supportive relationship with QCEA. The Border Meeting held in Germany in September 2018 was well attended by Dutch Friends and we hope to host the next Border Meeting on 6-8 September 2019. Our service organisation, *Quaker Hulpfonds*, is also developing closer cooperation with service organisations in other European Yearly Meetings.

Wils't Hart and Hans Weening, Representatives

Norway Yearly Meeting

Norway Yearly Meeting celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2018. On 29th August 1818 Norway Yearly Meeting was founded in Stavanger, and we celebrated this in many ways.

We held our Yearly Meeting in Stavanger earlier in August and had several guests on one of the days; from old Quaker families, from other churches, and from the local government. Hans Eirik Aarek and Ben Pink Dandelion gave talks; Hans Eirik talked about our history, and Ben about the future and how important it is to move forward and not linger in old traditions, but to think about how to live today and how to make our faith more known. Our history is an important one in Norwegian history as well; the Quakers have contributed in the larger society to have the ability to belong to another church, to be able to be a conscientious objector, and Friends worked during WW2 helping Jews across to Sweden and with convoys to Germany after the war with food and other supplies for people there.

Around the Yearly Meeting we had quite a bit of publicity, several of us being interviewed in different newspapers. We want to hold on to this possibility and to continue being more visible.

On the actual date of our anniversary, 29th August, Stavanger Monthly Meeting organised a public meeting, with two speakers talking about Peace and Truth in our time. This was a very successful event, with between 300 and 400 people attending. Hanne Hognestad also led the radio worship on the main radio channel for four days. This programme is listened to by more than a million people and we are very thankful for this opportunity to gain more publicity.

Our youth group, with 6 Junior Young Friends, had a pilgrimage to England this summer. They visited London and Friends House, the birthplace of George Fox, Pendle Hill and several places in the Lake District, being away for a week. They had an inspiring trip and have all talked about this as an important trip to do.

We have an All Age gathering in the mountains of Telemark twice a year, and this was also organised in 2018. In April we organised a retreat, with 10 people attending, and in November we organised a meeting with a professor of theology, Halvor Moxnes, who inspired many of us.

We are active within an organisation for all the churches in Norway and have been to quite a few of their activities. We find it important and inspiring to meet people from other churches.

Hanne Hognestad, Clerk

Portugal, Lisbon Area Informal Worship Group

We have been concentrating on increasing the number of attenders. To do that, we created a Meetup page and a Facebook page. We gave a series of talks on what Quakers are and our beliefs and posted them on the Facebook page. Our biggest challenge as we are new, and we believe the first Worship Group in Portugal, is to establish a regular group of attenders and build up membership.

Russia, Moscow Monthly Meeting

Our small monthly meeting was quite active in 2018. The rejuvenation of our Meeting continued. Our Young Friends, Alex Lipatov and Yulia Dvoretzskaya, have had a significant role in planning and organising the Europe & Middle East Young Friends Spring Gathering in 2019, which will be held near St Petersburg. A central theme of this gathering will be *Building Bridges of Friendship in Europe*. Alex Lipatov and Misha Roshchin worked to help LGBT people in Russia and in particular collaborated with Claude Bruillot, Radio France's correspondent in Moscow in preparing a radio programme about sexual minorities in Russia. This programme was distributed on March 18 2018: <https://www.franceinter.fr/emissions/interception/interception-18-mars-2018> Misha Roshchin continued to work with peacemaking activists from Donetsk to monitor how things are going in Donbass (South-Eastern Ukraine). A recently written report by Eugenia Yermoltchenko, *Crisis in Donbass (Eastern Ukraine): inner view – after 4 years of conflict*, was distributed at the EMES Annual Meeting in 2018 in Bergen. From 7-9 September 2018 a few Moscow Friends took part in the Ukrainian Gathering in Kiev and found there some old and new Friends. They reported with pleasure to Moscow Meeting about this interesting event. We very much appreciate that later in November Andrei Leonenko, one of Kiev's attenders, visited our meeting and prayed with us.

Misha Roshchin, Clerk

Russia, Friends House Moscow (Dom Druzei)

In 2018 outreach work was our main activity. We maintained the quakers.ru website. It is an online resource centre for Russian-speaking people who are interested in Quakerism. It contains a collection of articles and books about Quakers. Seekers can easily find materials that speak to their needs.

