

# Among Friends

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Exec Secretary: Marisa Johnson, P.O. Box 1157, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9XQ, UK emes@fwccemes.org Tel: +44 (0)122 347 9585

## Visiting Rwanda

### Dear Friends,

EMES Clerk Sue Glover Frykman and I visited Rwanda for the first time earlier this month for the Friends World Committee for Consultation's Africa Triennial. There were over 400 delegates in Kigali, considering the theme "Stop crying, God has a solution", a paraphrase of Exodus 14:15-16. Kenyan Friend Esther Mombo, gave two very thought-provoking reflections on the theme. The heart of her message is that God asks Moses "Why are you crying out to me" when he should already know, as a leader, what he has to do, and give assurance to the Israelites by remaining firm in his trust. Esther saw the "Stop crying" as a metaphor for "Stop fearing, stop blaming, stop doubting, stop complaining - and do something about it".

We happened to be in Rwanda at the time of the 23rd anniversary of the terrible genocide that was unleashed in the country in April 1994, when between 800,000 and 1 million people were killed in just 100 days, and the whole country was turned upside down, with much of the remaining population displaced. I visited the Genocide Memorial in Kigali, which affected me very much.

These outbreaks of evil test our faith, as we ask where God was at that time. For me, the answer to that question is that God was being crucified, once again, as so often through human history, and once again refuses to stay dead, and brings new life and hope even out of such monstrous events. And indeed there is much hope to be found in the rebuilding of the country, and its determination to



*Esther Mombo at Africa Section Triennial  
Photo: Harry Albright*

remember and learn from its tragic history. I found it much harder though to get the churches off the hook - where were the churches when hatred was being stoked up? What kind of Gospel were they preaching? I felt the same kind of disillusionment with "priests, preachers and experienced people" that George Fox must have felt, when he said that "For I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh then, I heard a voice which said, there is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition". We must not put our trust, our faith, in our traditions and human institutions, but only the living God, in Life that asserts itself in all places and all times.

After Kigali, we travelled West to Kibuyo, on Lake Kivu, for a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of FWCC. This was an enchanting and tranquil setting to work and reflect in.

*Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary*

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## Church and Peace Annual General Meeting

During the Church and Peace AGM in Strasbourg in June, the St Thomas Centre provided a haven from the heat and a venue for some passionate discussions. The opening remarks by our chair, Antje Heider-Rottwilm, reminded us that this year, The Lutheran Reformation Decade comes to an end and, for the Mennonites, a Decade of Remembrance and Renewal is beginning. After the AGM, in which we welcomed four new members – the group “Youth for Christ” from Croatia, and three individual members from Belgium, Croatia and Switzerland – and received the Annual Report of the Administrative Committee and the Financial Report, there was time for reflection and discussion.

The theme “Freedom from fear” was chosen to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and it was a coincidence that our meeting was taking place in a city whose clerics played a key role in the Reformation and in a region (Alsace) which has a significant Protestant population and a network of churches which in the past, and to some extent still today, are shared by Protestants and Catholics.

During the conference part of our meeting, we wanted to reflect on some of the different areas of our lives, to bring each other “good news” and to allow fear-free, safe spaces for sharing and learning together to take form. This was reflected in the workshop topics, some of which were facilitated by Quakers from across Europe – Andrew Lane of QCEA ran the workshop on security in Europe, Renato Lings (Denmark YM) and Kees Nieuwerth (Netherlands YM) collaborated on the workshop about The Bible and Sexual Identities, and Barbara and David Forbes (Britain YM) co-facilitated a workshop on Fear, Populism, Nationalism and the Return of Fascism to Europe. Other topics included



a critical look at Reformation history, non-violent conflict resolution, and women of the Reformation. Each workshop ran twice but, at only an hour and a half for each session, it was difficult to do more than scratch the surface of these vast concerns.

