

All-Age-Gathering 2016 - Epistle



We came together for a week in Bonn to celebrate the 30(ish)th birthday of EMEYF with multiple generations: those who were attending EMEYF for the first time at 6 months old, and those who were there at the first gatherings 30 years ago. We looked back to the past, were together in the present and turned our faces to the future in hope and determination to meet the challenges of the world today and our own lives. We hope to share with other Friends in EMES some of our experience of being time travellers. What is communication? Since the beginning of EMEYF, we have wondered how to bridge the separation of languages. This week we were reminded that we all speak the language of silence and shared experiences.

1994 Spring Gathering (from the EMEYF archives)

We took part in a ceremony to stimulate our thoughts about our involvement in our own life cycles. We covered our faces with masks and facepaint, chose new names for ourselves, wrote our personal weaknesses and old attitudes to life on slips of paper and burned them on a bonfire.

1995 Annual Report (from the EMEYF archives)

EMEYF continues to be an inspiring and important organisation for Young Friends around Europe. In 1995 EMEYF changed its structure slightly. The Annual Meeting, which is one of the main events of the year, was moved from spring time to the autumn so events are spread throughout the year, an arrangement which appears to have worked very well. (..) There is lots of energy and enthusiasm for new ideas in EMEYF.

AAG 2016: Obviously a sound base had been laid about 30 years ago, but what makes EMEYF so alive is that Young Friends reinvent themselves again and again in a continuous process led by the Spirit. (from the Epistle board)

2016 AAG in Bonn – Wake up, show up, and choose the light.

Das Zusammentreffen von so vielen Generationen von EMEYF'ern kreiert eine Gemeinschaft, die schwer in Worte zu fassen ist. Das Gefühl zu einem EMEYF-Treffen nach Hause zu kommen, sich wie von einem Netz getragen zu fühlen, oder in der Gemeinschaft die Wurzeln zu festigen, haben Viele mit mir geteilt. Auch wenn ich nach einem Treffen doch komplett physisch erschöpft nach Hause komme, fühle ich die neuen Ideen, Visionen und Kraft in mir wachsen. (Wanda, current EMEYF)



C'est par des voix chaleureuses et des rires que j'ai été accueilli au „EMEYF All-Age Gathering“, mon premier contact avec EYMEF et avec les Quakers. Pourtant ce ne sont ni ces voix ni ces rires que je retiens de cette semaine. Car c'est en silence, assis en cercle sous un même toit, que nous avons été les plus proches les uns des autres. C'est en silence qu'ont bourgeonné puis fleuri les liens entre anciens et nouveaux amis. C'est enfin en silence qu'ont muri les fruits sucrés de cette rencontre, récompenses du voyage introspectif que nous avons mené.

C'est donc avec des amis, le sourire et des cernes que je vais quitter Bonn. (Iona, first contact with Quakers)



Dit jaar komt EMEYF niet bijeen in een hutje op het platteland van Noord-Engeland of Macedonie, maar in een conferentie-oord in de buurt van het centrum van Bonn. En we zijn niet met alleen 25 jongeren, maar met meer dan 100 deelnemers van alle leeftijden. Toch voel ik me bij aankomst onmiddellijk thuis, ik heb meteen weer het "EMEYF-gevoel". Het is heerlijk om dat gevoel met zoveel mensen te kunnen delen en te vieren. To all people that have not been to an EMEYF event in a while, or never at all, thank you for being there. (Mieke, current EMEYF)

We had discussions about aging, past and current changes in the lives of people and felt the presence of past EMEYFers among us, those who are still with us and those who are not.

They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

We will remember them. (Laurence Binyon, quoted on the Epistle Board)

Throughout the week we had the opportunity to share our values and faith with so many exciting people, young friends and older Friends who are looking forward to being Young Friends when they grow up.

We are quite sad to see the week coming to an end, and are already looking forward to seeing the EMEYF community living and reinventing itself again and again. Thank you Friends.

