



Annual Report 2021



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

fwccemes.org

FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section

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For up to date information about EMES please
visit our website: **fwccemes.org**

For dates of Yearly Meetings and other events please
see the calendar page: **fwccemes.org/calendar**

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 fwcc.world/peru-2016/what-is-the-fwcc-world-plenary-meeting-irm. These plenary meetings will be less frequent in future for sustainability reasons. The next is expected to take place in 2024 in Southern Africa.

Read more about the work of the FWCC World Office here: fwcc.world



■ Some of the participants at our 2021 Annual Meeting on Zoom.

FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section

The Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) was established in 1938 and is the collective body for Quaker meetings in Europe and the Middle East. All the members, yearly meetings and groups affiliated to EMES, are members of FWCC. We publish a newsletter, *Among Friends*, three times a year and send out regular news emails to subscribers.

A small Executive Committee, assisted by the Executive Secretary and the Assistant Secretary, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. Each year EMES organises an Annual Meeting and Peace & Service Consultation and since the Covid-19 pandemic has been holding additional events online for Representatives & Roleholders, the Peace & Service Consultation and for 14-18 year old Young Friends. EMES is a member of Church and Peace and in 2016 was accepted by the Conference of European Churches as an Organisation in Partnership.

EMES has a 10-year strategy which *envisages a thriving, vibrant, inclusive, all-age, spiritual community of Friends in Europe and the Middle East, woven together in transformative faith and love, working and connecting with others, listening to the Spirit, actively living out our Quaker testimonies of truth and integrity, equality and community, simplicity, peace, and care for the earth and the environment.*

You can read more about EMES including our 10 year strategy on our website: fwccemes.org/emes

EMES consists of 12 Yearly Meetings, 1 Monthly Meeting and a number of worship groups. There are approximately 25,000 Quakers in the affiliated meetings in the Section (this figure includes members, attenders and children, and is based on the information provided by meetings in early 2022). Evangelical Friends Church International are also active in the following countries: Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Serbia; but do not have the numbers of people involved at the moment.

European & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) are a well-established autonomous organisation operating within the Section: emeyf.org

EMES Activity in 2021

Despite Covid, 2021 has been a stable year for EMES in many ways. Our staff and executive committee have remained the same and together we have been able to build on our experience last year with online working. EMES staff have mostly continued to work from home and there have been periods when their children were at home due to school closures during lockdown.

We have adapted much of our work to the situation we are in, and ended the year feeling that EMES is a stronger and closer community due to more frequent meetings and opportunities to meet Friends online. We continue to work in partnership with Woodbrooke running online worship throughout the week and we contributed a series of videos to Woodbrooke's online Reading and Reflection Group during the second half of 2021. We also work with other partners including European & Middle East Young Friends, the Quaker Council for European Affairs, the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, our member meetings and individual Friends.

We have continued to hold three monthly online gatherings for Friends:

1. Representatives and roleholders gatherings which bring Friends together for worship and fellowship and to give them the chance to better engage in the work of EMES.
2. Peace & Service Consultation gatherings which consider topics such as endings and organisation updates.
3. The EMES Youthgroup for 14-18 year olds – run bilingually in English and German – bringing together Young Friends from several countries.

We also began regular six-monthly online gatherings for international members of Quakers living in the Section. In addition we hold monthly worship for EMES roleholders.

Very little international travel was possible during the year, but EMES was able to send in person representatives to the Annual Gathering of Italian Friends in August, France YM in October and the QCEA General Assembly in November. We sent representatives to online YMs and gatherings where possible.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) acts as the EMES trustees and met eight times during 2020. All their meetings were online this year. The March and September meetings were held over weekends allowing time for more in depth decision making while the other meetings were held during evenings.

The EC is responsible for the work of EMES and monitors progress made on the 2020-22 workplan agreed at the Annual Meeting in 2019 and the work priorities agreed at the Annual Meeting in 2021. They also approve grants to the Spiritual Growth Fund and Digital Equality Fund.

Ethel Livermore was appointed as clerk of EMES for three years at the 2021 Annual Meeting, having been appointed acting clerk in September 2020.

EC members in 2021

Will Haire Ireland YM

Penny Heymans Norway YM (Treasurer)

Paul Holdsworth
Belgium & Luxembourg YM

Melanie Huopp EMEYF/German YM

Annie Janssen German YM

Ethel Livermore Britain YM (Clerk)

Peter Spriej
Netherlands YM (Assistant Treasurer)

Minutes of EC meetings are made available to EMES Representatives and are available from the EMES office on request.

EMES also appoints a nominations committee.

Nominations Committee

The EMES Nominations Committee consists of up to six Friends, appointed for three years in the first instance.

It receives requests for nominees from the EMES Executive Committee and/or Annual Meeting (AM) in session, normally for members of the Executive Committee and for the roles of EMES Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. Nominations Committee finds nominees by a process of Quaker discernment.

Since the last Annual Meeting, Nominations Committee has met 4 times. This year we spent much time searching for three elders (a new role for EMES). We were also consulted by the Executive Committee for comments and suggestions on the new draft Constitution for EMES and on the draft Terms of Reference (Memberships) for

the Executive Committee and Nominations Committee, both of which will come to AM 2022 for approval.

All our meetings have been online this year though our normal practice is to meet at least once face to face per year plus once at Annual Meeting.

Nominations Committee members, 2021

Simon Best Britain YM & Woodbrooke

Mikheil Elizbarashvili
Georgia Worship Group *from May*

Vidar Salvigsen (Co-convenor)

Liz Scurfield Britain YM (Co-convenor)

Arne Springorum
Prague Worship Group & Central
European Gathering *until May*

Siobhan Walshe Ireland YM

Staff

Executive Secretary

Michael Eccles, Britain YM

Assistant Secretary

Jez Smith, Switzerland YM

Finance

Our finances continue to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. With travel restrictions in force the annual meeting, the Peace and Service Consultation and other meetings were held online.

We have now completed our second year of our 3-year funding from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and we clearly saw that we would not be able to make full use the grant in 2021.

We are discussing with JRCT the possibility of using some of the 2021 grant in 2022 and to delay some payments in 2022 to 2023, thereby

extending the grant period with an extra year.

The accounts for 2020 were presented by the Treasurer and approved by the Annual Meeting in May. The Annual Meeting agreed to continue with Fortus Business Advisors & Accountants of Huntingdon, UK as the independent examiner of the EMES accounts for 2021.

The Triodos bank account in the Netherlands was closed in 2021 and transfers in Euro are now facilitated by Wise, which works well.

Representatives

All Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and meetings in the Section appoint representatives to FWCC-EMES.

Details of this are outlined in the EMES constitution.

Representatives usually serve for three years and can be reappointed once. All representatives are invited to attend the EMES Annual Meeting and monthly online Representatives & Roleholders Gatherings.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting (AM) was held in May, over 100 Friends gathered online to consider the theme: *And truth flourishes as the rose, and the lilies do grow among the thorns... for the seed Christ is over all (George Fox, 1663): Discerning how we rebuild and grow with hope.*

It was the largest and most diverse AM held for several years with Friends attending from many parts of the Section.

It was particularly good to have participation from some Friends in the Middle East and we heard news from the meetings and schools in Brummana,

Lebanon and Ramallah, Palestine – we hope to find ways to include these Friends more in the future. The AM made the decision that EMES will have appointed elders on an ongoing basis; it also approved some work priorities for the next year which included reviewing our communications, holding a language specific gathering and updating the EMES constitution. The AM also agreed to consult on a draft sustainable travel and events policy for EMES which we hope to finalise at the AM in 2022.

You can read the epistle from the EMES 2021 Annual Meeting here:
fwccemes.org/news/emes-annual-meeting-2021-epistle

Partnerships and Communication

We continue to maintain close relationships with other Quaker organisations in Europe and the Middle East, in particular our member yearly meetings and worship groups, but also Woodbrooke, the Quaker Council for European Affairs, the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva and European & Middle East Young Friends.

The *Quaker in Europe* course, founded over a decade ago by EMES, has been revamped and ran in English in the summer with 26 participants from 18 countries, and then in French in the autumn, in partnership with France Yearly Meeting who we worked with to make the course relevant to their needs. They reported that it was a success with over 40 participants.

We continue to run online worship with

Woodbrooke throughout the week. A survey was recently carried out amongst those who attend the worship as we begin to think about the future of the worship as many meetings open up again. It is clear that some Friends really value these online worship opportunities and there are people for whom this online worship is their primary Quaker meeting. There is more information here:
woodbrooke.org.uk/worship

We send regular news emails to approximately 150 Friends 2-4 times each month (you can sign up here: fwccemes.org/newsletter) and maintain an active presence on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), alongside using our website to keep Friends up to date. We also continue to produce and send out our journal *Among Friends* three times a year.

Peace & Service Consultation

The Peace and Service Consultation brings people together who are actively involved in peace and/or service work as staff, volunteers, in governance roles or as supporters and activists.

This year, 28 people in 12 countries and involved in over 20 organisations attended the event. Originally set to be held in Bad Pyrmont in Germany, this event was held online in late November.

The focus of our event was “Exploring how we use language and imagery to explain our work – challenging our assumptions,” which was presented and facilitated by Tracey Martin who is a staff member at Woodbrooke (the European Quaker Study Centre) and is clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Using a simple image of both a younger and older woman, we were challenged to think about what we see when we see something. Most people saw the younger woman first and many could only see the older woman with help, even if they had seen the image before. One Friend later explained, the impact of such a simple exercise can be profound:



■ An example of a social media post by FWCC EMES during 2021.

“Looking at the picture of the young woman/old woman reinforced what I perhaps tend to forget: that communication (and truth) is multifaceted. I may be trying to communicate one thing (young woman), but what is seen/heard may be very different (old woman).”

Later on, we examined texts found online from different organizations and were challenged to think about what those who wrote them were trying to convey and what we understood that they said.

A participant explained the challenge that occurred to them from exploring other people's words:

“Looking at written texts brought home to me the potential for misunderstanding and the need to take care not to make sweeping claims that are not altogether true.”

