

# Annual Meeting 2010 Reports

## Secretary's Report

### Annual Report 2009

The following received a hard-copy of the Annual Report:

- JRCT
- all EMES YMs
- all non-UK & Ireland Area Meetings listed on the EMES website
- Friends House - four copies: BYM, FWCC, QPSW and the Library
- Woodbrooke - two copies: YFGM and the Library
- Belgium & Luxembourg MM was given one and a few copies kept spare for the office and for AM.

In addition, an electronic copy was sent to all British and Irish AMs and local Meetings by email.

### Trees for Africa

My predecessor Joe Casey made a donation in September to cover the Spring Gatherings of 2009 and 2010, Annual Meeting 2009 and Communications Committee 2010. This amounted to €382. Given our present financial situation, we need to think about whether we wish to continue to make such donations in the coming years.

### Fundraising letters

A joint fundraising letter was put together with the help of EMES. It was sent out to non-UK and Ireland Yearly Meetings on 8<sup>th</sup> September. We are still waiting to hear responses, and I will follow the letter up with reminders before Christmas.

### Annual Report 2010

In order to compile the AR 2010, I will need contributions on their area of work from the following people: Clerk, Elders, Gatherings Coordinator, QCEA Representative, EMES Representative, and Treasurer. It will also include Joe's contribution as the former Secretary and a few words from myself, along with the Spring Gathering Epistle and the Consolidated Accounts. The aim is to put this together in February to go out by March, so I will be looking for your contributions by January if possible. Reminders will be sent out via email.

*John Nicholls*

## **Gatherings Coordinator report**

### **Spring Gathering 2010**

Held in the Moyallon Centre in Northern Ireland, Spring Gathering 2010 gathered 21 Young Friends around the theme of conflict and how we relate to conflict - inner, outer and spiritual. Local Friends educated us about the political conflict in Northern Ireland and the work of Northern Irish Friends, and Symon Hill joined us from Woodbrooke for sessions throughout the week.

As the epistle shows, the week was coloured by our surroundings at Moyallon and our day in Belfast, and by our own community. Our time together grew to long-lasting friendships and memories of trust, personal challenges and gathered reflections on our lives and the impacts we have.

### **Spring Gathering 2011 planning committee**

The planning of SG 2011 started with the unfortunate circumstances that our representative to EMES saw it best to stand down, and with some uncertainty about who had accepted to be on the planning committee.

Since the summer, PC has been working hard to discern a good way to balance the needs of EMEYF and the wishes of EMES for the upcoming joint gathering. We hope that one extra night for EMEYF together at Herzberg (the night before the joint gathering commences) will give EMEYF a good start to SG, lengthening the time we have together a little bit. PC aims to fundraise sufficient money for this extra night for it to be free of charge to EMEYFs, since the fee of the gathering is more expensive compared to the length of the gathering, than EMEYF SGs usually cost.

The theme of SG 2011 is 'Bring and share'. The theme hopes to open up to reflections about what defines Quakers and what we individually bring to the Society of Friends, as a preparation for the World Gathering of Friends in Kenya 2012.

The gathering will be held in Herzberg, Switzerland, 20-24 April 2011 (this includes the first night for EMEYF only).

The closing date for applications from Young Friends has been amended to 5<sup>th</sup> January 2011, in time for the EMES executive committee meeting in February.

*Kristin Skarsholt*

## **QCEA Representative Report to EMEYF**

This year I have attended three QCEA events; the Study Tour in the summer, the QCEA Council Meeting in October and the QCEA/QPSW Joint Conference at the end of October.

The QCEA Study tour was well attended and was based around the theme of “Sustainable Energy and Energy Security”. During the tour we visited European Institutions such as the Parliament, Commission and the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg as well as the European Court of Justice.

The study tour was a good opportunity to get to know QCEA and the work of Neil Endicott who had been focusing on Energy Security during his time at QCEA.

Those who attended the study tour were from a wide variety of backgrounds, experience and ages - although as ever it would have been nice to see more Young Friends involved. There are bursaries available for the study tour.

The Council agreed to postpone the Study Tour to 2012 due to the difficulties with dates. However, it would be possible to support one or more “Member of European Parliament”-sponsored events in 2011, like that in 2009.

The QCEA Council Meeting took place between 8-10 October and was a great opportunity to welcome two of the new programme assistants who had arrived literally about 48 hours before.

The Council was updated on the work programme of QCEA which included:

- Human Rights

There has been good progress on the research with regard to the social reintegration of prisoners before, on and after release, for which Joe Casey - our previous EMEYF Secretary - provided us an oral update. A report on this issue will be finished by the end of the year. The executive summary of the report on Criminal Justice Work - Alternatives to imprisonment has been translated into French and Liz Scurfield has begun the process of advocacy on this issue at the Council of Europe.

- Economic Justice

As Neil Endicott's contract came to an end, QCEA has recruited Paul Parrish as his successor. He will join QCEA as Advocacy Officer before the end of this year. Meanwhile, Neil finished his reports on the Nabucco and the Trans-Sahara Pipelines before he left. The report on the Nabucco Pipeline has already been published and Martina Weitsch has begun the advocacy work by handing out copies of the report to various decision-makers.

With regard to the Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan, Laurie Michaelis has produced a report on this issue for the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). Once Paul Parrish has joined QCEA, starting advocacy work on this issue will be a priority.

- Peace

QCEA has a substantial amount of joint work with the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), in which Martina Weitsch currently serves as vice-president.

With regard to Middle East work, the previous Programme Assistant Stefano d'Errico has completed two briefing papers on Arms Trade and Security Research which have been endorsed by the PAG and which have just been published. In the coming months, we will focus on the Economic Role of the European Union in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). A briefing paper on Common Security and Defence Policy Missions in Palestine/Israel has also been completed. This paper will be published on the QCEA website shortly and will be used for advocacy work.

The QCEA/QPSW Joint Conference at the end of October was a further opportunity to explore Quaker work and responses to the situation in the Middle East. It was an intense weekend that was interesting, inspiring, passionate and at times distressing. We began here from the EU representative to Palestine and the work of the EU in the region. The next morning we heard from Jean Zaru, Clerk of Ramallah meeting, who called on us not to be Pro-Palestinian or Pro-Israeli but Pro-Peace. We then attended workshops on specific issues such as Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions, the Arms Trade and EAPPI.

It was clear throughout the weekend that passions and anger ran high and there is a need for some individual and collective action; however there was no decision on a collective Quaker position on issues. QCEA will over the next few weeks be pulling together the responses from the conference and presenting the Council with a programme of work to move forward with.

It was great to learn from so many people, and great to meet Young Friends, although we were in the definite minority. We learnt of Quaker work in Ramallah and discussed ways we could promote the current Quaker work.

Over the next few months QCEA will be deciding what ways to move forward and it would be good if EMEYF gave some thought and discernment to the subject.

*Leo Vincent*

## **EMES Representative Report to EMEYF**

In September I attended the EMES Executive meeting in Sweden to replace Liz Seume who was unable to attend.

This was my first time at this meeting and it took a little time to get settled into the way they approach things!

At the meeting items discussed included EMES finances (they look rather healthy!!), the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage and other matters of “administrative business”.

EMES is also launching a Companion Programme for isolated Friends in the region which basically involves pairing people up to support those who are isolated. EMES would like to know if EMEYF would also like to engage in this work area. The other area of work EMES would like to know if EMEYF would like to engage with is the Global Change programme which is exploring how we as Quakers approach Global Change; the environment etc.

A lot time was spent discussing the joint gathering in 2011 with EMES and EMEYF. The update on the gathering will cover these points.

The weekend was enriched by a visiting Friend from Israel joining us on the Saturday and we spent the evening talking about what it was like to be an Israeli/Jewish/Quaker and the work she undertakes in her daily life to promote peace and discourse between Israelis and Palestinians.

Generally it was an informative meeting about the working of EMES but it is clear that there is a lot of work to be done to allow EMES and EMEYF to work together better.

*Leo Vincent*