

THE YOUNG QUAKER

For Young Friends Everywhere

NUMBER 5

MAY 2014

PRICE: FREE

THE STAVROS S. NIARCHOS SETS SAIL WITH A QUAKER CREW!

This April, a group of 40 young people (30 Quakers and 10 friends of Quakers) aged 14 to 17 from across BYM set sail for a six-day adventure on a Tall Ship on the Irish Sea, along with CYP staff and seven adult volunteers.

Their vessel, the *Stavros S. Niarchos*, is a brig operated by the Tall Ships Youth Trust, and departed from Liverpool on Tuesday 15th April with her Quaker crew.

The trip had been organised by BYM's Children and Young People's team. CYP staff member, Ruth Charles, said of the voyage "This was a unique opportunity to combine the adventurous activity of Tall Ship sailing with creating a Quaker community, and reflecting each day on the experience along with looking at early Quakers and their own links to sailing.

Experiencing Quaker worship out on the deck of the ship was an uplifting experience and those who brought non-Quaker friends with them appreciated the chance to introduce their friends to Quakerism and have the chance to discuss their spiritual journeys."

The *Stavros S. Niarchos* arrived back in Liverpool on Friday 18th April, having crossed the Irish Sea to Belfast. One young person said "I can honestly say that this voyage has been both a physical and spiritual journey and it has changed me as a person." and another asked "Can we stay onboard forever?"

Participants kept a diary of their experiences aboard the ship, as well as taking photographs documenting their time aboard. Both of these are available online at: quaker.org.uk/tall-ship-event-2014



Above: The *Stavros S. Niarchos*
(Photo: Emily Nurden)

Below: Quakers in the rigging!
(Photo: Ruth Charles)



"When I went to the Captain, I was scarce half a Quaker, but by their Lyes and false Reports against me, they have made me almost a whole Quaker, or at least I hope to be one. My Friends received me in much Love and Tenderness, and ever after I kept to their Meetings. After this, Truth prevailed very much, and had a great sway in the ship, and several were convinced"

Thomas Lurting, The Fighting Sailor Turned Peaceable Christian (1711)

ON BEING A RESIDENT STUDENT AT PENDLE HILL

By HAIFA RASHED

This time a year ago I was a Human Rights Programme Assistant at the Quaker UN Office (QUNO) in Geneva. I was thrilled to be working on behalf of Quakers at the international level and looking forward to progressing in my human rights career after years of charity work including paid jobs, unpaid internships, voluntary work and postgraduate study.

Then I was struck suddenly by a very nasty chest infection that lasted a couple of months and from which I never properly recovered. After ruling out various other illnesses my GP told me I had 'post-viral fatigue' which is like ME / chronic fatigue syndrome. Full recovery isn't guaranteed, and can take months or years, and the primary symptom is ongoing exhaustion, meaning I was no longer able to work full time.

Even normal household tasks became unmanageable and I returned home to the UK to be cared for by my parents, which I was grateful for - but it was not exactly what I had planned for my next move after QUNO!

My initial reaction to all this was 'why me?' and a real denial about the severity of the condition I was experiencing. I had a deep feeling that I would like to be in a Quaker environment, where I could take time out, read, reflect, recover, eat good food and be open to discerning what my life was asking of me at this point.

I had heard of Pendle Hill, a Quaker Study, Retreat, and Conference Center near Philadelphia, USA, and was amazed to find that it had precisely what I was looking for - the Resident Study Program.

The Resident Study Program consists of three terms and runs for a whole academic year, from September to June. Students can come for one, two or three terms, or for the month long summer programme.

Most students here are at a major

'transition' phase in their life, from a recent university graduate to those entering retirement, Pendle Hill offers the ideal space to stop and discern the way forward.

I applied to come for two terms and have been here since January 2014, overcoming both health and financial hurdles. Whilst initially daunted by the cost of the fees, I managed to raise the money through a Pendle Hill scholarship, my local meeting, the George Gorman Trust and the great generosity of friends and family.

Pendle Hill is a Quaker community, whereby some staff, students and interns live on campus and contribute to the daily running of the place.

