



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

March 2023



View from Craiglockhart Hill East. Oil shale bings of West Lothian, the Bridges, Corstorphine Hill. 20 mins walk from the Open Door.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings **every Sunday 10.30-11.30 am** at the Open Door, or remotely by Zoom (hybrid, except on the fourth Sun of each month). *Late changes and notices sent by weekly email.* To join the South Edinburgh Announce email list, see <https://quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh>

On fifth Sundays in Winter, an option may be strolling/sitting in Astley Ainsley grounds.

On the **First Thursday of each month** we meet for **30 min at 7.30 pm** by Zoom, followed by chat.

Other local meetings

Central Edinburgh and Portobello-Musselburgh are closest. Times are listed in SESAME, but for full info and a map, see <https://quakerscotland.org>

Several South Edinburgh Friends also attend Central Edinburgh's **Midweek Meeting on Wednesdays**, 12.30 for 30 mins at Victoria Terrace meeting house. Tea and coffee are available, and you can bring a packed lunch.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

Our collection for March is the **Alternatives to Violence Project** (Britain). Begun in USA prisons, now international, teaching alternative ways to respond. Alison Burnley will speak to this. <https://avpbritain.org.uk> (has Donation button).

QUAKER EVENTS

Evening Meeting by Zoom on first Thursdays at 7.30pm, so **Thur 2 Mar**.

General Meeting for Scotland will be held in Glasgow on **Sat 11 Mar**.

Witness for Peace and meeting for worship in Princes St Gardens, **Sun 12 Mar** 10.30. Towards West End, West of the Ross Fountain.

Meeting with Daniel Johnson MSP has been arranged for 5.30-7 pm on **Mon 13 March**. Content and presenters to be discussed at MfB on 26 Feb.

Area Meeting all-day meeting at Bellfield, Bellfield St, Portobello, on **Sat 18 Mar**. Details by email.

South Edin friends are welcome to these events organised by Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central.

Coffee – at Rachel's house, on first and third Thursdays from 10.15 am. Please contact Rachel in advance to ensure numbers OK.

Singing group, 7.30 pm on first Tuesday of each month at Victoria Terrace.

Book Group – usually 4th Sundays at 12.15 after Central MfW. March: *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.



A family of Philadelphia Friends circa 1896. An unexpectedly natural style for the time. Mother, father, and two younger daughters, believed to have been taken by eldest daughter Julia May Folwell. She was a keen amateur photographer, and great-great grandmother of Beth Follini, BYM Fund Raising Manager, with whose permission this is reproduced here. First published in *The Friend* of 3 Feb.

The Open Door was being built then, see page 3.

Getting to Know You: Catriona Courtier

I interviewed Catriona as she sat beside a map she has recently embroidered of Strathnaver, Sutherland where her mother was brought up. Catriona's maternal grandparents belonged to the Free Church. Her grandfather was a precentor, reading the Bible in Gaelic to his family and leading the community in psalm singing, also in Gaelic. Catriona's mother recounted stories of the devil, Hell, and damnation, learned in the Calvinist tradition. Added to this religious teaching were pre-Christian Celtic beliefs such as stories of second sight. Some of these beliefs terrified Catriona, who remembers seeking reassurance that such fearful things were untrue. No such reassurance was forthcoming. Although her mother believed these things, her father revealed at the end of his life that he didn't really share them, but thought religious beliefs might encourage people to lead better lives.

On the west coast island of Colonsay, Catriona's paternal grandfather was a Baptist lay preacher. Catriona remembers the low-pitched groans of the congregation as they prayed and repented their sins during services. Her father was brought up on Colonsay where he attended an English medium primary school, although the language of the islanders was Gaelic. His first job away from the island was as a seaman. He was described by the captain as 'a very gentlemanly young man of above average intelligence'. By the time Catriona was born her father was a police sergeant in Edinburgh, one of the "big Hieland bobbies" famous in southern Scotland.

Catriona's mother attended Dornoch Academy, her boarding fees paid by the state as she was exceptionally able. From there she escaped from the family tradition of working in 'service'. She went on to train and work as a secretary. Catriona described her parents as fine people and loving parents.

Catriona was born in a top flat in Viewforth Square, Edinburgh. Childhood was a time of freedom. She and her friends went swimming, played on the Meadows, and browsed shop windows in Tollcross. She went youth hosteling aged 13 with a friend: such unsupervised activities were not unusual. The Church of Scotland Sunday school was an important part of her family's life, with its Christmas party and picnics. In services, children sat together in the gallery where they could giggle and eat sweets until admonished by the minister from the pulpit.

In her early teens Catriona lost her faith, and she continues to question the possibility of God being born as a human. She sees little possibility of afterlife and therefore no possibility of resurrection, Heaven or Hell. It may be that religious questions fueled her political engagement. She attended Boroughmuir High School, and with a friend, aged 14, they joined the Young Communist League, leafleting in her school library. She joined the Aldermaston Marches against nuclear warfare. Here a Quaker offered Catriona and her friend beds for the night. She expressed interest in what they thought about communism and the anti-nuclear movement. Catriona actually knew very little about communism, but it was unusual for her to be taken seriously by an adult. The Quaker woman's kindness and openness impressed her, so that felt that if she ever joined a church again it might be the Quaker church.