The results of the workshops were shared in an informal evening session and fed into the press releases “Freed from fear, empowered to nonviolence” and “Use EU funds to strengthen civilian, not military instruments”. Church and Peace members across the continent were urged to take up the concern about developments in the EU and also to urge their governments to support the ongoing talks in New York for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

We welcomed our new General Secretary, German Mennonite Lydia Funck, who played a significant role in facilitating the conference before a formal commitment and blessing in the Sunday morning service.

As well as those Friends facilitating the workshops, Quakers from Germany, Russia and Switzerland were also present, and FWCC/EMES was represented by Martin Touwen (Netherlands YM). The next AGM will be part of an international conference to be held at High Leigh (North London) from 21st – 24th June 2018. We hope that many Friends will take the opportunity to join us!



*Photos by Barbara Forbes*

## Waltraud Engl

Our Friend Waltraud Engl passed away completely unexpectedly on the 4th of March 2017 in a Viennese hospital, two weeks after her first clerking the Quarterly Meeting. It was unbelievably upsetting news for us.

Waltraud became a member in the Society of Friends in 2015. She was very active in our meeting and also attended the Central European Gathering and several Border Meetings. She was very involved and brought sensitivity, openness and warmth to our meetings. We miss her and we are thankful for the time we had with her.



## EMES Annual Meeting 2018

2018 will see the 200th anniversary of the founding of Norway Yearly Meeting. EMES has been invited by Norwegian Friends to hold its annual meeting in the country, as one of the events that will mark the bicentenary. We shall meet from 21st to 24th June 2018, at Åsane Folk High School just outside Bergen. Midsummer in Norway, what an opportunity!

All are welcome! As 2018 also marks 80 years since the creation of the Europe Section of FWCC (the Middle East was added much later), we would like to open the event up to Friends interested in coming, not just formal Representatives of Yearly and other Meetings. We will be about to accommodate around 100 Friends.

Reflecting on the fact that it was sailors returning from many years' captivity during the Napoleonic wars who first brought Quakerism to Norway, that the Europe Section was created as the heavy clouds of World War II were gathering over the continent, and indeed that the roots of our tradition are in the English Civil War,



Åsane Folkehøgskole

Photo: Åsane Folkehøgskole

we chose as our theme *A New Heaven and an New Earth (Rev. 21:1): Finding New light in turbulent times.*

Interested? Please let us know that you may like to come by following this link:

<http://www.fwccemes.org/calendar/emes-annual-meeting-2018>

## What EMES has to offer Meetings

*Sue Glover Frykman*, EMES Clerk, writes:

In a workshop on the theme (Vibrant Meetings – Vibrant Section) at the EMES Annual Meeting in Bonn some Friends wondered what EMES could offer in terms of helping Meetings to become more vibrant. An informative article in *Among Friends* was suggested as a way of spreading the word and putting the information in one place. This article is a response to that request.

The EMES Ministry and Outreach (M&O) Programme was created in 2008 and since then has been supported by funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The Programme nurtures & supports the spiritual lives of Friends, individually & corporately, & strengthens outreach efforts across the Section. To this end it works closely with Quaker Meetings, Woodbrooke, groups & isolated Friends & offers a variety of resources & opportunities for online & face-to-face learning & fellowship.

The present focus (2017-19) of the M&O Programme is to consolidate the work that has already been done and to encourage Friends to engage in three specific inter-related areas: the documentation of your Meeting's Quaker faith and practice, the history of your Meeting or group and the documentation of lives of influential Friends. The process and the results of these documentations can be valuable for inreach (strengthening your own Meeting) and outreach (a document of pamphlet that can be used to reach out to others in the area). A new online EMES Information Resource has been created on Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre's Moodle platform (<http://moodle.woodbrooke.org.uk/course/view.php?id=215>). As the resource is open to all, no login code is needed. The Information Resource includes information about the 7-week introductory online Quaker in Europe course, which is available in many different languages, and the Companion Programme, which links anyone who is seriously interested in the Quaker way with an experienced Friend for a period of structured interaction. It also contains a limited-access interactive forum for Friends who are currently serving their Meetings as Nurturers and Carers (traditionally known as Elders and Overseers). The Information Resource is also be a collecting point for descriptions of Quaker methods of interaction (such as worship sharing, meetings for clearness, threshing meetings etc). It is also a place where spiritual wisdom and stories of Quaker lives can be collected and where the histories of Quakerism

in Europe and the Middle East can be made available as they are documented. It is envisaged that the Information Resource will continue to grow and become increasingly multilingual as Friends contribute to it.