Community life is based on Benedictine principles of study, work and prayer. For students this means we have a 'daily job' - I'm on breakfast washing-up duty - as well as a 'work morning' every Wednesday where, for example, we can help in the kitchen, or out on the grounds, or in the (excellent) bookstore.

Every term we have a choice of four courses: a Quakerism/Bible course, an art course, a social change course and a general spirituality course. Students are free to take as many classes as they would like to.

Last term I studied two courses - a very inspiring class on nonviolent social change and another on 'Discerning My Call'. Both were very rich and directly relevant to my experience and interests at this stage.

I had my first proper Clearness Committee as part of the Discerning My Call class, a process which I found extremely helpful.

This term I am taking three classes - Permaculture, 'Altered book-making' and the Synoptic Gospels. Students are also able to take a couple of the weekend workshops that are open to the public each term. My favourite so far has been a (very relaxing) yoga workshop.

During my time here, I have been able to heal on different levels. Physically, I'm healing by resting, practising tai chi every morning and enjoying afternoons sitting in the sun on the campus.

Furthermore, the food here is incredible! It is mostly vegetarian and organic and uses mainly local produce. I'm on a gluten-free and dairy-free diet, which is being specifically catered for and it is a real privilege to be able to stick to this diet without having to worry about the cost, sourcing the ingredients, the energy it takes to carry shopping/prepare.

Pendle Hill



On being a Resident Student at Pendle Hill

The food is very varied and international. Japanese, Korean, Mexican, Mediterranean, Indian, Italian dishes have all graced the menu. For someone who loves food each meal-time is an absolute joy!

On an emotional and spiritual level, I have really appreciated the daily 30 min Meeting for Worship and I am finding the daily collective silent worship to be an incredible gift and basis for the day.

There is a 24-hour library and art studio and a variety of extra-curricular activities on offer including the Pendle Hill Chorus, a writing meditation class and a dream interpretation group.

I am meeting some wonderful people and forming firm friendships. It's my first time Stateside and I've been able to travel to New York and Washington D.C. Most importantly perhaps, my 'spiritual' experiences since being here are numerous.

I heard someone say that people come to Pendle Hill and 'find God' but I think what this environment offers is the chance to slow down, centre in and really listen to that inner light/teacher, which is there all along. It's a very unique opportunity to be in such a supportive place where, as my fellow student put it, 'people want you to be well.'

For those of you who may be interested in becoming a Resident Student at Pendle Hill, contact admissions@pendlehill.org.

There is also an internship scheme whereby you can intern for a year in the hospitality, kitchen, maintenance or communications departments and in return are given room and board and a stipend.

For more information on Pendle Hill, see www.pendlehill.org or visit their Facebook page www.facebook.com/pendlehill.

To follow Haifa's blog of her experience at Pendle Hill, visit sixteenfiftytwo.wordpress.com.

Get involved with Quaker action at the heart of Europe, with the Quaker Council for European Affairs!

Become a Programme Assistant

Programme Assistantships are early career positions for people who have recently completed education, to work in the QCEA team in Brussels for one year.

This is an opportunity to:

- Gain work experience in an international Quaker setting
- Work on one of QCEA's programme areas (economic justice, peace, or sustainability)
- Assist in the day to day tasks of QCEA and Quaker House

Application Deadline 10 June. See more at: www.qcea.org/home/involved/vacancies

Stay up-to-date with European politics at our QCEA blog

Qceablog.wordpress.com provides regular comment on issues that Quakers work on at the European level.

Tell your Member of the European Parliament about an issue important to you

QCEA 'Action Alerts' let you know when there is an opportunity to take part in a joint action with other Friends (often by sending an email or taking part in an online consultation) to help make the Quaker voice even louder in Europe. To sign up visit: www.qcea.org/home/involved/action-alerts



**Quaker
Council for
European
Affairs**

Find us on Facebook – Follow us on Twitter @QCEA – More Info: www.qcea.org

EMEYF SPRING GATHERING 2014 – LAKE OHRID, MACEDONIA

By Tim Rouse

I wasn't planning on going to Macedonia. It just sort of happened.