FHM was in close contact with Moscow worship communities. We were glad to see new people among them. There were a lot of questions about Quakerism via different means of communication, including [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/) and [Vkontakte](https://vk.com/). We initiated holding **an enquirers' gathering in Ukraine**. This gathering took place in September 2018 in Kiev. It was run by the EMES team. There were about 20 participants from Ukraine, Poland, Georgia and Russia.

Our projects

- **AVP Ukraine** team concentrated their work on the conscripts in the Ukrainian army and students of the technical colleges. They have teams in three cities. They held their yearly national gathering, inviting experienced facilitators from the US. They are also in close contact with German Quakers and Mennonites.
- We held nine meetings of **Meditation of friends** project (our local version of *Experiment with Light*). Five of them had a special theme for discussion. Several AVP facilitators used their experiences to make the meetings more dynamic and interesting.
- Quäker-Hilfe and FHM supported the work of **Refugee School** in Moscow in the academic year 2017-2018, supplying the salary of the administrator and the specialists who train the volunteer tutors.
- **Quaker Books project** was completed this year after five years work. Twelve books were published by the project, as well as the texts of three lectures; short articles were added to the website at the rate of one a week on average. There are now 108 articles about Quakers on Russian Wikipedia, at least 34 translated by FHM. More than 30 QuakerSpeak videos on YouTube have been translated into Russian.
- The **Children and Social Networks project** in Dzerzhinsk was about creating a model of internet safety and suicide prevention among teenagers.
- FHM supported an ongoing activity called **the English Club**, held twice a month at Big Change premises. The Big Change Educational Center in Moscow focuses on social rehabilitation and social integration of Russian orphans.
- **AVP Moscow**, which has been inactive for some time, initiated and implemented several workshops in our office.

In general, the year was a successful, smooth transitional period from mainly editorial and translation work. We think we can keep a good level of editorial work, with more outreach with our texts, and also be more active in contacting people who can become partners in new projects with Quakerly goals.

Sergei Grushko & Natasha Zhurenkhova

Spain, Madrid Worship Group

2018 was a good year for Madrid Meeting. We continue to have Meeting for Worship twice a month (1st and 3rd Sunday) and a Bible study right before Meeting. We are very pleased to have a couple as regular attenders to Meeting for Worship. Both of them feel very close to Quakerism and have visited Meetings in other countries. Also, until June, we enjoyed the company of Nora Turriago, a young American Friend. There have been many requests for information about Quakerism. Not many of the inquirers end up visiting Meeting, but we keep in touch with some residing outside Madrid.

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In January we visited Barcelona Meeting, at their request, in relation with Catalonia's independence issue and its influence on their Meeting life. We had a Worship Sharing Group for one hour, and later we continued discussing for two more hours. The worship sharing group ran smoothly and allowed all of us to seek guidance and reach each other respectfully. We were hosted wonderfully.

Carmen attended EMES Annual Meeting in Bergen. She reported back how much she enjoyed being with Friends from all over Europe. She was hosted by Esther Klive, who she met a long time ago at Woodbrooke.

We were fortunate to received visits from travelling Friends, our especial appreciation to David Fish who visits regularly and even publishes his visits.

We have started attending an interreligious forum. Most of the participants are members of different Roman Catholic groups. Next meetings will focus on mystics in the different denominations. We expect to be able to share Quaker mystics with the group.

Carmen Alcalde

Sweden Yearly Meeting

This year has been filled by a number of retreats with exciting themes and committee meetings of different kinds. Our Meetings and Groups for Worship around the country have met regularly for Meeting for Worship followed by a meal and talking together. Exciting and thought-inspiring at times. Often new people attend, leading in many cases to a wish to become members.

The theme for the 84th Swedish Yearly Meeting, held in May at Svartbäcken, Rimbo, north of Stockholm, was *Our testimonies, how do we as a society and as individuals, walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone?* On one of the evenings Quaker Service Sweden presented its work through an invented TV show and this was very much appreciated.