We were reminded that when we write or say something, we have what we mean to say, what we say, what someone else hears and what someone else assumes.

Our time together was spent in plenary, in Home Groups and in individual reflection with further support from Tracey Martin.

Monthly sessions continued online, resulting in a growing sense of community among many of the participants.

More information is available here:

fwccemes.org/emes/peace-and-service-consultation

Worship around the Section

Most Friends around the Section are now meeting for worship online or in a blended form. We are learning from each other about how to do this better and EMES has supported Friends and meetings with their online worship when we have been asked.

We put together a page on our website listing meetings around the Section, open to receiving visitors from other countries, and many Friends have taken

the opportunity to do some of this international intervisitation. We have also heard some positive stories about better connections being made in countries where Friends are very scattered and sometimes isolated and are now able to join together for online worship regularly.

See the list of meetings open to receiving visitors here: fwccemes.org/calendar/online-meetings-for-worship-around-europe-the-middle-east

Spiritual Growth Fund

Our *Spiritual Growth Fund* continues to support meetings and their work. We believe that the Covid pandemic has had an effect on the fund, meaning meetings have been focussing on worshipping together and maintaining their communities rather than looking outward as much as they often do. We gave two grants in 2021, both for translation projects, in Sweden and Russia.

During 2021 the executive committee reviewed and updated the objectives and criteria of the fund, and we plan a relaunch on the fund at the annual meeting in 2022. You can find more information here:

fwccemes.org/emes/emes-spiritual-growth-fund

Digital Equality Fund

Our *Digital Equality Fund*, launched in 2020 to help Friends get online, has continued to operate through 2021. We gave four grants in 2021 to Friends around the Section supporting Friends in buying a device, or paying for their internet connection. You can find more information here:

fwccemes.org/emes/emes-digital-equality-fund

FWCC Central Executive Committee

The Clerk and Executive Secretary of EMES serve as members of the FWCC Central Executive Committee (CEC) along with their counterparts from the other FWCC Sections and the FWCC World Office. The CEC met five times in 2021, including for a four day long meeting in June. All the meetings were online.

Key issues considered by the CEC included the recruitment of a new General Secretary for the FWCC World Office, supporting the work of the International Planning Committee planning the next FWCC World Plenary Meeting due to be held in Southern Africa in 2024, the FWCC global fundraising campaign and World Quaker Day.

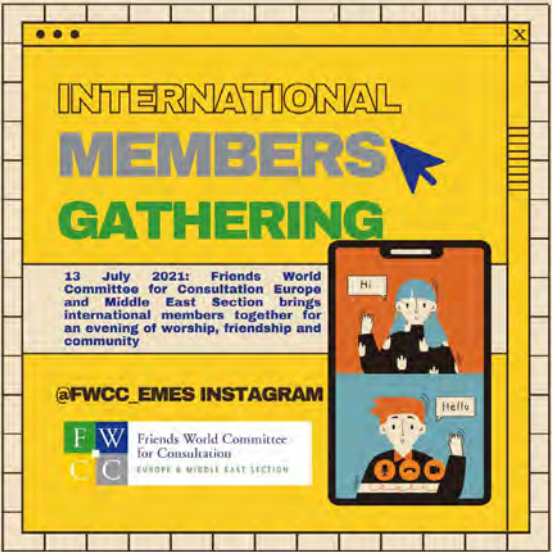
International membership

The Executive Secretary serves on the FWCC World Office International Membership Applications Committee that oversees and supports international members of the Religious Society of Friends around the world. These are people who want to become members but live in an area where there is not a Yearly Meeting or other Quaker body they can formally join. There are approximately 60 international members in our Section. Some of these Friends are part of existing worship groups or other Quaker meetings while others are more isolated. EMES tries to stay in touch with these Friends and to ensure that they are aware of our activities and invited to our events.

In July 2021 we held the first online gathering of international members living in EMES. This gathering was an opportunity for international members and other isolated Friends to meet to get to know one another better and to share the experience of being an international member. We plan to run these gatherings twice a year in future.

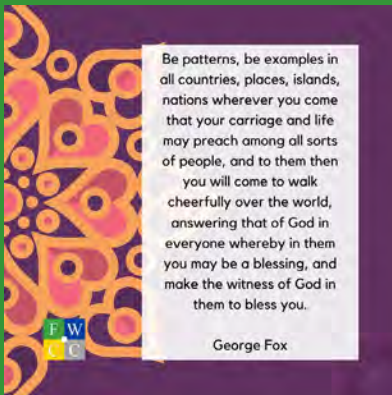
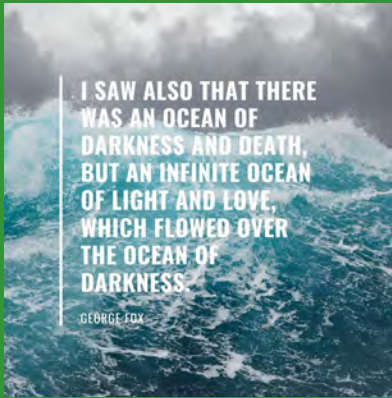
During 2021 one person became an international member in Italy, transferring their membership from Britain YM. We were sad to learn that Jola Grabowska, an international member in Poland, died this year. You can read more about the international membership programme here:

fwcc.world/areas-of-work/international-membership



■ International Members social media post.

Reports from Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Groups



- Example social media posts by FWCC EMES during 2021.

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting

We have continued to experience online Meetings for Worship, some of us with great enthusiasm, some of us with less. In Summer 2021 we began meeting in-person again in Quaker House, Brussels, though numbers attending are very much reduced, and in Gent.

This has proved to be an interesting change as we have realised that some Ffriends still prefer to continue to worship online and, indeed, a solid online community has emerged that is composed not only of Ffriends from BLYM but also some from further away: France, UK, as well as those who for practical or health reasons cannot easily come to Quaker House, Brussels on a Sunday morning. The result of this is that we now not only have three recognised worship groups in our Yearly Meeting, Gent, Luxembourg and Brussels, but also a distinct Online worship group. We are going to need to face this as a medium to long term reality of our Meeting.

While this situation has been a positive experience for those who regularly attend MfW online, it does pose certain challenges that no doubt many Meetings across the world are experiencing as a result of Covid and lockdowns: How does a Meeting address the fact that it has become a fragmented and potentially international group? What implications does this have for the life of the Meeting: for witness to the world as well as for fellowship? How are Meetings for Worship for Business to be organised when one of the worship groups now includes those who are not members of the Yearly Meeting? Will the reduced attendance at in-person Worship have financial implications for the YM? Will we need to accept that our in-person MsfW will henceforth be very much smaller? If so, what implications are there for our internal structure?

On a positive note, Ffriends have very much appreciated being able to meet in person again and the small group who meet regularly in QH have a strong desire to continue worshipping in this manner. We have also begun holding once per month hybrid Meetings that have, in general, met with positive feedback, although some Ffriends do find the presence of so much technical equipment in the worship room, and the ways in which the manner of worship needs to be adapted to suit it, a distraction.

It has been interesting to note that where in-person MsfW were standard pre-Covid and a certain amount of movement and noise was normal, some Ffriends accustomed to meeting online now find any outside noise distracting, to the extent that even in hybrid Meetings all computers have been muted. We wonder what implications this will have in the future when (if) we come back to worship together in person.

We have been delighted to note that even during this time, we have been able to welcome several new attenders and Friends who have moved to Brussels, both on-line and in-person. It is a pleasure to see these new faces and to get to know the people, some of whom are quickly becoming well integrated into our activities and organisation. This gives us renewed hope for the future that even in times when we despair, there can be new growth and hope.

In addition to the challenges of the last year, it will come as no surprise to many that our Meeting is struggling with internal strife. We have, over the past year, been going through a reconciliation process facilitated by a group from Britain Yearly Meeting, Restoring Relations. We are very happy with the RR mediators we have been fortunate enough to encounter through this process and are currently undergoing a discernment process as to the way forward.

In terms of social activities, community building and support, we have been very happy to be able to organise Community walks, a film evening, quiz evenings and 'bring and share' lunches (where Covid restrictions allowed). While these are generally attended by the same small group of Friends they are nevertheless appreciated by them.

Last year we reported that we had been preoccupied with Eldership and Oversight and that we had finally been able to nominate Friends to both roles and we now have active and engaged Overseers (renamed the Community Care Group) and Elders. Both these groups have worked very hard during the year in the face of the challenges we face.

We have been unable to organise a Yearly Meeting in 2021 as the planning group felt it was important, due to the nature of the proposed theme, to hold this in-person. So while several dates were chosen they were then rejected as impossible. We are waiting and praying that sometime soon it will be easier to travel, to hold Meeting indoors without having to have all windows open (and thus be bundled up in many layers of thermals) and to share meals together in fellowship.

In terms of other activities undertaken either on behalf of our Meeting or morally and/or financially supported by us, the same staunch Friends are working hard to ensure that there can be some safe places for migrants to stay when they end up in Brussels. As last year our Meeting has financially supported the running of a house that is made available to small groups of migrants at a time. This facility gives them a time off the streets and with warmth and food.

The small group of Belgian and Dutch Friends, 'Quakers for Peace', has continued to offer us a monthly 'gift', be in a peace calendar, a card game or bookmarks, always reminding us of our testimonies to peace and social justice.

Britain Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends,

The upheaval caused by the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the individual and corporate lives of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) in the past year. In 2020, Friends learnt how to come together online for worship, learning, and to conduct Quaker business. In 2021, Friends had to adjust to the 'new normal' of shifting, and sometimes conflicting, guidance about how to keep safe and healthy. Individual Friends have different needs and Quaker Meetings have had to be flexible in accommodating those who have been desperate to meet one another again alongside Friends for whom it does not feel safe to travel or gather in person. Blended Quaker meetings (of online and in-person participants) have been one response to this dilemma, and it is likely that this becomes part of our established practice for many Quaker gatherings in future.

The Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) in 2021 took place online from 19 July to 8 August. This was the first time that we had come together for a YMG online or over such an extended period. Over 2100 people registered to participate over the course of the Gathering and we minuted a welcome to 68 representatives and visitors from other Yearly Meetings. It was a great joy to British Friends to have this connection with Quakers from EMES and beyond, and to learn from the world family of Quakers.

The pandemic has made more stark the issues of power and privilege both within our Quaker Meetings and in wider society. The theme of the YMG was 'For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis'. We reaffirmed our commitment to work for climate justice and racial justice. We expressed our intention to becoming a welcoming community for trans and non-binary people, stating *"With glad hearts we acknowledge and affirm the trans and gender diverse Friends in our Quaker communities... The end of our travelling is for differences not to divide us. We rejoice in recognising God's creation in one another. This is what love requires of us"* (Minute 31). We noted that words or good intentions are not enough and that we must support and challenge one another to act with urgency and imagination. Early Quakers were often wild about their faith. We were asked the question 'is it time to re-wild our Quakerism?'.

The 2021 Swarthmore lecture, 'Kinder Ground: Creating Space for Truth' was given by Thomas Penny. Drawing on his experience as a journalist, he explored our Quaker commitment to Truth in an era of fake news and asked how our Quaker practices might help us create spaces for listening and understanding in the face increasing polarisation. His lecture can be viewed here: youtu.be/lei27xKLG9k

One important event that brought together Quakers from Britain and from around the world was the United Nations COP26 event held in Glasgow in November.

Quakers joined with other climate activist and faith groups in welcoming pilgrimages to Glasgow, an interfaith vigil, and a series of events that were held at Glasgow Quaker Meeting House.

BYM continues in its work towards becoming a simple church, supported by a simple charity to reinvigorate Quakerism. This has included simplifying its governance and committee structures. The coronavirus pandemic has heightened the need to consider what is essential and where we can best use our limited resources.

This has meant some difficult decisions such as some staff at Friends House taking voluntary redundancy. Contrary to expectations, BYM finished the last financial year (2020) with a financial surplus despite the loss of income. This was helped by higher than usual contributions from individual Friends and Quaker meetings, and it is hoped that BYM will achieve a balanced budget by 2023.

One area of new growth in the past year was the opening of a new base for national Quaker work in Leeds. The Quakers in Britain Yorkshire Centre, at Central Leeds Meeting House, is part of a pilot to test new ways of working that is intended to make BYM less London centred and better able to support the needs of Quaker communities across the whole of Britain. Another area of growth was the employment of a further three local development workers (LDWs), bringing the total number of workers to eight. It is hoped by summer of 2022 each area of Britain will have its own LDW to support the development of local Quaker communities.

BYM is a relatively large Yearly Meeting comprising 463 local meetings (organised into 70 area meetings), as well as numerous Quaker Recognised Bodies. It is therefore difficult to fully capture the life of all our different Quaker communities over the past year. Friends who are interested in knowing more about young adult Quakers in BYM are encouraged to look at the YFGM website: yfgm.quaker.org.uk

For an overview of the work of BYM please look at our annual review for 2020-2021: quaker.org.uk/documents/annual-review-2020

Other documents about the activities of BYM in the past year can be found on the BYM website here: quaker.org.uk/ym/documents

Our Yearly Meeting this coming year will be from 27-30 May 2022 (shortly after the EMES annual meeting). It will be in a blended format, with participants both at Friends House in London and online. We hope that this accessible format helps members of EMES to join us for worship, business and learning as we continue to encourage one another to do what love requires of us.

In Friendship

Quaker World Relations Committee, Britain Yearly Meeting

Budapest

At Budapest Quaker meeting, although we are very few members and attenders, we continue to worship once a month on Zoom and also join twice a month with Central European Gathering on Zoom.

During the year, two young people joined us and a few people came back after a while. We celebrated with joy when one of our attenders had a baby. We are active within the FWCC EMES community and we have participated in the monthly Representative and Roleholders meetings and one of our attenders took part in the FWCC EMES Quaker in Europe course in the summer of 2021.

Central European Gathering

The CEG continues to unite Friends and attenders from the following countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Ukraine. Although some Friends disagree with online meetings, (and this will involve further discussion in 2022), our twice monthly online worship held, as last year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, have enabled not only us but also visitors from Germany, Portugal, Russia and the UK to join in silence together on a regular basis.

We had a blended CEG meeting in September 2021 in Litomysl, Czech Republic, which gathered 31 Friends (12 online), from Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia, UK, Ukraine and the USA. As a result of this meeting, where the central theme was

the climate emergency, since September 2021 we have been holding regular decarbonisation workshops, before or after the Sunday worship meetings. Sometimes the discussion at Litomysl was not easy and there has been some soul-searching about the results. There was also discussion about whether online meetings are a valid way to manage Quaker affairs. This issue too continues to reverberate and will also be looked at again in 2022. Of real relevance is how we welcome sincere suggestions for faith in action, and how we manage open debate about our future.

It wasn't all hard work though – Jasmine Piercy told us about her Museum of Animal Stuff, Cathy Butler spoke about John Woolman and his anti-slavery work and then later in the year, we listened to a concert of flute playing, combined with a lecture on healing

In 2021, we lost our good Friend, Jola Grabowska, who was so important to the whole Central European Gathering and especially to Polish Friends. We miss her for her sincerity, energy and enthusiasm.

Kasia Kaczmarkiewicz, our representative to EMES, attended the EMES AM online as well as regular monthly EMES Representatives & Role holder Gatherings. The EMES International Members gathering also attracted some of our attendees and, following an EMES request, at a separate meeting, Gerry Turner, a Prague Friend, gave a short presentation on the history and current state of CEG.

Kasia Kaczmarkiewicz and **Liz Coling**
CEG Co-Clerks

Czechia, Prague Worship Group

2021 was another year pretty much dominated by the Covid 19 pandemic and again our activities were wholly centred in, or organised from, Prague, with online and face-to-face Meetings.

We currently have 7 members of the Religious Society of Friends living in the Czech Republic. Meeting numbers were reduced compared with 2020, with children rarely attending this year. Pre-worship singing, which has a long tradition here, died out due to some lack of enthusiasm.

The Czech Quakers' Wikipedia pages have finally been updated, a Czech translation from the Dutch of Erik Dries's book, *Simply Quakers*, published, and some Czech subtitles provided for Quaker Speak videos.

The development of Quaker-friendly materials for children (started in 2018), is progressing well. The Single Parent Project, started in 2017, has one volunteer counsellor and we continued to provide food packages and maintain links with a local networking organisation.

Pavel Marušinec ran the Quaker in Europe course in Czech and several Czech Friends have roles in EMES and QCEA. Taking advantage of zoom,

many of us attended the twice- monthly online Central European Group's (CEG) Meetings for Worship, and joined with Friends in Lisbon and Hungary. Despite travel difficulties, others went to worship in Austria, Germany and the UK.

The postponed CEG annual meeting finally took place in Litomyšl, a well-attended blended session. In recognition of the huge threat of the climate emergency, this was the main theme. The discussion was not easy and there has been some soul-searching about the results, especially among Czech Quakers. There was also discussion about whether online meetings are a valid way to manage Quaker affairs.

This issue too continues to reverberate and will also be looked at again in 2022.

Of real relevance, whether for CEG or Czech Quakers, is how we welcome sincere suggestions for faith in action, and manage open debate about our future.

It's not been an easy year for Czech Quakers, but we ended on a harmonious note (managing to raise some funds at the same time), as we were once again able to sing carols outside.

Liz Coling Prague Meeting attender
Prague, 02.02.2022

Denmark Yearly Meeting

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

Estonia, Tallinn Worship Group

The Tallinn Friends prayer group membership increased by two persons, Tanel and Madis. Presently the Group has 16 members of whom eight are active participants. Six new Friends have joined the Facebook group, making a total of 42 registrations. Compared to the previous year when we met mostly via Zoom, we had six in-person meetings.



Two of the new Friends are from abroad; Kiko is from the Philippines and studying at Tallinn University, and Laura Findley, who has Estonian roots, came to work in Estonia.

We have tried to restore the contacts we had years ago with Russian speaking Friends in the city of Narva, located in northeastern Estonia. Many Friends continue to consider International Membership status. We observed World Quakers Day at the Freedom Square in Tallinn with an environmental protection theme together with many other organizations.

We organized an art exhibit of Rafael Rolan's collection in Haapsalu on UN International Day of Peace observance. The visitors were introduced to Ben Pink Dandelion's Estonian language translation of the book, "Living the Quaker Way". We also organized a nature trip to central Estonia's winter wonderland.

The Estonian edition of "Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings" (Kveekerite Vaimsus – Valitud teosed), containing a selection from George Fox's journal and epistles, was published. FWCC-EMES supported this project. The book can be downloaded from Estonian Quakers website and distributed without charge.

Due to the restrictions imposed by Covid, life has become more sedentary and people have become more interested in books to read. The English language edition of Merle Veesalu-Rand's collection of poetry "On being together or unity" will be published shortly with the support of FWCC-EMES. Plans are being made to discuss the book's themes of unity and caring, an activity suggested by Michael Eccles.

Estonian Friends are interested in participating at the annual EMES meeting in Paris and in exhibiting Rafael Rolan's works of art there. One of the art pieces would be auctioned for the benefit of EMES.

Roland Rand Clerk

European & Middle East Young Friends

Uncertainties relating to the global pandemic continued to impact the EMEYF community throughout 2021. We had hoped that we may be able to return to travelling to meet one another for our annual gatherings but were prevented due to issues with the risk of cancelling venues or travel at short notice, as well as changing advice about crossing borders.

Our Spring Gathering – referred to as Special Gathering over the course of the pandemic – was again held online using the platform jitsi. About 20 Friends from around Europe joined the Special Gathering held in July.

We sustained our community and aimed to foster a sense of togetherness by sharing activities such as crafting with natural materials, dance workshops and 'Secret Friend' (writing letters and postcards on the theme of growth and spring to a Friend who does not know who is writing to them). We invite you to visit our Website for Minutes and Epistle, emeyf.org

Hearing that COVID-19 still posed a great threat, but at the same time there was a real and urgent need for togetherness and in-person contact in our community, we prepared for a decentralised Annual Meeting in November.