Catriona studied English language at Edinburgh University and then linguistics at Reading. She was heading for an academic career. She met Miles who was studying psychology. Together they led a typical 60s hippy lifestyle, interested in left wing politics. Both trained as teachers. They went to live in London where Martha was born. Catriona helped set up a Women's centre in North Paddington, an area of poor housing and poverty, and then worked for the GLC under Ken Livingstone when it created a Women's Committee. She became involved in anti-racist actions, and also worked for Labour women MPs, including Jo Richardson who was Shadow Minister for Women. After the GLC was abolished she worked for a left wing political think tank, the London Strategic Policy Unit.

In her early forties Catriona became ill, as did Martha, aged fourteen, both with M.E. Martha was confined to bed for 12 years of her young adulthood and Catriona did her best to care for her despite her own illness. There was little human help to be had, so Catriona searched for a spiritual path. She visited Clarence house, a Quaker healing centre. There she attended the small Meetings for Worship, and being impressed with the spiritual feeling, ventured to Hammersmith Meeting in London. She learned more about Quakerism, though fearing any pressure to adopt a creed. She was given a copy of *Advices and Queries* and much to her relief found that there was no creed. She was very impressed by Quaker business methods in Hammersmith Meeting. She observed potentially divisive issues being handled well, with a positive outcome. She entered Membership after about two years in her fifties. Catriona values the openness of Quakers to all religious thought, and whilst remaining a convinced Friend she has found truth particularly in Buddhism and Hinduism. She has begun to understand the Buddhist view of suffering and happiness, and that happiness is always possible.

In her late thirties Martha's health began to improve. Miles retired from being a head teacher so they could all move to Edinburgh. For the last ten years Catriona has attended South Edinburgh Meeting. She can no longer be politically active though upholds those who are. She feels it is important to go to Meeting and to have the presence of others in Worship. Although M.E. continues to be present in their lives, Catriona feels she and her family have been blessed.

Susie Reade

Where we meet

Have you explored the amazing National Library of Scotland historic map features? These now cover the UK widely, and more historic maps have been added. <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore> (Help available from page)



With the 'spyglass' feature you can move an old map over a modern map or satellite photo. Side-by-side or fade-in views also available.

Left, 1882: the foot of Morningside Road, showing a Toll House by the Jordan Burn, Egypt farm about to be demolished to extend Nile Grove, and the new railway line but no Morningside station, and no tenement next to it to contain the Open Door. The station opened, and the toll house moved, in 1884, after which development rapidly crossed the Burn southwards.

Right, 1893: street pattern similar to today, but the Royal Edinburgh's East House still opens onto Morningside Road. Three years later that had been replaced by further southward extension of tenements and shops.

Our meeting place, 420 Morningside Road: James Gillespie, grocer and wine merchant, is listed in the street directory for 1898. His home address was the very respectable 3 Greenhill Gardens. However the shop number in 1898 was 316, renumbered to 420 by 1910, presumably following the addition of all the new premises up the road.

More on the history of our local streets and travel in our July 2022 and December 2021 issues.

50 word review: An Edinburgh comedy



The Lost King: Great lead performances in this based-on-real tale of discovering the skeleton of King Richard III in a Leicester car park. Light yet thought-provoking, and mostly filmed in Edinburgh, with classic spottable backdrops that more than make up for some weak plot elements and stereotyped baddies. *HSC*

NEWS

Hard questions about peace It is a year since full-scale war was launched on Ukraine. QPSW has published a collection of thoughtful reflections on hard questions such as

Can I support armed self-defence and still be a Quaker?

What does witnessing to peace mean in the midst of war?

What would I do if I were in Russia?

Download the full 18 from www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/ukraine (19 pages). The download link is just below the Get Involved list of headings. Those take you to collated information about the range of active Quaker responses around the UK.

New Scots: building community with refugees and asylum seekers. Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees are holding a one-day gathering on **Sat 25 Mar**, 10-3.30 at St Mark's Parish Church, Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling FK8 1RE. More info and sign-up for the conference at <https://journeyingwithnewscots.eventbrite.co.uk>

Booking for BYM. London, 28 Apr – 1 May. www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings

*Our newsletter is usually published near the last Sunday of each month. Spring blooms to neilturn@gmail.com
Find this edition, plus archives of previous, at www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh*

Thoughts of Spring



“My bath will be a poem in pastel porcelain. In it I will bathe like a fairy tale princess ... I'll buy it on the Allied 2 years to pay plan.”

1961 advert for baths made by Allied Ironfounders in and around Falkirk. Pastel shades of enamel appeared in 1930s catalogues. Via [@FalkirkMade](https://twitter.com/FalkirkMade). Below: two Morningside Road post boxes that were also Falkirk made.



Some locally made and sited street furniture. Usual prizes for correct identification of locations.