I knew EMEYF existed, but I'd never been involved before – foreign travel is fun, but it's also expensive, and I just hadn't had the chance to go to any EMEYF events before now. But when I heard about this year's Spring Gathering, which took place on the shores of Macedonia's 'fresh-water sea', Lake Ohrid, from April 12th to 19th, the idea of going entered my head and just wouldn't leave.

"If you want a really strong dose of Quakerism, this is it."

Fast forward a few weeks. With financial help from my local meeting, I was flying out to Macedonia's capital, Skopje, a couple of days before the Gathering. Once there, I met up with some of my fellow Gatherers before we took the 3-hour bus journey to Ohrid.

We took the opportunity to drink in the sights and sounds of Skopje, from the old bazaar with its twisty streets, beautiful mosques, and local cuisine, to the nationalistic triumphalism of the main square, with its 22-metre high statue of 'local' hero, Alexander the Great.



The Spring Gatherers in Galichica National Park, Macedonia

Lake Ohrid was another matter entirely. From the urban landscape of Skopje, we passed dramatic mountain ranges and fertile valleys to reach the serene lake on the western edge of Macedonia. The lake is split between Albania, on the western side, and Macedonia on the east; for us, the most visible sign of this was getting an Albanian signal on our mobile phones!

The presence of this border, and the fact that the Gathering was being held in Macedonia at all, were tied into the theme of the Gathering, borders. The issue of borders guided our thoughts and our discernment through the week; all the more so when a visa issue meant that a Georgian friend couldn't be with us at the Gathering.

The six of us who had travelled together by bus from Skopje, arrived in the tiny lakeside village of Lagadin just a few minutes before the five who had driven by car from the Netherlands, meaning that the Ikar Hut, our venue, was rapidly filled with noise and life as everyone settled in. For me, it was a time of getting to know new people from all across Europe, and saying hello to old friends from the UK.

The rest of the week was intense and amazing. We grew rapidly into a strong community, caring for each other and building strong friendships. Our business sessions were long, but they were deeply spiritual, filled with powerful discernment.

Too much happened that week for me to be able to relate it in full. We climbed a mountain; we visited a monastery; we volunteered and cooked and paddled and looked after a baby. Most of all, we enjoyed ourselves; we were Friends and friends, exporting top quality Quakerism to a country where Quakers are unheard of. As one participant said, "If you want a really strong dose of Quakerism, this is it."

I hadn't been to an EMEYF event before this Spring Gathering, but I know I'll be going to more in the future.



Lake Ohrid

EMEYF Spring Gathering 2014 - Epistle

“Go with the flow. There is a different sense of time in Macedonia.”

From the 12th of April to the 19th of April 2014 we came together in Lagadin, Macedonia, for our Spring Gathering. The decision to go to Macedonia was a bit scary and the organizing committee faced many challenges to make this gathering happen. We were not aware of any Quakers here and none of us had ever been to the country before. But we managed.

Since we are all strangers in Macedonia, we were all put in the same position from where we then started to explore.

This gathering felt active, buzzing. We overcame our worries of going to an unknown country and not being able to plan every detail. Sometimes it was difficult to pinpoint what was happening, but we could sense that a lot was going on.

Some of us came to the gathering feeling we must overcome borders and tear them down. Then we worked on our theme „Borders within and without“ in workshops and discovered other aspects. Borders keep us together. We have them for structure, but must remember that they need to be permeable. Impassable borders tear and keep communities apart.

Misha from Georgia could not get a visa to come to Spring Gathering.

This felt very significant to our gathering. It even was eyeopening for some of us, because many young Friends never experienced an impassable border.

After Annual Meeting in November, EMEYF was without a clerk. This was difficult, especially for the members of the Communications Committee. To our surprise, this situation led to a very different experience in meeting for worship for business and in the end resulted in a very high engagement of the whole group into the process. We have faith that what needs to be done will be done. Three Friends volunteered to record minutes during our business meetings and they were surprised they could actually do it.