We had an online space in our jitsi room, which has been used throughout the year for weekly meet-ups and discussions, where we could come

together as a large group. At the same time, we also encouraged Friends to organise small in- person gatherings in their own regions and countries. As a result of this, some Friends planned meet-ups in the Netherlands/Germany and other in London.

This year in December, our clerks attended a course facilitated by Woodbrooke tutors and held online, for clerks around the world to consider effective ways of working and learn with and from one another. We enjoyed sharing our experience as co-clerks of EMEYF, and hearing diverse stories of clerking experiences in the Quaker world.

Between gatherings, jitsi continues to provide us with a platform through which we can connect spiritually and socially. We have taken part in several seasonal editions of 'Secret Friend' and held space for discussions on important and difficult topics such as death and dying. EMEYF continues to be a creative community: the Willy & Penn online magazine remains online at willyandpenn.com, we have maintained work on our Living Archive Project and we have begun planning ideas for a new podcast project.

Make sure you're subscribed if not already, for staying in touch with EMEYF and joining in on topics that move our community!

Leyna Garrettson & Marcie Winstanley
on behalf of EMEYF Communications Committee and the wider community.

Finland Yearly Meeting

For Friends in Finland, the year 2021 continued in many ways in the same fashion as the year before. Every now and then when the pandemic allowed, our meeting groups were able to gather for worship in Helsinki, Tampere, and in Northern Finland.

In addition, we held video meetings for worship via Zoom every other Sunday. These video meetings were very much liked as they gave many Friends and newcomers, as well, ways to keep in touch enjoy worship together even under lockdowns. In addition to our regular meetings for worship, we occasionally used Zoom for themed sessions such as the monthly Healing Group, Dance Meetings for Worship and the International Study Circle. Our Quaker newsletter 'Kveekaritietiset – Quaker News' was published twice in 2021, and we also started to publish some spoken introductory videos to Quakers on YouTube.

Both our Spring and Autumn gatherings were held online this year. The theme of our weekend event in April was 'The Power of Hope', where we pondered on e.g. what gives us strength, comfort and

hope to carry us towards easier times. The Autumn gathering in November continued the topic onwards with the theme 'The Earth, our shared home – how Quakerism leads us to acts of hope?'. This time we looked into environmental issues, solidarity and how do live our daily life while caring for the well-being of our world as well.

As meetings for business agendas often tend to be packed full of items, we decided this year to have an extra business meeting between the bi-annuals in order to better discuss and prepare some topics for decision making. Thus, in September we held an afternoon long Zoom meeting for worship for business to discuss the update of our long-term plan, and to consider which causes we like to give support to as a Yearly Meeting. This extra meeting for business gave us such promising experiences that we look forward to continue the practice in the future.

We were happy to welcome many Friends from around the world to join our online meetings and we continue to do so in 2022. For more information on how to reach us, visit our website at kveekarit.org/en

France Yearly Meeting

Change is in the air. France Yearly Meeting entered 2021 like everyone else on planet Earth; we were hopeful for change, for peace and for an end to the dark tunnel of the world pandemic.

Depending on local conditions and the ballet of national restrictions, Paris, Toulouse, Nantes and Congenies meetings continued to meet online and in person when possible, as did worship groups in Lille and Nouvelle Aquitaine. Isolated Friends who participate in the weekly online Meeting for Worship have forged a new, virtual worship group.

Business meetings continued online with one meeting in Congenies in the fall. A new clerk, Kris Misselbrook, assisted by Philippe Le Gall and Alexandre Tautry-Gautier, are already cutting their clerking teeth to lead French Friends forward.

To quote one Friend, committees are motors to get the Friend's bus going. Our communication and outreach committee has continued to grow, editing several new brochures for public distribution and reaching out to newcomers via social media and a bimonthly blog on all things Quaker. Our Peace and Service committee gave time and spiritual energy to understanding what discernment really meant. A memorable end to the year came with the French-language edition of the Woodbrooke 'Quaker in Europe' course. Over 40 participants from all over the French speaking world

enrolled and we are grateful to both Woodbrooke and EMES for inviting us to facilitate the course.

Another highlight of the year was coming back 'face to face' in Martillac near Bordeaux at our Yearly Meeting Gathering in October. It was the first time French Friends had seen each other for a long of time. The theme of Faith in Action inspired us, as did the rousing words of Friends Terry Waite and Bruce Kent. A wonderful benefit of the gathering was seeing how the Nouvelle Aquitaine group grew closer and more sure of themselves as they organized the event.

Our partnership agreement with the Centre Quaker de Congenies was renewed and we were delighted to welcome new Resident Friends, Amy and Chamba Cooke. 2022 will mark the bicentennial of the Congenies Quaker house and the centenary of the Quaker Centre in France; we look forward to celebrating.

The Centre Quaker International, located in Paris, made a formal offer to France Yearly Meeting to join them in the purchase of new offices. This is a big step for FYM, and Friends devoted time and energy to ensure that we were following the Quaker way to discern the way ahead. After much reflection, discussion, and silence, the offer was accepted. The project is certainly something to look forward to in 2022.

France Yearly Meeting continues in the hope that we can "walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone".

Georgia Worship Group

The Year 2021 was fairly difficult for the whole Planet.

The population of the earth has faced continuation of Covid-19 Pandemic, which took more than 5.5m lives so far. Republic of Georgia was one of the country which suffered a lot. More than 15,000 people died, and more than 1m official cases of Covid-19 that are too high numbers for the country with population of 3.5m people.

Nevertheless, all Georgian Friends survived and had complete courses of vaccination. The Meetings for worship was always held in live, but was temporarily stopped during the lockdowns, since that period public transport did not work.

More than that, the Clerk of Georgian Friends implemented two charity projects that year. One was aimed to diagnose IDPs (intemporarily displaced persons) from Abkhazia and South Ossetia living in shelters and settlements for Diabetes Mellitus (screening for diabetes), was very successful and was funded by IQFA. The second successful and very helpful project was funded by Friends from Sweden and was aimed to support and help the IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia in finding jobs.

This project also included trainings, consultations, mediation between employers and candidates for jobs (IDPs), distribution of the lists of vacancies etc. The project restarted this year for another three months and will bring hope and new possibilities to

become self-sufficient to many IDPs. Clerks of Georgian Friends would like to use an opportunity and express the gratitude to donors of these two projects.

In 2021 year, the Centre for religious tolerance at public defenders office in Georgia has published an Encyclopedia on religions. That is a fairly big book of 598 pages. The Encyclopedia was published under the name *Variety of Religions in Georgia*. The encyclopedia is based on the materials which were represented to the author by different religions in Georgia. It has many beautiful illustrations, vocabulary of different religious words and describes most of the religions, which have their Churches, branches, or communities in the country.

There are six pages with illustrations about Quakerism in the encyclopedia. The chapter about Quakerism in the book describes the history of Quakerism, faith and practice, social service, organizational structure and history of Friends in Georgia. It also includes the current and and former Clerks' interviews.

This book gives a possibility to Georgian Friends to spread the information about the Quakers beliefs to the people of Georgia.

Georgian Friends Worship group's members would like to express their gratitude to Friends in Ireland and in Cambridge for their contribution toward the rent of the apartment in Tbilisi, for Meetings for worship.

Georgian Friends Worship Group

German Yearly Meeting

The impact of the pandemic on our Yearly Meeting has yet again slowed down our community and our initiatives and many events have had to be cancelled. Some groups still meet locally, sometimes outside, others meet online or have stopped meeting altogether. There is still a monthly online worship organized by the Yearly Meeting. Quite a few regional gatherings have been held online.

Our 91. annual meeting was held in Bad Pyrmont as a blended meeting with about 100 participants. The motto of this annual meeting was 'Quakers on the way – shaping the future together!' We wish for solidarity on our Quaker path with friends all over the world.

The theme of our annual Richard Cary Lecture was 'The Genesis goes on', based on Stefan Mann's own experiences and events from politics and society. He concluded that we can all have an effect as individuals through our actions. By taking small steps, having the courage to disagree and bringing in ones own ideas, we can all contribute to positive development.

Many of us are happy to be able to join initiatives at a local level, such as protests in Büchel against the threat posed by nuclear

weapons and demonstrations in Lützerath against the destruction of livelihoods caused by opencast lignite mining.

Others use the new possibilities of worldwide connection without having to travel to work for peace and spiritual learning. We want to overcome relationship problems and personal sensitivities in order to open ourselves up to new organizational forms of sharing and community with confidence.

Activities more directly concerning Quakers are the continuation of the translation of George Fox's Journal into German, considerations about the 100 year anniversary of the German Yearly Meeting in 2025 and a safeguarding policy to prevent sexualised violence against children and young people. And we are moving forward with planning the conservation and modifications of our Quaker house in Bad Pyrmont.

Lots of activities are planned again in the Quaker house in 2022, hopefully they will be able to take place.

Flo* Krapoth and Karin Hoenicke

Delegates of the German Yearly Meeting to EMES



■ Participants at the gardening weekend in Bad Pyrmont in October 2021. Photo: Kerstin Mangels.

Hungary, Evangelical Friends Church

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! I would like to share with you my short report of the last (2021) year in our EFC Mission. Our Facebook page is: **EFC Hungary, EFC Budapest**, our Charity: Barátság Szeretetszolgálat Alapítvány. Our EFC mission and meeting place:

1. EFC Tolna – Church House / EFC Hungary Mission Center
2. EFC Pécs – Community Center
3. EFC Budapest – Community Center
4. EFC Kölked Church House / EFC Gipsy Mission Center
5. EFC Ozora – Community Center
6. Komló – House Group
7. Majs – House Group
8. Serbia – Backi-Monostor – House Church
9. Croatia – Vardaroc – House Group

Every month, we visited our churches and house groups. Our local pastors keep church meeting every week. Every Sunday morning, I go to EFC Budapest and I come back to EFC Tolna in the afternoon. In EFC Budapest, we have Children Church Meetings one Sunday a month and Youth Church Meetings also one Sunday a month. We can invite new unbeliever families and youth. This time, God showed this way because in Hungary it's very hard to invite unbeliever people to church...