Intervisitation and travelling in the ministry have been central to Quaker life since the 17th century and continue to be so today. The M&O Programme encourages Friends to visit each other for mutual learning and support and helps to identify and equip Friends to travel on behalf of EMES to Quaker Meetings needing support or nurture. The experiences of earlier Visiting Friends can be accessed through the Information Resource in preparation for visits. Friends who intend to travel within the Section are encouraged to inform the EMES staff, so that they know which groups and isolated Friends are being/have been visited. Another way in which the M&O Programme serves Friends is to organise residential gatherings for learning and exploration of various themes.

The M&O Programme encourages and supports Quaker groups to make use of the EMES Small Grants Fund – or 'spiritual growth fund' as it now more fondly named – as a tool to realise Quaker activities that help to strengthen Quaker identity and community and to bring Quaker values to the wider community. Quaker groups (outside Britain Yearly Meeting) are encouraged to apply for funding for projects meeting these criteria. EMES staff can suggest projects that specifically link with its 2017-2019 focus and can support Meetings interested in exploring project proposals. Projects might include helping Meetings to document their own history and the stories of key individuals. Visiting and interviewing Friends in other meetings could be both stimulating and rewarding and be part of intervisitation. The production of such documents would further help to increase the number and range of Faith & Practice documents (e.g. pamphlets, booklets, books, web-books) across the Section. Information about the fund and how to apply can be found at <http://www.fwccemes.org/emes/emes-small-grants-fund-sgf>

Once a year EMES organises a Peace and Service Consultation. This is an opportunity for Quakers who are actively working to promote peace, prevent conflict, uphold human rights, advocate economic justice and environmentally sustainable living and so on to learn more about each other's work, forge stronger links and identify areas in which they might work closer together.

## Epistle of EMES Annual Meeting 2017 Haus Venusberg, Bonn, Germany 4 – 7 May 2017

To all Friends everywhere greetings. We wish you vibrancy in your meetings: Vivacita! Zivost! Vitalite! Liewenskraaft a Vitalitéit! Elinvoima! Medryckande / vibrerande! Die strahlende Lebendigkeit! Beogacht! ¡Vibrantes con mucha vida! Opgewekt en blijmoedig!



We send loving greetings from a beautifully wooded area on the edge of Bonn, where forty-six Friends have met to bring our Section business up to date, see one another's faces, hear one another's stories and gather inspiration for the future development of Quakers in Europe and the Middle East.

Our theme of 'Vibrant Meetings, Vibrant Section', introduced by Simon Best of Woodbrooke, was followed by useful small group discussions. Vibrancy includes the creative imagination that helps us work effectively to bring the future into being - an apt link with the function of QUNO Geneva.

Lindsey Fielder Cook inspired us with practical examples of the ways in which QUNO's quiet informal provision of safe confidential discussion spaces makes a contribution on unpopular fronts and helps persuade diplomats of the interrelationship between issues such as human rights, peace-building, and climate change. She argued that climate change is only one of nine great challenges, the first two being biodiversity (extinction) and chemical pollution. Yet she also named specific examples that gave us hope that change is occurring

and our efforts can help accelerate positive action. We urge Friends to consult the QUNO website, for its list of concise reasons for Friends to take urgent action on climate change.

