

## **EMEYF Spring Gathering 2012, Wehlen near Dresden, Germany, April 6-13 2012**

**Present:** Ben Jarman, David Mangels, Esther Koehring, Georg Adelman, Hannah Slater, Helen Close, Helen Percy, Kristin Skarsholt, Laurina Pfeiffer, Matt Loffman (until tuesday), Miranda Barty-Taylor (until tuesday), Oliver Robertson (until monday), Paul Sladen (until tuesday), Sarah Dyble, Tamara Gorbenko, Vivian Barty-Taylor (until tuesday), Wanda Dahme

**Greetings:** see EMEYF SG 12/03

### **EMEYF SG 12/01                      Opening Minute**

We are pleased to be gathered in the beautiful surroundings of Wehlen and meeting together again for EMEYF Spring Gathering 2012. In exploring what it means to be a community and how to encourage it, we hope to build stronger connections between us and to be encouraged by this in our daily lives. We look forward to sharing time as a community over the course of the gathering.

### **EMEYF SG 12/02                      Nominations for SG 2012**

The following Friends have been appointed to serve for this gathering:

- Ben Jarman (Recording Clerk)
- Laurina Pfeiffer (Elder)
- Wanda Dahme, Hannah Slater, Paul Sladen and Matt Loffman (Nominations Committee)
- Georg Adelman, Sarah Dyble, Kristin Skarsholt, Tamara Gorbenko and David Mangels (Epistle Committee)

We thank them for their willingness to serve and will support them as a community throughout the week.

### **EMEYF SG 12/03                      Greetings**

Ian Goggin (Ireland), Kathrine Skarsholt (Norway), Tonje Smidt Hundevadt (Norway), Heather Havishambling Fowler (Finland), Leo Vincent (Britain YM) and Sophie Edwards (Britain YM) send their greetings.

Some of our Friends have also been prevented from joining us by practical issues: Kristina Paulkina (Georgia), Eduard Shiukashvili (Georgia) and Dilawer Dari (Syria).

These Friends are not with us this week but remain part of our community; we hope to meet them at EMEYF events in future.

### **EMEYF SG 12/04                      Annual Report 2011**

Our secretary, Hannah Slater, presented the Annual Report 2011. It contains reports from various posts within EMEYF on the events we have held over the last year, in particular the joint Spring Gathering held at Herzberg with EMES, as well as other information such as the accounts and the dates of events and gatherings interesting to Young Friends in Europe and the Middle East. Hannah will send out copies to YMs, donors and other interested parties soon.

We thank Hannah for her efforts in assembling the Annual Report, as well as thanking all those involved in writing the various sections.

### **EMEYF SG 12/05                      National Delegates**

In the past, EMEYF had a series of National Contact Persons to different national Quaker organisations. EMEYF valued this system, which has since been discontinued owing to EMEYF's financial situation. We have discussed some of the ways in which we might renew and strengthen formal links with national Quaker groups, and heard from the two delegates of German Young Friends with us at this meeting, Laurina Pfeiffer and Georg Adelman.

Laurina and Georg reported on their selection and service, focusing on their personal journeys

during and before this Gathering, and the reports they will make back to German Young Friends and German YM more generally. We thank them for these reflections, as well as thanking German YM for funding their attendance.

We believe that both EMEYF and national Quaker groups can benefit from stronger formal links between them. The delegation of German YFs to EMEYF will ensure that new people will benefit from their attendance and carry their enthusiasm back to their own Quaker communities. It is through such links, and through the presence in their midst of Young Friends who are enthusiastic about EMEYF, that lasting formal links with national Quaker groups will be renewed.

It may be that individual national groups will not find a similar arrangement appropriate, for financial or other reasons. However, we ask national Quaker groups to consider how they may support closer formal links to EMEYF, possibly including nominating delegates (in the manner of German Young Friends) or by considering other means appropriate to their situation. We hope that this would, in the longer term, lead to the return of a more permanent network of national contacts. We ask the EMEYF Secretary and Communications Committee to facilitate this process.