■ We had a baptism meeting in September 2021.

We (my wife Agnes and me) keep RE lessons / Bible studies at local Primary Schools. We have nine classes. We would like to have local pastors, leadership, worship (music) groups in every churches and make them grow! Last summer, we had Children Days again in every churches. These were very blessed.

We continued renovate our Church House, EFC Mission Center in Tolna and also renovate our EFC Gipsy Mission Center in Kölked. We worked together with every pastors, co-workers and Friends there. We made Christmas Church Meetings in every churches and we gave more than 1.000 pieces of Calendars and about 220 Christmas Pack and 200 Christian booklets.

Very sad news: our pastor Mezei Géza from Komló died in December 2021. Géza was a really faithful pastor in EFC Mission in Hungary and in Romania.

Thank you for your prayers and for your partnership in the Mission. We are very grateful to God for You and your Friendship!

With love, **Tony & Ági Tolna**, Hungary 31.01.2022

Ireland Yearly Meeting

2021 was another year full of both challenges and opportunities.

By January 2022, nearly all Meetings and Worship Groups had returned to holding in-person Meetings for Worship, though a handful still feel unable to do so.

At the same time, many Meetings have realised the value of continuing with some form of online worship as a way to be inclusive and prevent geographically distant Friends from being isolated.

In the Dublin area, one Sunday morning online Meeting for Worship is run for Friends in all four Dublin-area Meetings.

Blended Meetings for Worship, in which a physical Meeting room is one site of an online Meeting for Worship, are being successfully run by South Belfast Meeting and Cork Meeting.

Our weekly newsletter circulated by the office in Dublin helps keep Friends throughout Ireland Yearly Meeting up to date about which Meeting Houses are open and which are offering online or blended worship.

A number of regular online activities have proven popular, including a morning Coffee Hour and an Online Poetry Group. Although these are organised in

Dublin, Friends from all over Ireland can participate.

Many of our Ministry and Oversight Committees have worked hard to keep in touch with those who have felt unable to attend Meeting for Worship either in person or online.

We are excited to have hired a part-time Youth Support Worker, who will be providing support to Friends organising activities for Young Friends aged 11-18, and will also be organising a programme of activities for this age group at Ireland Yearly Meeting.

A Quaker Discussion Weekend was held in-person on November 26-28, 2021 at a venue in the countryside north of Dublin, on the theme “The Core of Quakerism: Personal Experience of the Light”. This was the first in-person event held since January 2020, and Friends were delighted to be able to come together in person, even with masks, hand sanitizer and social distancing. In addition to reflection and discussion, there was lots of good chat over meals, and a quiz and some contactless international folk dancing on the Saturday night.

Friends in Munster, in the southern part of the island, will have another chance to gather in person at an EcoQuakers Ireland one-day gathering on the theme “From Disappointment to Hope: Actions and Responses to Climate Breakdown”, to be held on April 23, 2022. This will take place in the recently renovated and expanded Cork Meeting House. A similar event was held in Belfast in 2019, and it is hoped to hold a third one-day event in or near Dublin in 2023.

Friends in Ireland are also pleased to have the opportunity in 2022 to see and engage with the Loving Earth Project, initiated by Quakers in Britain. This collection of small textile panels aims to celebrate some of the wonderful things threatened by growing environmental breakdown: people, places, creatures, and other things we love. After its initial visit to South Belfast Meeting, the Loving Earth Project will also be travelling to Coleraine Meeting in the northern part of the island and then to Cork Meeting on the southern coast. It is fitting that the panels will be on display in Cork during the EcoQuakers Ireland conference on April 23, 2022.

After having to cancel Ireland Yearly Meeting in 2020 and then hold IYM 2021 online, Ulster Friends will finally be able to welcome Friends to Belfast for IYM 2022, which will be held in person during August 11-14, 2022. We decided to live adventurously, and aim for the plenary sessions to be run in a blended format, so that Friends who are not able to come to Belfast can join us online.

As we move back to holding events in person, one of the greatest challenges and opportunities for 2022 will be to ensure we do not lose connections that have been forged with Friends who are geographically distant or have limited mobility. This will likely mean some Meetings retaining some online and blended activities into the future. It will be important for Ministry and Oversight Committees to stay in touch with such Friends, and also to renew contact with those who have not felt able to come to Meeting for Worship either in person or online over the past two years.

Italy, Bologna Worship Group

We meet regularly twice a month (the 2nd and the 4th Sunday of every month) in presence in via Lombardia, 36 – Bologna [in the public library of Quartiere Savena] from 11:15 a.m. and/or online through Google Meet.

Most of us also joins the online Meetings for Worship of the informal worship group in Florence (they meet every 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month) and sometimes we have exchange visits in Bologna and Florence for worship.

The work in Dozza prison (Bologna), started by Pier Cesare Bori (more than 20 years ago), with the inmates (initially from the Middle East, most with long detention sentences) is again, after the stop due to the pandemic, carried on by Fabian Lang, once a week, regularly.

Members of our meeting are involved in supporting migrants, assisting and hosting them, teaching Italian and helping with legal papers and procedures.

One member Mauro Bonaiuti **mauro.bonaiuti@unito.it** still works for the Degrowth Movement, and another member, Cecilia Clementel, volunteers with migrants in Bologna and in the UK.

Unfortunately the realization of a Medical Charity Center in Weh, in North-West Cameroon, has stopped, due to the civil war in Cameroon, our concern for the community was re-directed towards the internal refugees from Weh in Yaoundé (the capital) and in Tiko, but at the moment we contribute only on a personal basis at fund raising through the bank account: BIC ICRAITRRTSO IBAN IT18L0707202403021000097168 registered to Associazione Universo based in Bologna (with Fabian Lang).

Last Christmas (2021) Fabian Lang continued the initiative of the Christmas dinner with the refugees in Bologna, as well as the many activities for migrants in Bologna.

Especially in Rimini, the support for the family from Gaza and the peaceful fight for rights of the Palestinian Occupied Territories goes on also through the collaboration with EducAid NGO, a local, small organization which works with the persons with disabilities in empowerment projects, peer-to-peer tutoring, school inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classes in the Middle East (Gaza Strip, West Bank, Lebanon).

Italy, Florence Worship Group

From an initial group of five members in January 2019, the Florence Worship Group currently has ten to twelve regular attenders on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

The increase is in part due to the ability to attend remotely. Since spring 2021, however, local members of the Florence group have also had the option of meeting in person at the library of the English Cemetery in Piazzale Donatello. Having a fixed location for in-person Meetings has been a welcome solution to a prior dilemma.

In July 2021, a new website was launched, making it easier for Friends visiting Italy and any residents – Italian or Expat – interested in learning more about Quaker faith and practice, to find us. That too has contributed to the increase in members and attenders.

Finally, from August 27-29, 2021, members of the Florence and Bologna

groups gathered for the annual meeting of Amici del Silenzio/Quakers in Italy at the Borgo Basino Agriturismo in Emilia-Romagna.

The weekend was attended by Friends from all over Italy, with the bonus addition of Jez Smith from FWCC EMES. Jez reported on the latest news and initiatives at EMES, including a summary of the annual meeting last May and the possibility of applying for funding for Meeting-related projects and initiatives through EMES's Spiritual Growth Fund. Throughout the weekend, discussions were held on topics ranging from forms of meditation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, sustainable travel and lifestyles, experiencing spirituality in Quaker worship, and more. A highlight was recording content for the new website quaccheriitalia.com. Yearly Meeting for Business was led by Bologna Clerk Lucia Biondelli on Sunday morning, after which everyone gathered for lunch before saying goodbye until next year.



■ Participants at the Italian Quakers' Gathering in August 2021. Photo: Sylvia Hetzel

Malta Worship Group

The meeting has all but closed down last year what with the plague cutting visitors from abroad and also attenders from Malta. Last MFW. was just myself, my dog and a couple of stray cats!

I do, however, carry on, holding a sale to raise money for the website costs,

and the local Anglican 'Steeple-house' in whose church hall we meet, donated 100€ to keep us going.

With such a small group it is hard to keep attenders as the meeting 'dynamic' is harder to build up than in a larger group, but the group has bounced back from previous setbacks and will no doubt do so again.

Russia, Moscow Monthly Meeting

Regular online zoom Meetings for Worship took place every 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of a month. From 7 to 14 people joined, both Muscovites and non-Muscovites. There were participants from many places in Russia – Barnaul, Kostroma, Moscow, Samara, St.-Petersburg, etc. – and other countries, including Britain, the USA, Ukraine, and other places. We made no summer breaks in online silent worship. It is an open Russian-speaking meeting for Friends, and for anyone interested in Quakerism.

The memorial meeting for Mikhail (Misha) Roshchin, who died aged 68, was held via zoom on 22nd May. Over 20 persons attended, including Misha's younger daughter and son-in-law.

Some of the Moscow Friends gathered face-to-face and joined in zoom as a group. Quakers and Misha's friends from various countries participated, some of them accompanied by their kids. Misha was one of the original members and co-founders of Moscow Monthly Meeting, and one of its long-term clerks. Johan Maurer prepared a photo-gallery, musical background and readings. That was a warm, informal and long- lasting meeting.

In 2021 Moscow Monthly Meeting continued to meet face to face on the premises of the Apostolic Orthodox Church, usually on Saturdays, whenever it was possible. The place is close to the new circle line station Nizhegorodskaya. It is in the basement of a five-storey building. There were also meetings in private apartments.

Netherlands Yearly Meeting

The pandemic continued to make life of our Yearly Meeting rather difficult. Most meetings for worship and business had to be held digitally. The digital meetings to 'nurture the spirit' amongst Friends which were introduced last year were continued.

Even our Yearly Meeting session in May was held digitally. Its theme was 'Love' reminding us of William Penn's *'Let us then try what love can do'* and Isaac Pennington's *'Our life is love, our life is peace, our life is tenderness and bearing with each other, and forgiving and helping each other with a tender hand'*.