We were glad to hear of the continued vibrancy of European & Middle East Young Friends, an organisation now over 30 years old. A separate discussion focused on changed provision for teenagers/young adults. Plans in hand for the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage would leave 16–18 year olds without dedicated events; EMES is exploring ways to ensure that EMES teenagers continue to have opportunities for transformational meetings with one another.

We learned of the dedicated work of volunteer Friends at the Eurosatory Arms Trade Fair. They provide a necessary distinctive protesting voice, seeking real contact and not confrontation with arms dealers and customers.

From a Czech Friend we heard of exciting developments for Quakers in Central Europe; with EMES support, isolated Friends have met annually since the mid-1990s as the Central European Gathering of Friends. Now this has led to the major step of deciding that Friends in Poland, Hungary, Austria and Czech Republic will combine as the Central European Regional Meeting and will support the growth of emerging small meetings and worship groups spanning several languages and cultures. Preparatory meetings and the main gathering are now held three times yearly as they learn their responsibilities and develop their practice.

The Conference of European Churches sent out an Open Letter on the Future of Europe to its members in 2016, requesting responses in preparation for the 2018 General Assembly in Novi Sad. Were we prepared to



strengthen the voice of Quakers as a peace church by endorsing the draft Quaker response which was brought to us by a small group of Friends who had been working on it since the Peace & Service Consultation in 2016. Only by doing so would EMES be in a position to put a strong peace church view at Novi Sad. Our discussion movingly emphasised the underlying unity of European faith groups and the importance of our being a visible part of the Conference. We wholeheartedly decided to endorse the document and to commend it to Yearly Meetings.

Following an introduction from Julia Ryberg, we spent time in small groups thinking about how any of our Section's Meetings outside Britain Yearly Meeting might put forward imaginative projects as applications to the Small Grants Fund (or spiritual growth fund, a nickname that appealed to everyone as being immediately appropriate). Projects might be to help meetings document their own stories and those of key individuals; this would itself grow and strengthen the meetings and would provide outreach tools. Visiting and interviewing other meetings could be very stimulating. Work on key documents could help increase the number and range of Faith & Practice documents (pamphlets, booklets, books, web-books) across our Section. We have much to explore further, new ideas to try, friendships to maintain and develop, work to do, hope to nourish by action.

Several workshop sessions led us deeper into agenda topics. Some of us learned about theories of conflict resolution. Others spent time considering worshipfully what intervisitation is, reminding ourselves that it stems



from meeting to 'see one another's faces and open our hearts one to another' as George Fox put it in the Yearly Meeting Epistle of 1668. We were moved to hear how crucial the long tradition of such visiting is to isolated Friends and we thought of our responsibility to help support worship in our small European groups. This brings just as much joy to visitors as those being visited. It is a truly mutual enrichment. We encourage Friends to think of committing to this as a theme in their own Area, Yearly and Regional Meetings. If each meeting found a minimum of one Friend to visit another meeting, whether nearby or across a border, we should greatly deepen the awareness of 'Friends on the bench' of being members of a Section and should create widening webs of F/friendship.

In our time together we widened those friendship webs informally through sharing meetings for walking, for museum visiting, for entertainment – and for learning to draw Quaker cartoons (though we shall never match



the skill and wit of our teacher Erik Dries).

We part, grateful for this opportunity and hoping to meet again in Bergen, Norway in June 2018, shortly before the bicentenary of the founding of Quakers in Norway. Norwegian Friends have accommodation at the event for more than three times the usual number of participants. So come and join us and support the growth of intervisitation in the Section!

Signed on behalf of FWCC EMES

*Sue Glover Frykman, Clerk*



*All photographs by Kate McNally*



## Epistle of 2017 Central European Gathering of Friends Brno, Czech Republic



*Central European Gathering of Friends Photo: Cathy Butler*

On 18-21 May 53 people including 9 children and one dog, Berta, met in Brno, Czech Republic for the 21st annual Central European Gathering. Although Friends transcend all borders, we acknowledge people coming from Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom. A gathering of families, of friends, of Quakers indeed. The Central European Gathering has been evolving towards a regional meeting from a bridge-building started by Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary and EMES, gathering isolated Quakers and groups in central Europe.

