

MAISON QUAKER DE CONGENIES

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www.maison-quaker-congenies.org

Dear Friends of Congénies,

The newsletter is late this year as we are literally waiting for the dust to settle on two counts:

a) on the first floor of the MQC where the builders have been working since February and

b) in my new house in Congénies where I moved on 1st August with our indefatigable and hard working Friends, Louise and Georges Elias, who moved here in March with their small dog, Dip. We are all three so pleased to be here and become part of the steadily growing Quaker community. From 2 in 1994, the *groupe Languedocien* has grown, first to 6, then to 8, then 11 and now numbers 17! So the Meeting House, thanks to you, is well used, much appreciated by regulars and admired by our many visitors.

Last year I wrote to you as a willing volunteer (which I still am), but now I have the title of Communications and PR person which means responsibility for the newsletter and editing the web site with the professional help of Jon North as web master. Jon lives in nearby Lunel and takes over from Kim Chevalier who created the web site in April, 2005, and has maintained it for us ever since. Please send me any comments or suggestions as there is always room for corrections, additions and improvements.

To return to the first floor. An enormous amount of work has been accomplished by a few devoted Friends and various advisors to ensure that all legal, health and safety matters are in order. The builder, Mr. Gharbi, has co-ordinated all the work of subcontractors (unlike the ground floor where we struggled with separate contracts - plumbers, electricians, floor tilers, plasterers - not easy, and the architect had a new baby at the time!). But Mr. Gharbi has had his misfortunes too - his plasterer was stabbed one weekend (OK now), and the original plumber went bankrupt, so estimates and a new subcontractor had to be found at short notice. So the completion date for the end of July has had to be extended to mid-September.

The studio flat is nearly ready for the resident Friend(s); 3 guest rooms (2 en suite) and a large family or meeting room, with toilets and showers on the landing are in place with painting and furnishing in progress. On the ground floor (with wheel chair access) a bedroom, with separate toilet and shower room is suitable for those with limited mobility. The kitchen is equipped for self-catering and of course the Meeting Room is available much of the time. Camping in the garden is an option, at present sharing the indoor toilets and showers. The garden

shed, completed by Denis and Kyla, a Canadian volunteer, is quite palatial). From 15th October, Kyla will be our first Resident Friend - initially for 3 months.

There is also the possibility of gardening or other work in exchange for a room. Reservations and offers of work welcome from mid-September. You can also book your own group for a week or weekend in the MQC, up to 20 people with overflow to local hosts if necessary. Contact Françoise Tomlin, tel. +33 (0)466 80 26 42, email: dentom@tele2.fr.

The programme/ group bookings for this autumn include the annual Quaker retreat 5 - 7 October (registration form from Georges Liens, 10 rue Jean Mermoz, 13008 Marseille), and perhaps a Chicago painting group and a yoga week as well as the weekly MfW and Monthly Meetings held faithfully by Languedoc-Roussillon Friends. A QVA work and worship week is being planned for 2008. Details of the 2008 programme will appear on the web site and in *The Friend*. Suggestions for further activities are welcome.

Finance needs must be mentioned. Thanks to generous donations from "anon" and from German and Netherlands Yearly Meetings, and all your Meetings and individual gifts, the first floor has become a reality, and is greener than we dared to hope with organic paints and plans for the installation of solar panels for a hot water system. We still seek the funds to pay for these over 3 years, and funds to help FYM repay the interest free loan of £150,000 to purchase and partly refurbish the house - now reduced to £120,000. We are getting there! Any contributions are still welcome and can be sent to Mary Savage, 8 La Fontaine des Près, 11360 Villesèque de Corbières, France. Cheques (and transfers) should be payable to Amis Quaker Congénies (not CAF vouchers) and can be in sterling or French euro cheques. 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.

With all Friendly Greetings,

Libby Perkins
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for the MQC Committee