Next Spring Gathering will be held in Georgia. Georgian Friends have been prevented from participating in our community for many years. We are glad to accept their invitation to get to know them and their country.

Our youngest participant was Peter, who turned one at our gathering. We appreciated sharing our time with him. We held him close and entertained him with music. This way we also got to experience this Spring Gathering through his eyes. We sincerely hope to meet Peter again next year to celebrate his second birthday with him!

We move forward in hope and live adventurously.

WHAT IS EMEYF?

Imagine if YFGM wasn't just a British thing – imagine if YFGM covered the entirety of Europe and the Middle East, and you're getting close to imagining what EMEYF is.

The comparison isn't perfect – there are lots of differences between the two bodies – but it's a good starting point. EMEYF, or to use its full name, European and Middle Eastern Young Friends, is the community for young Friends from any of the Yearly Meetings and Worship Groups in the FWCC's Europe and Middle East Section (EMES).

If you're aged between 18 and 35, you live somewhere in Europe or the Middle East, and you consider yourself a Quaker, then congratulations! You're already a part of EMEYF, even if you didn't know it.

Other countries in EMES simply don't have the numbers to sustain a YFGM-like community on their own, so EMEYF brings together young Friends from all over EMES (including the UK!) into one, international community. It's quite a small community but it's a very friendly one!

EMEYF usually has at least two gatherings every year, which attract young Friends from across the Section. One of these is the Annual Meeting, held in Belgium or Germany, and the other is the Spring Gathering, which is held in a different country each year, and gives the EMEYF community the chance to explore a theme, as well as developing personal friendships and deepening our spiritual experiences.

This year's Spring Gathering was at Lake Ohrid in Macedonia, exploring the theme of borders. We don't know what next year's theme is yet, but we do know it'll be taking place in Georgia.

If you're interested in getting involved with EMEYF, if you want to come to an event, or just find out more, then visit the website at www.emeyf.org or contact the EMEYF secretary at emeyf@qcea.org

The Ikar Hut, in Lagadin near Ohrid, was our home base throughout the Spring Gathering.



DOING GOOD, DOING BAD?

DIANA JEATER asks some challenging questions ahead of her 'Doing Good, Doing Bad?' course at Woodbrooke

Are you planning a gap year? Have you, perhaps, just returned from doing voluntary work for a development project somewhere in the global south? How confident are you that these projects really meet local needs? How do we know what will help and empower communities?

Who decides whether a community really needs a school, a well, an orphanage, an unqualified teacher? And what makes us think that these communities need well-meaning outsiders to come and 'help' them to carry out tasks that they are perfectly capable of carrying out for themselves?

As Quakers, we need to ask ourselves whether we have answers to these questions. Can we be sure that we are doing good, or might our well-meaning interventions actually be doing harm?

Of course, it's long been known that development work and gap year experiences can perpetuate patronising and disempowering relationships between rich and poor. Helen Steven's words about the 'profound arrogance which initiates aid programmes' (see QF&P 29.06) still have significant today.

Development organisations are well aware of this concern, and generally acknowledge and attempt to address it when designing their programmes and training their volunteers.

But there's something more. Even when development programmes attempt to use local knowledge and when the power imbalance is overtly acknowledged, we are often left with a sense of unease. Deep-seated systems still seem to pull development and gap-year programmes in directions that reinforce rather than challenge global inequalities.

As charity work has become more institutionalised, it has also become more about 'value for money'. Like everything else in this increasingly commoditised world, 'aid' is now about costs, not about people. Few would argue that charities and NGOs need to be able to audit their use of donated funds. But putting financial accountability at the centre of aid and development has many knock-on effects which undermine the partnership between those who provide and those who receive.

For example, an emphasis on quantifiable outcomes can mean that things that can be counted and measured – buildings, placements, quantities of seed distributed – become more important than long-term transformations in how people work together in community.

The prevalence of external agenda-setting results in recipients of aid being given limited options, and end up accepting what is being offered, rather than being given support to find out what they need for themselves.

And there's a real danger of professionalisation at the expense of local knowledge, as project leaders are appointed on the basis of their track record in delivering outcomes on time and within budget.