The gathering began with country reports. The highlights included the growth in meetings in Poland and the influence in Czech Republic of funding by Bader Philanthropies. In retrospect, we highlight the importance of welcoming newcomers at the beginning of future gatherings. There were presentations by Gabriela Hotovcova, Michael Luick-Thrams, Kristjan Laes and Jasmine Piercy, and a video by Charles

Tauber. Cathy Butler facilitated a workshop on identity (including feeling at home among Quakers). Jalka introduced us to her work on creative, constructive handling of conflict. Julia Ryberg of EMES talked about and encouraged us to develop small grant fund projects to strengthen our Quaker groups and the links among us and document, for example, our Quaker practices and histories.

Friends remembered dearly Waltraud Engl and Evzen (Eugen) Schart. We brought their presence amongst our midst through our words and memories. The children playing outside offered us a sense of continuity. Music has become an important element in Central European Gatherings.

We thank Czech Friends who organized the gathering in the beautiful setting of Penzion Zahrada in Brno. Just as this gathering has evolved into a vital Quaker community, we as Friends have deepened our sense of each other and of our faith as part of our identity.

## News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Woodbrooke continues to offer a full and varied programme of courses and retreats at our main centre in Birmingham and with our partners at the historically significant Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria.

We would like to remind Friends that there is special funding available for anyone who is interested in joining one of our popular extended programmes. ***Equipping for Ministry, Soul of Leadership, Young Adult Leadership Programme*** and our post-graduate courses are all open to Friends throughout EMES.

Our two year ***Equipping for Ministry programme*** supports Friends who wish to explore what it means to be a Quaker today, and encourages them to explore their sense of personal vocation. The ***Young Adult Leadership Programme*** helps 18-30 year olds strengthen their knowledge of the Quaker faith and history, and develop their life skills. Those interested in developing their inner resources for service in leadership roles may be interested in our 18 month Soul of Leadership programme.

Our growing ***online programme*** continues to be popular with those Friends who are unable to travel to the UK. Our courses, webinars and retreats are both affordable and convenient. We'd urge you to consider joining Julia Ryberg for her 6 week retreat '***European Quaker voices***'. Our postgraduate ***Certificate in Quaker Studies*** and ***MA in Quakerism in the Modern World*** are also distance courses held entirely online.

Our travelling teaching service, ***Woodbrooke on the Road***, is a good way to experience Woodbrooke learning without leaving home. We are happy to tailor



# WOODBROOKE



our current offering of workshops and quiet days to meet the particular learning and spiritual needs of your meeting. We offer days exploring Quaker history, theology and testimony. We can also help you to consider what it means to be a living and faithful worshipping community, whether that is training for Quaker roles or deepening your meeting's spiritual life.

If you are interested in joining us in any of these events, we would like to remind you that special funding is available so that you can take advantage of what we have to offer.

Friends may be interested to know that one of this year's ***Eva Koch scholars*** will be surveying attitudes to the EU referendum and subsequent 'Brexit' negotiations amongst British Friends. We hope to publish the results of this work sometime in the late summer.

For those of you wanting to extend your involvement with Woodbrooke, you might want to consider serving as one of our ***Friends in Residence***. These are Friends who stay with us for a few weeks at a time and who nurture our daily worshipping life, welcome visitors and support residents out of office hours. You can also volunteer to help our newly appointed Garden Manager in maintaining and improving our 10 acres of gardens and grounds by serving as a ***Gardening Friend***.

For more information about any aspect of Woodbrooke's learning programme please call +44(0)121 472 5171, email [enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk) or visit [www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk)

*All photos from Woodbrooke*



## We have a Radical Claim



*Friends visiting Strasbourg's human rights institutions Photo: QCEA*

*Andrew Lane, QCEA Director, writes*

Twenty Friends visited the human rights institutions in Strasbourg in June. When Dan Flynn (Belgium) posted about this on facebook, Carmen Alcalde (Spain) was quick to respond with a photograph of her on the same Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) study tour in May 1988, (29 years earlier). Why do we keep doing this? Why do European Quakers maintain this pilgrimage for human rights?