One of our main speakers was Timon Wallis the then newly appointed director of the Quaker Council for European Affairs. He told us of his 'pilgrimage' from being a peace activist demonstrating against nuclear arms, later being engaged in Peace Brigades International protecting human rights activists in Latin America and now moving on to silent diplomacy at Brussels.

As I had been asked to speak what inspired me during my long-time involvement in the Council of Churches in the Netherlands I shared some of my experiences – good as well as bad – in ecumenical relations. Ecumenism remains a challenge for and to us Quakers, being part of the wider church.

We can try to be wholly church in our own way, but we are not the whole church. And though participating in the (inter)national ecumenical movement we may participate in ecumenical work for peace and justice, bringing in our Quaker perspective.

In the autumn we yet again had a good session. But this time to the joy aof many we could meet in person! The meeting was dedicated to the theme 'Our Capital', the Dutch word 'vermogen' can however refer to both our quantitative financial resources as our qualitative potential as Yearly Meeting.

How do we use our resources and talents wisely? Friends had a good feeling about the meeting – which can be otherwise at times when discussing finances – but in particular also about the social evening which was – since a long time – such a joyful part of it!

Kees Nieuwerth

Norway Yearly Meeting

2021 continued as the last year had ended. We had Meeting for Worship online for most of the winter and spring. All our monthly meetings have been closed, and all opened up again in the early autumn. But as the omicron variant has made the situation more dangerous again, one of our meetings have just been closed.

Even though the pandemic is hard, and making our lives a lot more challenging, going online has been a success for Norway Yearly Meeting.

Norway is a country with large distances and for many people Meeting for Worship in some of our cities, have been too far away. Having the opportunity now to join Meeting for Worship online has made meetings a lot more available, and we have got new members because of this opportunity. We continue to have Meetings for Worship online as well as "normal" Meetings. Others again have continued to have their Meeting for Worship outdoors.

Yearly Meeting 2021 was held online and we had a great day together via our computers with a talk by Hans Eirik Aarek where he talked about what is holding us together as the Society of Friends over time. We had our Meeting for Worship for Business, and we had an evening together with songs, games and stories.

In October we again had the opportunity to meet in the mountains for a weekend. Most of the weekend was spent talking and having Meetings for Worship together in the same room. It was good to meet again in real and not just online.

We have, like last year, also participated in several interfaith religious services, and Friends have been participating in several demonstrations.

We are looking forward to more normal times, and hope that will come true during 2022.

Hanne Hognestad

Clerk, Norway Yearly Meeting

Poland, All Poland Gathering

In September, four of Polish friends had an opportunity to take part in CEG-Central European Gathering that took place 10-13 Sep in Litomyšl, Czechia.

As Ogólnopolskie Zrządzenie Przyjaciół – All-Poland Gathering of Friends, we didn't meet in past two years, but we hope that it would be possible in near future.

Some Polish regional groups hold Meetings for Worship face-to-face or on-line: Friends from Białystok, Poznań's two meetings, The community of Friends from the South. At each of these meetings, people from other regions are welcome, and we send invitations to each other every time, we stay in contact.

Paweł Milka & Anna Koskowska
Co-clerks of All-Poland Gathering

Poland, Poznan Worship Group

An independent Quaker foundation in the Liberal Friends Tradition since 2007.

During the pandemic emergency we have increased the frequency of our meetings for worship and have expanded the content of our notification sheet before each meeting to include educational and inspiring quotations.

A main concern in these pandemic times is that hybrid meetings are changing the nature of our regional meetings for worship in an undesirable way, rendering them no longer fully Quaker in nature.

Bradius V Maurus III

Portugal, Lisboa Worship Group

We have two Meetings for Worship per week, Wednesdays and Sundays from 1700. All are by Zoom. We have an after-Meeting discussion on a Quaker topic, usually something out of Quaker Faith and Practice. We record it and everyone has access to the drop box link for all recordings for the past year,

We have had many attenders from many countries around the world. Zoom offers opportunities and challenges going forward. We may go to a hybrid system after the crisis ends, or we may continue to only have Meetings on Zoom. To be determined.

Middle East Yearly Meeting, Ramallah Monthly Meeting

Last January, early in the New Year 2021, many of us were hopeful and truly confident that we would leave the COVID-19 pandemic behind. Many individuals have suffered and endured isolation, social distancing, masking and economic deterioration. We, as Palestinians have adapted to live under this situation as well, and our Ramallah Friends Meeting Center had no other choice but to adjust living under this challenge, however, it was no secret that we were eager and determined to commence Sunday Worship and Fellowship, also to welcome visiting groups back to our Ramallah Friends Meeting.

January 2021 was a difficult time to start with up until February 2021, we were fortunate enough to receive the good news from the government of easing the lockdown in our country and life would go back to somewhat normal but still following Covid rules. We reconnected with our Worshiping members to return to Worship and were ready to welcome groups from overseas whenever the chance allowed. Moreover, Ramallah Friends Meeting connected with other Quaker meetings as well throughout the year 2021 where Jean Zaru, was invited to join online conferences with other Quaker meetings and religious organizations for such occasions such as International Women's Day and Quaker world day. We were also happy to welcome back our first post-COVID group in November 2021. A group of international students studying Theology course in Jerusalem. The visit was refreshing, encouraging, and allowed for deeper knowledge and learning. Among those who engaged with our meeting are:

Local Organization: SABEEL, Swedish Christian Study Centre (BILDA), The Swedish Theological Institute Jerusalem (STI), Ramallah Friends Schools.

International Groups: Quaker Voluntary Action (QVA)

Even though life is uncertain and barriers still exist, we will continue the work and worship throughout 2022. This year, we will be seeking new commitments for our Ramallah Friends Meeting by extending our local care to the educational sector, but under a new perspective and supervision.

Our hopes for the future include maintaining our involvement in the community at large, and carrying out the necessary functions of the routine of Ramallah Friends Center by rebuilding the path with other Quaker organizations, and by welcoming visitors from all walks of life.

Saleem F. Zaru

Clerk, Ramallah Friends Meeting

Spain Quakers

Astrid Brun: “We meet, using Zoom, once a week, on Sundays at 11 o’clock CET. I myself live on the Canary Islands and the Quakers who come here usually are here for two weeks on vacation and so we can meet on one Sunday but because of Coronavirus that was not possible and so the Spanish Quakers started meeting via zoom and I feel very grateful to be able to meet that way and not to lose the contact to other Quakers.

Before, I only had known Carmen and now we are a group of about nine who meet regularly and I want to thank all of them for their participation which strengthen me on my Quaker way and gives me the impetus to go on. Even if Coronavirus leaves us, I hope we will go on meeting by Zoom.

Sheree Burgess: “We are a meeting which has being formed by the necessity to Zoom and which amalgamated three small meetings. We all live in different parts of Spain.

We meet only on Sunday mornings. We have several regular attenders and some who have visited. Not many are members. Many attenders are new to Quakerism and on a voyage of discovery. We have a diversity of languages but our meetings are conducted mostly in Spanish.

So far our meeting structure is undefined. Discussion of anything happens after meetings or on a WhatsApp forum.

Ramiro Alvarez: Cuáqueros Ibéricos se ha constituido como comunidad virtual, abierta a todas las nacionalidades.

El encuentro dominical se organiza como reunión de adoración y, ocasionalmente, para abordar cuestiones prácticas. Un grupo de WhatsApp permite mantener el contacto entre los asistentes a lo largo de la semana lo que facilita tanto el apoyo personal como la organización de alguna acción concreta.

Maggie Whiteley: At the beginning of the pandemic, Quakers all over Spain met for the first time over Zoom. A virtual Meeting for Worship that we all thought would be a short-term measure. But it hasn’t worked out that way. Over these last months as we have come to know each other, we are growing into what the Irish poet John O’Donohue describes as “anam cara”... Soul Friends.

Most of us have never met face to face and are scattered all over our country from north to south and east to west. We are an international community with Spanish, British, American, German and French Friends joining regularly and visits from other Spanish speaking Friends in Latin America (who are brave enough to deal with the time difference) popping in to join us from time to time.

Sweden Yearly Meeting

Sweden has like all other countries been affected by the corona pandemic. For a few months during autumn, Friends had a chance to meet again face to face, but by the end of the year we are now back to online meetings.

We have had regular Sunday Meetings for Worship on Zoom arranged by the Stockholm and Gothenburg meetings. Also, other events such as seminars, lectures, poetry evenings and retreats have been held online. One effect of meeting online, has been that very isolated Friends have had a chance to take part in Meeting more regularly.

The yearly meeting was held in May, online, and with seminars and group conversations on the theme Our Methods, Beautiful Façade or Stable Ground? Around 40 Friends participated during the weekend.

The digital presence has also allowed for a monthly introduction evening for anyone

curious about the Quakers. These evenings have been very successful and will continue as the Society has found a good format to arrange them. Also, there is a closed study group for those who are even more interested and want to continue deepening their understanding of Quakerism. Also, newcomers are welcome to get information through direct contact with a member in local meetings.

This year we had the joy to welcome two new Friends into membership but we also lost one member and one long time friend of the Friends. We are now 130 Friends in membership, spread around the country, from the very north to the south, west to east.

We are happy once again to have a lively peace paper, *Fredsbladet*, circulated four times a year. This year we have read information about the arms industry and the nuclear threat.

The Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering is planned for the summer 2022, and we hope for a good gathering.



"One step along the road at the time is enough. There will be Light given to your next step. The larger the group going along the road, the stronger the power of Peace will be in the world. And we are not left on our own. Peace on earth is close to God's heart."

Elsa Cedergren, 1974

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

The 2021 annual gathering of Switzerland Yearly Meeting was held hybrid 7-10 June, again at the “Haus für Bildung und Begegnung”, in Herzberg near Aarau and online. The theme was “The Work of QUNO and its Spiritual Background.” and included presentations on QUNO’s spiritual underpinnings as well as its work to promote sustainable and just economic systems and the human impact of climate change. The weekend was enriched by guests from QCEA, Britain, Germany, France, South-Africa and FWCC-EMES.