During 2018, Quakers in Sweden were granted an observer status with the Christian Council of Sweden (CCS). There has been cooperation between the Quakers and the CCS, especially between Quaker Service Sweden and the related networks at CCS, and we are very happy to now be a more formal part of the Council. This is also in line with our longing to re-establish a peace committee and thus better meet the expectations that we have on ourselves, and that others may have about us, that we work more actively on our peace testimony.

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As an organisation in the EU we have welcomed the GDPR as a chance to make inventories of how we work with personal data and make adjustments where we find that areas of improvement are identified. This is an ongoing process, and indeed our digital ways of walking cheerfully over the world will probably continue to develop and surprise us.

Our internal password protected website with information for Friends was re-launched during 2018 and influences the way information may be spread. Also, Friends in Sweden are experimenting by using other digital tools for committee meetings and working on documents in the cloud, which facilitates collaboration between members in distant parts of the country, with less need to travel.

Unfortunately, a disagreement in some matters arose within our Society during the autumn and this has cast a shadow over the work for many. We hold each other in the Light.

Annika Hollsing and Solveig-Karin Erdal, Representatives

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

The 2018 annual gathering of Switzerland Yearly Meeting was held 18-21 May again in Herzberg near Aarau. The theme was “Living our Values in an Uncertain World” and included a panel discussion by four Friends sharing how they live their values in today’s world, presentations and workshops on non-violent communication, and a workshop on mediating conflicts in our neighbourhoods. The weekend also included early morning walks in the woods, music, and activities for children. The gathering was enriched by representatives from Britain Yearly Meeting, Germany Yearly Meeting and FWCC EMES, and a guest from Russia.

Another significant event was the annual gathering at Montmirail near Neuchâtel, held from 9-11 February on the theme “What does Quaker Community mean to me?” and conducted in both English and German. The Mystery Tour for Friends in Geneva and Lausanne was held again in September, with participants arriving at the train station at the designated time only knowing to pack a lunch and the type of clothes to wear. In October over 100 Friends and family gathered in Geneva for a very uncommon but happy event, the wedding of Sia Kessi and Jean-Marc Falconnet under the care of the Meeting (only the 5th such wedding since 1980).

The spiritual life of SYM continues to be strengthened by various activities. For the German-speaking groups, an Elder continues to lead talks on spiritual themes. In Geneva, a “mid-week” meeting for worship is now held on the first Tuesday of each month for those who are unable to attend meetings for worship on Sundays. Geneva Elders have also initiated Spiritual Deepening Sessions that are held before meeting for

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worship every other week and cover a wide-range of topics. In April a family weekend was held in the mountains outside Geneva, which was well attended and gave children insights into Quaker traditions and peace building activities.

Following an initiative by Zurich Friends, an SYM-wide action was taken to send a letter expressing our support to the students organising the “March for our lives” in Washington on March 24th. This followed the horrendous shooting at Parkland High School in Florida. Believing it was important to let the students know they were being heard and to show our support before the march, Swiss Friends displayed a remarkable ability to reach consensus on a text and send the letter quickly. When a rally of support was organised in front of the United Nations in Geneva on the same date, Friends from across Switzerland came together to participate and express our support for tighter gun control in the United States.

We are now 86 Friends and 99 friends of Friends included on our membership list, which is a slight decrease from the previous year. However, a new worship group has formed in Ligerz, outside Biel/Bienne, and the worship group in Basel is continuing despite only having 3 members. In Geneva, the number of Friends and attenders active in the life of the meeting has grown thanks to Friends sojourning in Geneva for at least the next few years.

SYM continues to hold three Business Meetings a year, the principle one taking place during the Yearly Meeting and attended by about 40-45 members. The two other Business meetings are held in the spring and autumn and are attended by about 10-15 members. The spring meeting focuses on planning the Yearly Meeting and acceptance of the accounts from the year before. The autumn meeting deals mainly with the budget and nominations for the next year.

Two publications continue to be produced several times a year, *Entre Amis* and *News and Views of Geneva Friends*, which contain much information about the activities of Swiss Friends. Similar to the multiple languages used at the SYM annual gathering, these publications contain articles in German, French and English. In consideration of the environment, both publications are now made available via a link to an online file storage service.