I sometimes hear people say that Quakers don't believe in anything. But, what about the radical set of claims that Quakers have been making on the basis of our spiritual experience for more than 300 years? These claims include: equality of women and men, the equal participation of all people in our democratic systems and the abolition of the death penalty.

Each of these is far more widely accepted today that it was at the time of early Friends, but our work is far from over. One European country still has the death penalty (Belarus) and another has talked openly about reintroducing it (Turkey). Recent issues of Among Friends have expressed concerns about the treatment of refugees from Calais to Lampedusa.

Michael Bartlet (Britain) wrote: "An early conception of human rights is implicit in the seventeenth century political and religious experience of Friends. Such rights are inherent in the 'neighbour principle' as a source of social responsibility, common to world faiths." The report will be available at [QCEA.org](http://QCEA.org) from 20 July.

In July, we will be publishing our QCEA report 'Children in Immigration Detention'. This is the result of contact with 20 European governments and

many national NGOs, and collates information about number of children detained, relevant laws and the use of alternatives to detention across Europe. We will be using this report in face to face meetings with politicians and officials in the coming months.

This work is rooted in Quakers' consistent commitment to human rights, but also in the practical work undertaken by Friends today. Elizabeth Fry is well known for leading campaigns for improved detention conditions in Britain in the 19th Century, but it is less well known that she later also advised on prison regimes in France, Germany, Italy and Russia. Today, Quakers are active as prison chaplains, prison visitors and campaigners for reform of immigration detention.

So how do we live our radical claim today?

'Seize the day' was the spirit of my QCEA colleague Kate McNally and Pauline Goggin (Ireland) when they peeled off from the QCEA study tour to persuade the receptionist at the Council of Europe to telephone the office of an Irish Senator that we had just heard speak in a debate on forced migration. Within minutes they were meeting the Senator to share their concerns and experiences.

When we look at news from around the world, it is clear that human rights are sadly still very much a radical notion. It is up to all of us to keep our movement for global transformation going, one project, one practical action, one outreach event... at a time.

As mentioned above, many Friends are concerned about forced migration. To find out more about what Friends are doing, or to connect with Friends doing similar work to you, contact [kate.mcnally@qcea.org](mailto:kate.mcnally@qcea.org).

## Nordic Yearly Meeting Epistle 2017

We send our warmest greetings to Friends around the world from our combined Nordic Friends Yearly Meeting of 2017.

The Nordiska Folkhögskolan near Gothenburg, Sweden, was founded 70 years ago to manifest the peace in the wake of World War II. It rests in an idyllic setting on a hill overlooking a remnant of warfare: medieval Bohus Fortress (1308). The fortress is in ruins, while the school continues to carry forward a tradition of education, featuring a flourishing inter-Nordic curriculum, for all ages post-high-school.

The venue chosen for the Nordic Friends Yearly Meeting 2017 was appropriate not only for its practical and scenic qualities but also because of the fact that Jeanna Oterdahl (1879-1965) – a writer, educator, and Friend – was a co-founder in 1947. Jeanna taught here and also was on the board for 20 years. We have read her poetry and sung her songs in our meetings.

The theme for the gathering “Am I my brother’s keeper?” was chosen to address our concern for the condition of the world today, where violence is too often normalized in our societies: in politics, film and TV, by the multinational war machine and its consequences, and with the erosion of the social contract in a world of rising conflict.

The theme was explored in a talk by Finnish Friend Jaana Erkkilä-Hill (in no less than four languages: Swedish, English, Finnish, and Norwegian). She helped us to see that our societies are full of Cains, who feel they are entitled to more and have the right to take it by force; and also the many Abels, the innocent victims, and how few Jobs, who accept the ups and downs in life with the gentle attitude that they deserve neither the good nor the bad. She also touched upon what can be done for the Cains we encounter, besides explaining their ill deeds by saying that they too were slighted. How do we nourish the good in Cain? Jaana concluded

that Cain and Abel represent two sides of each human being, and each of our societies, in patterns of both active and passive violence. In addressing this complex and difficult picture, our first response is to be “quietly waiting on God”.

We had workshops, in some of which we were using our thoughts and words to fathom the theme, in others motion or silence brought us to new kinds of consciousness.

The Friends Service Committees of Norway and Sweden focused our awareness through a quick series of learning stations covering their work in Central Africa, Bangladesh, Gaza, and other places. They had us write postcards and tweets urging those in power to ameliorate problems in these places –one offered the foreign minister an air ticket to visit Gaza.

We held a celebratory and welcoming worship for young Friends who have prepared for membership in Norway YM through their three-year youth “confirmation” program. It was a joyous and rich occasion of prayer, ministry and song.

Again we have appreciated the spiritual enrichment and extended fellowship of this gathering of the four Nordic Yearly Meetings. With large and small we have been one hundred and twenty-three souls, including visitors from six other European countries, India and USA. We look forward to meeting again in three years’ time, and leave with the hope that we may make positive contributions to peace wherever we go.

With our warmest salutations,

*Hanne Hognestad*, Norway

*Wilhelm Dahllöf*, Sweden

*Leena Lampela*, Finland

*Jessica Klaphaak*, Denmark

## Diary Dates 2017

More dates for 2017 are available on the website: [www.fwccemes.org](http://www.fwccemes.org). Please send items for inclusion in the diary to Marisa Johnson at [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org).

**1-3 September 2017: Italian Friends Gathering**, near Forlì, Italy, [ceciliaclementel@gmail.com](mailto:ceciliaclementel@gmail.com)

**8-10 September 2017: Border Meeting**, Maison Notre-Dame du Chant-d'Oiseau, Avenue des Franciscains, 3A, B-1150 Brussels, Belgium [daniel\\_flynn39@yahoo.com](mailto:daniel_flynn39@yahoo.com)

**01 October 2017: World Quaker Day** - this year's theme is "Gathering in Worship around the World". Celebrate your Quaker heritage, faith, and practices and document it online with the hashtag #WorldQuakerDay2017 - for more information: <http://www.worldquakerday.org/>

**21-24 October 2017: France Yearly Meeting**, [assembleedefrance@gmail.com](mailto:assembleedefrance@gmail.com)

**2-5 November 2017: German Yearly Meeting**, Bad Pyrmont, [clerks@quaeker.org](mailto:clerks@quaeker.org)

**10-12 November 2017: EMES Peace & Service Consultation**, Kortenberg, Belgium, [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org)

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

An opportunity for Friends to consider the Quaker work on forced migration, and the much broader issues of what Friends can do to ensure Europe is a continent that values the human dignity of all people. As Friends we oppose war, and call for peacebuilding efforts long before war is on the agenda. The question facing European Friends is what should we be doing to swim against the current tide.

**21-24 June 2018: EMES Annual Meeting 2018**, Åsane Folk High School just outside Bergen, Norway. All are welcome! This is not just for representatives. Join us celebrating 200 years of a Quaker presence in Norway and 80 years of EMES.

### Woodbrooke on-line Meeting for Worship

A regular opportunity to join in a virtual Meeting for Worship on Wednesdays at 9:30am Greenwich Mean Time and Fridays, 1pm Greenwich Mean Time November till March, 1pm British Summer Time April till October. Martin Layton will be running a Meeting for Worship using Adobe Connect, an online meeting space accessible on any browser. All you have to do is go to <https://woodbrooke.adobeconnect.com/quiet-room/> to take part. See <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mf/w/>

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

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**Deadline for Among Friends 140: 1 November 2017**