These tendencies are difficult to challenge because aid and gap-year projects are a thriving business. Many people's livelihoods depend on them.

Even where development agencies set up consultation processes and employ local expertise, people remain unhappy about external actors making a well-paid career out of running projects formulated with external accountability in mind.

Would you like us to do better than this? Would you welcome some tools to help you assess the long-term impact of your volunteer work?

As Quakers, we have a good tradition of providing appropriate help when it has been requested. But we are also subject to the need for external accountability, which puts the interests of donors ahead of the interests of recipients.

How can we address this? A recognition of that of God in everyone leads us to a radical testimony to equality. This may require us to reject almost all the existing models of aid and find new ways to build loving partnerships with others in the world. At the least, it requires us to pay heed to what love requires of us, which may not be great busy-body-ness.

"Doing Good, Doing Bad? : Exploring uneasiness about the development 'industry'" will be running at Woodbrooke in July. Generous bursaries available for young Friends. For further information, phone Woodbrooke, 0121 472 5171 or email enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk

Doing Good, Doing Bad?

Exploring unease about the development industry

**Monday 21 -
Wednesday 23 July
2014**

**£200 ensuite
£190 standard**



To find out more or book, visit <http://bit.ly/dogood14>

PLUS discounts available to Young Friends and others.
See <http://bit.ly/WB14help>

WHY I AM A QUNITARIAN

By JULIAN WOOD

I recently became a member at Unitarian Meeting Bristol (www.bristolunitarians.blogspot.co.uk), and am so glad to have joined. The Unitarians have given me so much over the last couple of years, and I know I will be a Unitarian for years to come – I have found a real spiritual home, plus a fascinating and friendly bunch of people, a real community of open-minded and free-thinking individuals.

Over the same time, I've been attending the Quaker Meeting at Redland too, and have enjoyed and need this greatly on my path. Both paths (Quakers and Unitarians) share so much in common. There is also different emphasis in each tradition, and I value that too.

So I've decided to continue attending both services. It is a time commitment, but it gives me so much and allows me to give a lot to other people in my life and community.

I will encourage all Unitarians to explore aspects of Quakerism, and encourage Quakers to find out more about Unitarians too!

LISTEN UP!

JULIAN WOOD shares some of his favourite podcasts and online radio shows with us.

1) On Being – www.onbeing.org
On Being is a weekly radio program with Krista Tippett. Pick any of the episodes, they are all excellent, and each one has a webpage full of info, links and ideas. I recommend this one on Alain de Botton:
<http://bit.ly/1hhVbuV>

2) Spirit of Things
<http://ab.co/1gxnpX>
From ABC National (Australia's public broadcaster) comes another fantastic multi-faith radio show, with excellent guests and topics. I recommend this one on my favourite writer Stephanie Dowrick:
<http://ab.co/1na3DhT>

3) Encounter: The Hour of the Stranger – <http://ab.co/1fA1Djf>
An episode from another of ABC National's weekly shows, this episode is on the pressures of adolescence.

4) Something Understood
bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qn7f
Excellent religious / spiritual program on BBC Radio 4, with episodes available to listen to online any time for up to a week, presented by Mark Tully.

YFGM-FREE AT YEALAND

This summer, some of the Young Friends General Meeting community will be gathering for a fun event at the Old School House, Yealand.

Owned and managed by the local Quaker Meeting, the venue is a simple hostel in the heart of '1652 country', the area in which Quakerism first emerged during the travels of George Fox and his contemporaries.

This summer's event will offer a relaxed weekend away from the hectic pace of daily life and, with no business to be conducted at the event, it will provide a break from the business sessions that are a big part of regular YFGMs, giving a chance to spend time with other Young Friends in an informal environment.

The organisers promise fun and stimulating activities, but reassure that their main aim is to take it easy and deepen friendships within the community.

"We hope to have walks, craft and special interest groups, epilogues, games and silliness, good food and plenty of cake."

The Old School House, Yealand



In an additional advantage over most YFGMs, there are even a few beds available, although most accommodation will be on the floor. There are even hot showers!