Bob Bowers, Co-Clerk

Europe & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF)

2018 has been an exciting year for us at EMEYF. While Communications Committee and the Charitable Committee (our trustees) worked behind the scenes on a GDPR-proof Data Policy, updated bursary policy and a new Safeguarding Policy (so many policies!), we managed to meet with many young Friends from all over Europe.

During our Spring Gathering, based at the Moyallon Centre, Northern Ireland, we explored the theme of Community and the different ways in which people form communities in their lives. We built our own little community for the week: we worshipped, cooked, ate, talked, baked, laughed, hugged, learned and shared together. We also celebrated a Friend's birthday and spent Easter together. And we even had time to make day trips. We were invited to visit the Irish Junior Yearly Meeting, which was a very uplifting and beautiful experience. We shared some of our experiences as Young Friends in Europe, and in return we were delighted by the insights and responses we got from the Younger Irish Friends. Visiting Belfast brought some of us back to earth: a beautiful city full of strong communities, but at the same time more divided than many of us had ever seen within one town. All in all, it was an exceptional week in which our community proved tight and strong, for which we are grateful.

In November we got together for our Annual Meeting. During a busy weekend in Bad Pyrmont, Germany, we not only conducted our business, but spent some wonderfully inspiring time with new and old Friends. It was nice to welcome so many new Friends (about a quarter of the attendees had never been to an EMEYF meeting before and some had never even been to a Quaker meeting) and to rekindle relationships with old Friends. We even (re)kindled relationships with former EMEYFers from before many of us were born through workshops on the Living Archives Project. We got lost in parts of the old EMEYF archives, such as letters sent by parents, members of our meetings or complete strangers that hit close to home. It is always a joy to experience that we as Young Friends face many of the same situations (whether hard or beautiful), regardless of generation, country or other factors that separate us in daily life.

Beyond our gatherings, our enlivening of EMEYF's history bore fruit in 2018, with the rebirth of our newsletter, Willy & Penn, updated as an online blog for the 21st century (and to think, 20 years ago, EMEYF was suspicious of the internet, to say the least). Willy & Penn 2.0 now has an editorial team, appointed by the EMEYF community, and plays a vital role in deepening our community. Find out more at: <https://willyandpenn.com/>

Since we live all over Europe, it is sometimes hard to meet in person, but our connection is strong enough to remain a community of Friends and friends. We look forward to 2019!

Lisette Nijboer, on behalf of EMEYF Communications Committee and the wider community

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) - A European Quaker contribution to politics

Peacebuilding for and by everyone, everywhere

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In response to increasingly military-oriented EU, QCEA is making a path to ways which better promote a sustainable peace. In 2018 our peace programme organised fifteen events and published a major report on peacebuilding entitled *Building Peace Together*. Events in Berlin, Dublin, London, The Hague and Brussels were organised with a partner organisation and featured a member of the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ensuring we engage directly with governments on their peace and security policies.

The report provides forty peacebuilding tools across eleven fields such as diplomacy, the environment, business, trade and economics. This resource is useful to both peace practitioners and policymakers, as it provides concrete examples of peacebuilding delivered around the world by actors as varied as governments, the EU, civil society and Quaker organisations. *Building Peace Together* shows that peacebuilding is everyone's business, and that it is a shared responsibility.

By the end of 2018 the report had reached over 50,000 people, including military and civilian practitioners working in conflict zones around the world. The report is available online in English, French, Russian and Arabic, and QCEA is receiving requests to translate it in other languages such as Turkish and Ukrainian.

Europe building walls: QCEA achieving human rights protections

The next 7 years will see unprecedented levels of EU funding for border management and military projects. We have already had some success in our efforts to limit the harm of these policies.

Alongside a partner organisation, the European Council of Refugees and Exiles, QCEA successfully influenced the European Parliament's position ahead of the negotiations with European states, ensuring that transparency and respect for human rights are taken into account in the EU proposed budget on border management. Ninety percent of our proposals were accepted into the European Parliament position. We encourage Friends to share our website explaining what is happening – www.QCEA.org/MFF

Faith and community

Individual Friends are having an impact through QCEA. Many people have contributed through translation, fundraising, networking and much more. A group of psychotherapists have come together through QCEA to organise a project to support volunteers in refugee camps and used the summer to recruit volunteers for their 18-month project. In 2018 they held their first week-long institute with enthusiastic feedback from participants.

Your Yearly Meeting representatives are having an impact on QCEA's General Assembly. The new website ChooseRespect.eu developed from the General Assembly ministry of a Swedish Friend. The values-based training (on leadership, human rights,

and anti-racism) that we have run from Quaker House in 2018 developed from the ministry of a Dutch Friend.

Thank you for all your support.

Andrew Lane, Director

Quaker United Nations Office and Committee (Geneva)

In 2018, QUNO's Human Rights & Refugees programme supported the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which is the first UN agreement to seek to address all aspects of migration. Its adoption in December was the conclusion of a two-year process that QUNO has been actively engaged in, working alongside States, UN agencies and civil society to support an ambitious, effective and human rights agreement. We look forward to continuing to work to promote its effectiveness and, with this in mind, launched *Foundations for Implementation*, a new publication highlighting the role that the UN's independent human rights experts can play in guiding concrete actions to defend the human rights of people on the move. Also in 2018, the Constitutional Court in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) further reaffirmed the right to conscientious objection to military service. These judgments were based in part on international law, which QUNO has spent many years working to develop, and mean that 900 conscientious objectors whose cases were pending will not go to prison.

Our Peace & Disarmament programme continued work to encourage a more holistic and integrated approach between peacebuilding and human rights actors on the ground and throughout the UN system. In 2018, we assisted peacebuilding actors in delivering their reports to the Universal Periodic Review process, a periodic examination of the human rights performance of all 193 UN Member States in Geneva. We also brought their findings into discussions with diplomats who make recommendations during the Reviews. Over the year, participation in these discussions grew to include other UN departments and stakeholders—a welcome sign that we are on the right path towards greater acknowledgment that human rights are relevant to the prevention of violent conflict and the restoration of sustainable peace. On the issue of nuclear disarmament, we have been exploring ways in which we can help build trust and hopefully inspire creativity towards positive change in the wake of numerous geo-political changes and setbacks. This year, QUNO facilitated public debates on nuclear issues and began work to create informal and off-the-record spaces for trusted, open conversation.

This year, the Human Impacts of Climate Change (HICC) intensively interlinked efforts at the international climate change negotiations (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). QUNO was an expert reviewer on the historic IPCC Special Report of Global

Warming of 1.5C, and our interventions during the IPCC Meeting in Incheon, South Korea, led to rewriting of a section of agreed summary text. We continued to work with country delegations at the UNFCCC, and were active during negotiation sessions in Bonn, Bangkok and Katowice this year. We held off the record dinners for negotiators on sensitive issues blocking progress and for human rights and climate change advocacy groups, and organised side events and distributed publications on the need for urgent, effective and fair implementation guidelines for the 2015 Paris Agreement. Publications in 2018 included a revised A Negotiator's Toolkit and A Government Officials Toolkit to connect readers with the latest research for urgent, rights-based climate action, and a study on the role of decentralised renewable energy in peacebuilding.

We are very grateful to Quaker meetings and individuals who provide most of our financial support. Thank you!

The QUNO team in Geneva

Quaker United Nations Office and Committee in New York

Penny Heymans' service as representative of EMES to the Quaker United Nations Committee in New York (QUNC) ended in spring 2018 and I am now the EMES delegate. The committee supports the work of the Quaker office at the United Nations in New York. By participating on this committee I have the chance to learn more about how QUNO performs in planning and organising their projects. Our Friends who work in the Quaker offices of the UN are fully engaged in various aspects of peace, following the Quaker peace testimony.

After intense discussions and working on agreements, FWCC, AFSC and QUNC affirmed and clarified solid institutional foundations for QUNO. 2018 was really the first year operating under the new arrangements. Also, QUNO received some big new grants. QUNO and QUNC are together working on the evolving Strategic Plan, new financial arrangements, and 'living into' new programme and administrative responsibilities.

