

## **CENTRE QUAKER de CONGÉNIES**

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NEWSLETTER No. 6. June 2008

Dear Friends,

What is the difference between the Centre Quaker de Congénies and the Maison Quaker de Congénies? It is the intricacies of French charity law which make this necessary. The Maison Quaker de Congénies is the actual property belonging to France Yearly Meeting (which is registered as a religious association). As landlord, FYM is responsible for major repairs and reimbursing the interest free loan. The Centre, (registered as a cultural association) has signed an 'Agreement' with France Yearly Meeting to manage the property on its behalf, ensuring continued use as a Quaker Meeting House, while running a programme of courses, activities and guest accommodation, income from which will help cover running costs.

Now the house, elegant, but simple, has opened its doors to visitors, and we invite you to come and stay. This newsletter will be mainly about the Centre's activities, but in the garden, the summer kitchen and outdoor showers and toilets remain to be completed.

Our first resident friend, Kyla, a young Canadian, has come and gone. She contributed much by her willing service and graphic design skills. Volunteers have offered their service up to 2010 which is very encouraging.

We began modestly with an Esperanto course, led by Gaby Tréanton, a Friend from Brittany Meeting, - an enlightening 4 days for several of us. We have welcomed musical guests. Over Christmas, we were treated to a concert of recorders and crumhorns. Later the ImproVisions Jazz Quartet from Montpellier, USA (friends of Friends) played at a converted wine co-operative in the village - a gig facilitated by the Centre - and raised money for the local Amnesty group as well as for the Centre.

The Languedoc Roussillon Meeting and the Centre continue to invite visiting speakers to the Centre once a month. Topics have included Alternative Tourism in India; Healing; the USA, torture and rendition with Chuck Fager and organised with ACAT (Action des chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture); and Teaching English in Palestine Today with Pat Stapleton.

In April, QVA (Quaker Voluntary Action) came for their first overseas Work and Worship week, some 10 people doing sterling work in the burial ground and garden. The Meetings for Worship felt blessed, and it was a week full of sharing, laughter and deep reflection too.

During the summer, we have various family and individual bookings (including a big wedding over 14th July), but would welcome your help in encouraging more groups to come with their own programme. The Centre programme will include "The 1788 Country", the story of local Quakers, during the autumn gathering 17-20 October, Also self-drive tours on topics such as "Artists in the South of France", "Bridges and Viaducts", or "Sketching in sun and shadow".

I hope this updates you. Please visit our revamped website. There you will find details of how to make a donation by cheque or bank transfer. (As well as financing the extensive building works, we have managed to reduce our interest free purchase loan in only 6 years by £35k to £115k, so thank you to our generous donors). I repeat the details anyway. Cheques in sterling or French euro cheques payable to Amis Quaker Congénies can be sent to Mary Savage, 8 La Fontaine des Près, 11360 Villesèque de Corbières, France. Bank transfers can be made to Triodos Bank, Bristol, IBAN GB11 RBOS 1600 3411 0000 856 or to Crédit Coopératif, Carcassonne IBAN FR76 4255 9000 3521 8802 0340 190

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In Friendship

Libby Perkins  
for Le Conseil d'Administration du  
Centre Quaker de Congénies.