For more information or to register for the weekend, contact Julian at julwood@gmail.com or phone him on 07977 263011. You can also find out more details by searching for the event on Facebook, or visiting the page on the YFGM website: www.yfgm.quaker.org.uk/events/yfgm-free

Costs are £40 per person, but bursaries are available – contact the YFGM coordinator, Niki, at yfgm@quaker.org.uk for more information.

WHAT ARE QUAKERS?

The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, are a religious group which started in the north of England in the seventeenth century. Originally a Christian sect, modern Quakers include people from a multitude of religious and philosophical positions.

One of the key ideas in Quakerism is that truth isn't necessarily found in old scriptures, but can be revealed to anybody who listens for it. Quaker worship is mostly silent, with people speaking when they feel called to do so by the 'Inner Light', sometimes called 'that of God within everyone'.

Quakers are concerned with making the world a better place. Central to Quakerism are the Testimonies of Peace, Equality, Truth (or Integrity) and Simplicity. Others, such as a Testimony to the Environment, are also spoken of in some contexts.

A commitment to these principles has put Quakers at the forefront of political and social issues; for example, Quakers were among the leading groups who campaigned for the abolition of slavery, and in more recent years Quakers advocated strongly for the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

WHAT IS YFGM?

Young Friends General Meeting, abbreviated as YFGM, is the national community for young adult Quakers in Britain.

Our main events are the three General Meetings which take place at Quaker meeting houses around the country in February, May, and October each year.

These weekends are open to anyone aged between 18 and 30ish who is a Quaker or interested in Quakerism, from the UK or farther afield, and are a chance to meet like-minded people and find out more about what Young Adult Friends do.

YFGM is an autonomous organisation, entirely run by the young people who take part in it, using Quaker principles and methods. We're also an active part of the wider Quaker community in Britain, providing representatives to bodies such as Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Life, and the NFPB.

If you'd like to get involved in YFGM, to come along to a YFGM event, or simply find out more, then visit the YFGM website at yfgm.quaker.org.uk or email yfgm@quaker.org.uk. You can also find the YFGM group on Facebook.

WHAT IS *THE YOUNG QUAKER*?

The *Young Quaker* is a magazine for young Friends everywhere, produced in print and online. Published by YFGM, TYQ comes out three times a year, to coincide with YFGM weekends – meaning that you can expect a new issue in February, May, and October.

The aim of TYQ is to share news, opinion, and pretty much anything that might be of interest to young Quakers.

All of our articles are either written by young Friends, about things that young Friends have been doing, or simply about things that young Friends might find interesting. Most of our articles tick two or three of those boxes, too.

We're always looking for new material. If you've got an idea for an article you'd like to see in *The Young Quaker*, get in touch with us at the email address below. If you're able to write it, even better!

Although our focus is on the UK, we also welcome articles from Quakers in other countries, and we also welcome submissions from people under 18; you might not be able to come to YFGM yet, but we'd love to hear from you.



Scan this QR code with your phone to experience the digital edition of TYQ

If you've been inspired, you can submit articles or ideas to *The Young Quaker* by emailing us at theyoungquaker@gmail.com or by talking to the editors at YFGM!

Don't forget to visit the website at www.tyq.org.uk to read the latest articles, to download the digital edition, or to subscribe to receive TYQ by email.

The Young Quaker can be found online at

www.theyoungquaker.org.uk

For general enquiries, for additional copies of TYQ, or if you would like to advertise in TYQ, please contact the TYQ team by emailing

theyoungquaker@gmail.com

The Young Quaker is produced by Young Friends General Meeting
www.yfgm.quaker.org.uk

Young Friends General Meeting
Friends House
173 Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ

The Co-Editors would like to thank all those who have contributed to this edition of *The Young Quaker*. It would be impossible to produce the magazine without the articles and photographs that you send in.

Please get in touch if you would like to contribute to the next issue, due out in time for the next YFGM, which will take place between **17th - 19th October 2014** in Nottingham Meeting House

We are also planning a special Summer edition to celebrate Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath. We would welcome any submissions for this edition no later than **18th July 2014**