During 2018 QUNO continued to co-facilitate the Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform, with emerging new collaborative work around the Joint Program on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention. The Platform has now established itself as a recognised forum for discussion of prevention issues at the UN, and held regular meetings over the period, pushing at the frontiers of the prevention debate. The agreement on the PDA pilot project, to examine the engagement of the PDAs with local civil society, demonstrates a deepening of the platform's programmatic work, complementing its convening role.

QUNO continues to explore the potential of the intersection between Human Rights, Prevention and Peacebuilding, while acknowledging that human rights approaches remain very political in New York. One point of entry has been the joint work with

QUNO Geneva on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which is a relatively well-accepted tool. In June, QUNO welcomed Florence Foster (QUNO Geneva), who helped to co-host a UN event on the UPR and Prevention with a high-level panel and an impressive list of attendees.

QUNO is working with the New York Peacebuilding Group (NYPG) to provide input into the current process to establish guidelines for community engagement on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, supporting civil society.

The UN continues to frame a new peace agenda with recent components including the Secretary-General's report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, the High-Level Event in Spring 2018, the internal review on Peace and Security Architecture, the World Bank-UN study on Prevention and Development and the Progress Report on Youth, Peace, and Security. QUNO is anticipating the July 2019 reviews of Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 16, the first of the ministerial reviews in September, and the 2020 review of the Peacebuilding Architecture.

QUNO had a presence at Friends General Conference and at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; there was AFSC collaboration on Global Dialogue and Exchange Programs. QUNO held the annual gathering with peacebuilding leaders. QUNO initiated a Peacebuilders' statement for the International Day of Peace, and is working with a group of peacebuilding CEOs on getting the word 'peacebuilding' into dictionaries around the world.

Jalka

Quaker Voluntary Action

2018 saw Quaker Voluntary Action (QVA) try to 'live adventurously', taking working retreat groups to new settings and responding to an urgent request from a meeting who have bought a property for use as a halfway house for refugees. We visited The Pales – a beautiful old Meeting House in Wales – for the first time for a summery long weekend tending to and transforming part of their garden; we returned for our annual visit to UK Quaker centre Swarthmoor Hall, giving Friends the chance to explore significant places for early Quakers; and enjoyed the hospitality and teaching of Friends in Ramallah whilst supporting Palestinian farmers with the olive harvest. Check out our new blog for a taster of some of these events: qva.org.uk/blog

We rewrote our mission statement, too. We exist to enable 'participation in spirit-led volunteering that makes a practical and social difference. Our projects build community and work for a more just and peaceful world'.

In 2019 we are living out this mission through this year's theme, 'God in the movement of peoples'. The theme will be the focus of our retreat sessions over the year, as we take

groups to volunteer at the Help Refugees warehouse in Calais in July, to an eco-farm and burgeoning folk school in Emilia Romagna – home of our Friend Evan Welkin – in August, to Swarthmoor Hall in September, and to Israel-Palestine in October. In all these contexts, we hope to build loving communities through work, fellowship and deep sharing; to give meaningful, practical assistance to Quaker and social justice projects that live out our faith, and to have fun!

We hope that Friends from all around the Section will consider joining our working retreats this year, and also to consider whether you have any need for volunteer support which might be met by inviting QVA to run a working retreat. Please get in touch with us if so! Info at qva.org.uk

Jane Robinson, Clerk to QVA Trustees

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Woodbrooke aims to widen the accessibility of its learning so that more people can deepen their own spiritual practice, improve their understanding of the Quaker way and feel better supported in their meetings. We are increasingly global in our outlook and reach.

Here are some of our highlights from 2018:

- We worked in partnership with Quaker Council for European Affairs to run an event exploring William Penn's vision for Europe and thought about the shape of current European politics. This has led on to a further partnership event with QCEA on 'EU, Brexit and You' scheduled for March 2019.
- Our Head of Learning, Simon Best, attended the EMES annual meeting at Åsane, near Bergen. To support Friends preparation for this gathering Mark Russ, our Nurturing Friends and Meetings tutor, developed online study materials based on the Book of Revelation looking at the theme of 'New Heaven and the New Earth'
- We welcomed young Friends from Norway, who spent some time with us during their recent trip to the UK. Together we explored Quaker history and spirituality, as well as looking at our processes for personal and community discernment.
- We ran an on-the-road workshop on 'Being a Quaker Clerk' for Germany Yearly Meeting. This event was run by Julia Ryberg, Arne Springorum and Esther Köhring, who are known to many, and was part funded by the Catchpool Fund.
- Our online course 'Bayard Rustin: Reflections on his life and witness' was led by Nicole Hirschfelder of University of Tübingen, Germany.
- We continued to nourish a productive working relationship with our Friend, Julia Ryberg whose online courses continue to attract participants from

throughout Europe. One of these was ‘Reality and Radiance: a retreat with inspiration from Swedish Quaker Emilia Fogelklou’.

- We are grateful for the experience and skills of EMES’ Sue Glover Frykman and Michael Eccles who tutor on our online clerking courses.
- Friends from the following countries participated in one or more of online courses, retreats and webinars: Estonia, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Poland, Sweden, Germany, Slovenia, France, Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.
- We were delighted to welcome a participant from Poland for their first year of our extend Equipping for Ministry programme. Friends from Norway and Germany completed their second year. In 2019, we welcomed participants from Switzerland and Belgium.
- We continue to make funding available from The Catchpool Fund to enable Friends and meetings from Europe (excluding Britain Yearly Meeting) to participate in Woodbrooke learning.
- Our twice weekly online meetings for worship help to nourish the spiritual lives of Friends in countries such as Poland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Italy, France, Latvia, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Ireland.

Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke, said *“At a time when boundaries and borders are very much on people’s minds, I give grateful thanks for the bridges that Woodbrooke learning builds across and within our Quaker communities.”*

Over the years, many Friends from throughout EMES have enrolled on our research degree programmes, and we are now taking applications for the wholly online PG Certificate and MA Quakerism in the Modern World which we run with Lancaster University.

Whether Friends travel to the UK, participate in an online course or experience our travelling teaching service where they are, there are many ways of engaging the inspiring with the learning Woodbrooke has to offer.

Martin Layton, Senior Programme Leader for off-site and online learning

Yearly Meetings in 2019

YM	When	Contact
Denmark	6 April 2019	kvaekerne@gmail.com
Ireland	25-28 April 2019	office@quakers-in-ireland.ie
Britain	24-27 May 2019	Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Friends House, 173 Euston Road London NW1 2AX ymg@quaker.org.uk
Belgium & Luxembourg	15-17 November 2019	quakerclerk@gmail.com
Netherlands	10-12 May 2019	secretariaat@dequakers.nl
Switzerland	7-10 June 2019	symclerk@swiss-quakers.ch
Sweden	30 May-2 June 2019	kvakargarden@kvakare.se
Norway	27-30 June 2019	kveker@kveker.org
France	25-28 October 2019	assembleedefrance@gmail.com
Finland	22-24 March 2019	lampelanleena@gmail.com
German	3-6 October 2019	clerks@quaeker.org

Other events in 2019 (fuller details on <http://www.fwccemes.org/calendar/>)

Event	When	Contact
Grentztreffen Switzerland/Germany/France	29-31 March	
EMEYF Spring Gathering	24 April-1 May	emeyf@qcea.org
Central European Gathering	12-15 April	
Border Meeting	6-8 September	/
Peace & Service Consultation in Kortenbergh, Belgium	22-24 November	emes@fwccemes.org

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.

In Sterling: By international transfer to:

Bank – HSBC City Corporate Banking Centre, 60 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TR

Correspondent SWIFT BIC Code – MIDLGB22XXX

Beneficiary Bank SWIFT: CAFBGB21XXX

Beneficiary's Bank name and address:

CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

IBAN No – GB03CAFB40524000025578

Account Name – CAF Bank Ltd

FWCC EMES

Account Number – 00025578

Sort Code – 40-52-40

In Euros: Sozialbank Account

IBAN: DE35 3702 0500 0001 0795 00 in Germany just 1079500)

BIC: BFSWDE33XXX (in Germany just 370 205 00)

Name: Sozialbank

Location: Cologne (Köln), Wörthstr. 15-17, 50668 Köln

In the name of: Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East

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, Penny Heymans, for further information or to inform us of bank transfers you are making.