Geneva Monthly Meeting has continued to host regular online spiritual deepening sessions on a wide range of subjects. Whilst we regret the constraints that the pandemic has placed on our ability to meet in person, the transition to online events has also meant that we could welcome the participation of other Friends both near and far (SYM, Quakers in Britain, France and the US among others).

We are 80 Friends and 70 friends of Friends included on our mailing list. The average age remains high (over 70).

There are four regional groups (Bern, Basel, Geneva, and Zürich) and small worship groups in Lausanne and Romanshorn. Organising the SYM Annual Meeting is rotated between the German-speaking groups and Geneva Monthly Meeting and in 2021 was carried out by the German speaking groups.

There are three Business Meetings a year, the principal one taking place during the Yearly Meeting, which is attended by about 40-45 members and representatives of other Yearly Meetings and Quaker organisations. The two other Business meetings are held in the spring and autumn and are attended by about 10-15 members. In 2021 the spring meeting was held online and the autumn meeting was held hybrid. 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 SYM Annual Meeting, these publications contain articles in German, French and English, reflecting the multilingualism that is both a strength and a challenge for the Quaker community in Switzerland.

Reports from Across the Section

Church and Peace

Regional networks

Church and Peace members in the French-speaking region have become more connected, getting together monthly online and sharing about the importance of nonviolence in their lives. The series of conversations, alongside members' introductions, can be found on the region's sub-site on our website.

Participants in online events in the Britain and Ireland region discussed resisting politics of polarisation and white nationalism. At the regional meeting we challenged to transform the relationships and conditions we live in so that they are unfavourable to violence.

In Germany, there was good cooperation with organisations from the peace movement, which led to the development of a compilation of questions relevant to peace and European policy for the new members of the German Bundestag (Wahlprüfsteine).

International Conference: Images of God and (Non)Violence

Once again we were not able to meet in person, but we held an intensive online meeting. On four days in September, we met for encounters, thematic input, discussion, prayer and worship. Speakers from different European contexts facilitated workshops on aspects of the theme *Images of God and (Non)Violence*. In the last newsletter

we reported on some of the workshops. They are also available to watch and read on our website.

Europe

European security policy was also a topic this year. The Board commented on the security policy decisions during the German EU Council Presidency. In autumn, the Board specified three concrete topics for the deliberations of the Conference on the Future of Europe. These are an expression of our horror at the inhumane treatment of refugees both on the edges and in the heart of Europe. Many Church and Peace members are active locally in this field of human rights work.

Ecumenical movement

21 years after the signing of the Charta Oecumenica by churches in Europe, we are looking forward to the World Council of Churches, the worldwide ecumenical movement, holding its 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. We are involved in ensuring that issues of peace and justice find a place in the encounter programme. We support the peace appeal "War is Contrary to the Will of God!". The aim of the appeal is for the inviting churches to clarify their positions on Just Peace, nuclear weapons, arms exports and military budgets in the run-up to the Assembly, to courageously contribute to the discussion in the churches and in society, to seek dialogue with the people at grassroots level and to present clear demands to politicians.

Friends House Moscow Report

by Natasha Zhuravenkova
and Sergei Grushko

The biggest projects we supported were *AVP Ukraine*, *AVP Moscow*, *Meditation of Friends*, meditative sessions for spiritual seekers, *Kids are Kids*, integrational center for refugee and migrant children in Moscow, *English Club* educational program in *Big Change*, charity foundation for former residents of orphanages.

We were happy to support a new project – *Equally Diverse* program in the Kaluga Region. The program provides books, manuals, games and other learning and entertaining materials for public schools; and also educates school teachers on how to use the materials to enable children of migrants learn Russian, develop communication skills, and get acquainted with cultural features of Russia.

We helped *The Mothers of Soldiers* (St Petersburg) run their informational project. We also had the opportunity to provide them with our anti-military books.

Outreach was an important part of our work this year. We were active online spreading the information about Quakers including meetings for worship. We can see that the number of participants of Quaker groups in Facebook, Telegram and V Kontakte increases. The main online resource centre is the quakers.ru website.

Muriel Payne's book *Plague, Pestilence and Famine* was our main publishing project in 2021. The book describing the details of the Great Famine in Russia in 1921–22 was published and distributed by means of an online crowdfunding service. It was our first successful experience in this direction.



The Quaker Council for European Affairs

The Quaker Council for European Affairs is unusual amongst Quaker bodies in that it has a governing body – a General Assembly – made up of the representatives of Yearly Meetings from across Europe, together with representatives of support groups and from European & Middle East Young Friends, and from Europe and Middle East Section of FWCC.

Over the last year the General Assembly has met three times, a record, and the Executive Committee fully a dozen times. Unfortunately this is less a reflection of the vitality of the organisation, but rather of the difficulties which it has experienced, and the efforts to learn lessons from them.

During 2021, despite the best efforts of both governance and staff, the year was characterised by disunity following the departure of our director and the recruitment of his replacement. QCEA has professional staff, led by a professional. Each of the professionals – in human rights, in peace, and in advocacy – did their individual best but they no longer worked as a team, and it was felt in the best interest of the organisation to end the contract of the director.

Many Quakers felt that the dismissal of the director was unjust, and asked many questions about it. Most of the rest of the team also left, feeling that

there were inadequate measures to support them during the period of internal conflict. Care for all staff, bruised by the experience, is of deep concern, and so we are thinking carefully how best to be a caring employer.

Very much on the plus side, a lot of great work was done by QCEA in 2021, both related to peace, especially around peace education, and to human rights, particularly those of migrants to Europe. Also on the plus side has been the recognition that QCEA has a critical role to play, both bringing Quaker values and methods to the attention of Europe, and, in parallel with EMES, drawing together the Quaker communities across Europe to address common concerns.

It will be a precious lesson for Quakers to see how to rebuild better, and a 'lessons learned' exercise has been initiated to do just that. 2022 will see much reflection on how QCEA may flourish.

That Quakers in Britain see it as their voice in Europe is a positive in the midst of Brexit gloom, while Quakers across Europe are united in the restrengthening of their voice through quiet diplomacy. Quaker House in Brussels will, with the eclipse of the pandemic, once more be a space for dialogue between those who might otherwise never meet.

Quaker International Education Trust

Brummana High School (BHS) was established in 1873 by a Quaker, Theophilus Waldmeier, a German-Swiss Missionary.

Today BHS is governed by a Board of Governors in Lebanon while the Quaker International Educational Trust (QuiET) is responsible for the land, buildings and the school's Quaker ethos. QuiET has Trustees from the UK, Ireland, USA and Lebanon. Within the school grounds, is the Quaker Meeting House, and the small Brummana Meeting uses the school's premises.

BHS, the main English-based school in Lebanon – though also teaching in French and Arabic – has been a beacon of light in times of repeated crisis in Lebanon attracting students of all faiths and backgrounds. Its diversity of school population and its promotion of tolerance and peaceful resolution have been central to its strengths as a place of academic excellence and pastoral compassion at the heart of a holistic educational experience since its foundation.

The 4th August 2020 explosion in Beirut, which ripped out the heart of the city, rendered 300,000 people homeless and killed and maimed thousands, brought Lebanon to the attention of the world. In the past year the Lebanese Lira has lost 90% of its value, inflation is rampant, unemployment runs at 50% and 60% of the population lives below the poverty line. The COVID-19 pandemic has closed businesses, schools are physically closed, and many

of those who have the capacity have left the country for a better life elsewhere.

Yet Lebanon remains resilient, a champion of education as a means to prosperity and success and the dynamic, diverse population have demonstrated their ability to find ways forward despite the complex situation in which they find themselves. Brummana High School continues to play an important role in this difficult situation. It has, through the promotion of Quaker values turned out generations of national leaders,



presidents and prime ministers across the Middle East, as well as leaders of the professions across the globe, and it is continuing to do so.

BHS runs a comprehensive education and welfare programme for its 1250 strong population, aged three to 18. The school strives to provide for its families who have been hit hard through its beleaguered financial aid scheme. Yet while it offers a beacon of hope to its student population BHS is struggling with a projected US\$ 750,000 loss in the current academic year.

The support coming from Quakers outside Lebanon, and from the Old Scholars is making a major contribution, and is very deeply appreciated by the entire Brummana community.

In October 2020 QuIET launched The Friends of Brummana to raise awareness about BHS and to assist fundraising for the large number of students requiring bursaries to continue their education. Yet despite Lebanon's very difficult economic and political situation it is our firm belief that BHS can weather this storm as it has done in the past.



■ Pupils at Brummana High School learning English. Photo: QuIET.

Quaker Service Sweden

Even though Quaker Service Sweden (QSS) is now an independent organisation with its own constitution, guidelines, members, nominations committee, auditor and annual meeting, it will continue to be closely connected to the Religious Society of Friends in Sweden.

As an independent organisation, in 2021 QSS was granted the Swedish equivalent of charitable status by Swedish Fundraising Control with the ability to open a 90-account in Sweden. At present, the QSS board consists of 5 people – clerk, secretary, treasurer and two other members – each of which have responsibility for certain areas of work. All the board members are volunteers and give of their own time. We produce a newsletter four times a year for members and donors with updates of the various projects, which is printed and distributed by post.

QSS is a member of the Swedish Mission Council (SMC), an umbrella organisation through which Swedish development aid is distributed. It is through SMC that QSS obtains Sida funding for the projects undertaken by our partner organisation, Sabalamby Unnayan Samity (SUS), in Bangladesh. As a member of SMC we take part in several of its courses, workshops, seminars and Desk Officer days, as well as SMC's annual meeting, most of which were held online in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have regular online meetings with our Desk Officer at SMC for updates on SMC policies, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) regulations and the progress of the Bangladesh projects, and welcome SMC's increased focus on 'trusting partnerships' and 'core support' for an organisation in general rather than a specific project, and that climate and the environment are important elements in its support work. We also take part in network meetings with

our partner support organisations for SUS in Sweden.