#### **EMEYF SG 12/06                      Outreach**

Wanda Dahme reported on the activities of an Outreach Committee that came together at the 2011 Spring Gathering, which focused on amendments to the EMEYF leaflet, website and Facebook page. The Committee is open to feedback and ideas brought forward by EMEYF members. We thank the members of the committee for their work.

#### **EMEYF SG 12/07                      Venue of Annual Meeting 2012**

EMEYF has previously held Annual Meetings in even years at Bad Pyrmont, and in odd years at Quaker House in Brussels. We are considering the question of whether to move our Annual Meeting from Bad Pyrmont to another location, in view of the difficulties of travelling to a remote location. Mindful of the fact that the reasons for any change in our arrangements will need careful explaining to German Friends, we will hold the 2012 Annual Meeting at Bad Pyrmont as before, but will open discussions with German Friends about whether they feel the Quaker office in Berlin is a viable option for our 2014 Annual Meeting. We also ask our Gatherings Coordinator to continue investigating alternative venues, including those in other countries.

If an Annual Meeting goes ahead in a new location, this will involve a change to the environment in which previous annual meetings have taken place. We will therefore gather feedback on the 2014 Annual Meeting and review whether this arrangement worked for us as a community after the event has taken place, with a view to whether the same venue is a viable option for the future.

#### **EMEYF SG 12/08                      Date of Annual Meeting 2012**

We ask our Secretary to enquire whether Bad Pyrmont is available for the weekend of 16-18 November 2012, and if so to book it. If not, we ask her to book the closest alternative weekend.

#### **EMEYF SG 12/09                      Nominations returns**

The following people have been appointed:

- Members of Spring Gathering Planning Committee 2013: Majk Stokes and Sarah Dyble
- Website Editor (until Spring Gathering 2014): Esther Köhring
- Charitable Committee trustee and treasurer (interim): Ben Jarman (released from service: Jonathan Riddell)
- Charitable Committee trustee (until 2014): Matt Loffman (released from service: Leo Vincent)
- Recording Clerk for Annual Meeting 2012: Vivian Barty-Taylor

The post of Website Editor is a new role and we have decided for the time being to appoint it on a two-year basis, subject to review at the time when the role is next up for nomination.

At Spring Gathering we have been unable to appoint a permanent Charitable Committee trustee and treasurer, a role that EMEYF were asked to find a new postholder for in autumn 2011. Mindful of the responsibilities we have to make it possible for Friends to balance between their commitment to EMEYF and their personal life and growth, we appoint Ben Jarman as an interim Charitable Committee trustee and treasurer. We ask Communications Committee to actively look for names of possible future treasurers and to contact those people before Annual Meeting 2012, with the aim of appointing a permanent Charitable Committee trustee and treasurer in autumn 2012.

We thank Nominations Committee for their efforts, thank Leo Vincent and Jonathan Riddell for their service in the roles from which they have been released, and wish the new postholders well in their roles.

#### **EMEYF SG 12/10                      Epistle**

The Epistle Committee have created a beautiful representation of the time we have spent together. It grows from words from those present here about our origins, our sense of community, and the ways in which we have grown, personally and as a group, through our participation in the Spring Gathering, forming a tree.

The Epistle is attached, as a picture and as a text, to these minutes.

#### **EMEYF SG 12/11                      Closing Minute**

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to come together, spend time, tell our stories, and to help each other grow, all in the beautiful natural setting of the Sächsische Schweiz. Our time here has been spent encouraging and building community, and we have felt a sense of deep spiritual fellowship. To reach the tiny ferry across the Elbe to Wehlen, we travelled from all over Europe. Now, travelling back to our own diverse communities, we carry the bridges we have built here with us.

The fellowship we have felt has partly been possible as a result of the generous support of Yearly Meetings, Area Meetings, and individuals. We thank them for having helped to enable our growth. Our gathering here would not have been possible without the hard work of the Planning Committee and of our Gatherings Coordinator, and we also owe them our gratitude. Finally, we thank those who have served in various roles through the week, both from within our community, and those invited speakers who joined us to facilitate sessions.

We keenly anticipate the next opportunity we will have to gather in this way, in England in the spring of 2013.