In addition to the projects in Bangladesh, QSS supports projects in Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Georgia, Palestine (Ramallah) and Russia, and channels donations to Quaker Service Norway for its preschool projects in Gaza. Information about the various projects we support can be found here: kvakare.se/in-english/quaker-service-sweden

The continuing Covid-19 pandemic has naturally affected the work of the projects we support, especially when countries have been or are in lockdown and certain aspects cannot be carried out as planned. However, we have tried to keep in regular touch with our partners through Zoom, Skype and email. It is hoped that we can visit the projects in Bangladesh and possibly Burundi in 2022, but this will depend on the situation regarding the pandemic and the ease of travel.

In November we were represented at the EMES Peace and Service Consultation (PSC), again held on Zoom. Members of the QSS board also take part in the monthly Zoom PSC meetings, a welcome and valued initiative on the part of EMES where we can learn about other Quaker peace and service organisations' work in the Section and collaborate with or support as appropriate. Following the monthly PSC meeting in September on how our organisations are responding to climate change, QSS began to draft its own climate and environmental policy, which we hope to adopt at a board meeting in early 2022.

In short, 2021 was a busy, rewarding and at times challenging year. We look forward to 2022, new challenges and new developments.

Sue Glover Frykman

On behalf of the QSS board

Quaker United Nations Office Geneva

In 2021 QUNO Geneva continued to adapt to the evolving impact of the pandemic on our lives, our concerns, and our ways of working. We welcomed the time we could return to in person convening – making good use of the Quaker House garden – and continued to find and foster an appetite for our spaces for quiet dialogue, even when that had to be online.

Working on the climate change as a peace and justice concern, our Human Impacts of Climate Change Programme focused mainly on the Conference of Parties (COP) 26 in Glasgow. This built on months and years of preparation and relationship building. We held five quiet diplomacy meetings with climate negotiators, provided extensive talks, published materials to empower government policymakers, climate advocates, and citizens, and supported Quaker organisations attending the COP. This shared witness with Friends was a source of strength. We see the outcome in Glasgow as ‘two steps forward one step back’ and continue to build on these steps forward and for more progress on the path to climate justice.

We understand sustainable peace as a holistic process, fundamentally linked with human rights, social and economic justice, and political participation. This understanding led our Peace and Disarmament Programme to highlight and strengthen the complementary approaches and links between peacebuilding and human rights in addressing corporate accountability relating to environmental challenges. This included extensive

work towards the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform’s Whitepaper on Environmental Peacebuilding which contains an agenda for the future of environmental peacebuilding.

Economic systems contain many of the root causes of injustice, conflict, and unsustainability. Our Sustainable and Just Economic Systems programme responds to the urgent need to upgrade, update, and accelerate the international community’s responses to challenges at the intersection of trade, justice, and sustainability – both environmental and social. The Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) at the WTO are a promising avenue for doing so. In 2021 QUNO partnered with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung to provide targeted, high-value support to WTO Members in the TESSD and related contexts, through research, advice, and discussion, including off-the-record facilitative meetings. This included papers and discussions on the topics of circular economy, environmental goods and services, fossil fuel subsidy reform, and green aid-for-trade.

Our joint Quaker statement on migration, shared at the end of 2020, says we are heartbroken by migration policy that dehumanises some members of our human family based on where they come from. Our Human Rights and Refugees Programme sought to strengthen responses by the Human Rights Council to the widespread violence and human rights violations resulting from this and we were closely involved in joint NGO calls for monitoring at borders.

We began a deeper exploration of how we can work on manifestations of systemic racism in migration management. This work seeks to draw on and feed into significant developments at the UN with the creation of an international independent expert mechanism on systemic racism and law enforcement.

At the end of 2021 Jonathan Woolley retired after 10 years as Director and we are grateful for his service, at the same time we have welcomed Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge as our incoming Director and look forward to seeing what flourishes with this transition.

QUNO New York, Quaker United Nations Committee

by EMES delegate jalka

This was a year of transition and change for QUNO. The most far-reaching change was the retirement of QUNO Director Andrew Tomlinson after nearly 14 years in the position. Sarah Clarke is QUNO/NY's new director.

Previously Sarah has served as UN Representative at QUNO from 2002-14. Sarah is the first woman to hold the office of Director. The terms of the outgoing and incoming directors overlapped during the month of November, with Sarah fully taking the reins in December 2021.

One of QUNO's two UN Representatives, Rachel Madenyika, resigned in March to take up a new position as Chief Financial Officer at the Touch Foundation. In July, QUNO was joined by Kavita Desai in the position vacated by Rachel. Kavita arrived with ten years' experience in international policymaking and diplomacy.

QUNO's other UN Representative, Megan Schmidt, was on maternity leave from July to November, giving birth to daughter Charlie – who attended her first QUNC meeting last November!

QUNO benefited for several months from the secondment of Marianne Elias, a staff member of AFSC's International Programs. Finally, QUNO Program Assistant Hannah Patterson extended her tenure through the end of the year, helping to sustain QUNO's work on prevention issues. QUNO was pleased to welcome two new Program Assistants Cecile Adrian in September and Tim Koch in December. Cecile studied for a year in Durban, South Africa and majored in Peace Studies at Goucher College. Tim was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia, has a MA in International Affairs from The New School, and worked previously with the UN Development Program.

The 2021 UN report presented proposals that are of particular interest to QUNO's New York office. It is about the adoption of a "New Agenda for Peace" that calls for investing in prevention and peacebuilding. And for the establishment of an Emergency Platform to respond in a more timely and effective manner to complex crises. Over the coming year, staff will work to strengthen the peacebuilding and prevention capacities. New guidelines were launched in 2021: United Nations Community Engagement

Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

A key approach to QUNO's work is to foster learning and insights. QUNO's facilitation of a three-year project focused on dialogue and on conflict prevention among Chinese and Swiss scholars was completed in 2021 with the publication of a book featuring articles by the participants. Title "New Paths and Policies towards Conflict Prevention: Chinese and Swiss Perspectives", co-edited by then-QUNO UN Representative Rachel Madenyika.

In September QUNO presented the statement Let us see what Peace can do, which brought over 200 organizations together for the international day of peace.

QUNC met four times during 2021. All meetings were virtual. The regular bi-annual meetings were held in March and November. In July the Committee met for the 2022 budget.

Woodbrooke

Director Sandra Berry reflects on 2021

2021 was another year of sailing the Woodbrooke ship through choppy waters. As I look back, I'm proud of how we continued to support people through 2021.

At various moments, in various countries across Europe and the Middle East it looked like it would go back to some type of normality but then didn't. In Britain we started the year with a sense of 2020 behind us only to be put into

The approved total reflects a modest increase over 2021. in anticipation of an increase in the salaries of Program Assistants to match the New York City minimum wage, on an annualized basis.

Due to Covid 19 The staff continued to work almost entirely from home. The Quaker House was seldom needed for office work. But with the repair of some damage due to some flooding a gas leak was identified – the gas had to be closed. Further repair needs emerged and have to be discussed.

Strengthening QUNO's capacity for outreach and development will be a key priority in 2022, in preparation for the observance of QUNO's 75th anniversary. The Strategic Plan envisions a concerted effort to expand the refocus outreach and fundraising efforts to improve QUNO's visibility and support among Quakers and other stakeholders.

Some parts quote the co-clerks' report of QUNC 2021 to AFSC by Cheryl Morden.

a long lockdown. Our ability to keep working, particularly in partnership with EMES., throughout this time to provide online worship and learning is a real highlight for me.

Woodbrooke recognises how important online worship is to many people and we will keep supporting it, with EMES, in the coming years. I continue to be amazed by how many people have been able to access our learning and how it resonates

with Woodbrooke's original purpose about bringing people together from all across the world. We received over 6000 bookings on our sessions, courses, and workshops in 2021! This was a significant increase on 2020 which had already gone up compared to 2019.

2021 was a time to try to adapt some programmes we had put on hold in 2020. We were delighted that our Eva Koch scholars could undertake their research in 2021, presenting some of their findings early this year.

This was alongside the research which takes place through the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies, where students are working on Masters and PhD projects covering Quakers from the seventeenth century to today.

In 2021 this included deep dives into specific figures, such as T Edmund Harvey, and broad topics such as the development and growth of Quakerism in Africa. The Centre continues to work closely with the Quaker Studies Research Association, helping to host the annual conference and support the journal Quaker Studies, which recently welcomed Rhiannon Grant and Rebecca Wynter as new editors

None of this is possible without the support of Friends. We are humbled by

the support we receive, particularly from those who understand that to continue offering learning in the future it is more than just outlasting the pandemic.

In 2021 we continued to find good uses for the centre, it provided an important meeting place for local organisations throughout the pandemic – in particular some local hospitals and health groups. We remained open throughout 2021 finding ways for people to visit us via safely, such as through the opening of two self-catering flats.

As 2022 gets underway we are excited by the possibility of what we can offer. Our Woodbrooke *Where You Are* programme, replacing Woodbrooke on the Road, is ready to offer workshops to meetings both in person and online or blended. We have a new programme of online courses which continue to prove popular with a broad range of people. We will be offering some courses and retreats at the Woodbrooke Centre this year as well.

You can find more information on our websites [woodbrooke.org.uk](https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk) and [thewoodbrookecentre.co.uk](https://www.thewoodbrookecentre.co.uk) or contact us by email on enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk (for centre bookings) or learning@woodbrooke.org.uk (for our learning and research offerings).

Bank account & how to contribute 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.

Sterling

Bank name CAF Bank

Bank address

25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill,
West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ. UK

Account Name FWCC EMES

IBAN GB73CAFB40524000025578

SWIFT/BIC CAFBGB21XXX

Account Number 00025578

Sort Code 40-52-40

Euro account

For transfers or standing orders in Euros please use these account details:

Institution name Wise

Account Name FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section

IBAN BE33 9672 0215 6046

SWIFT/BIC TRWIBEB1XXX

To make a contribution in another currency please contact michael@fwccemes.org



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION