



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

March 2012



Robert Fergusson, Canongate (see p4)

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Every Sunday at 10.30 am at the Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, EH10 5HY, with separate Children's meeting.

Every weekday at Victoria Terrace: 8am for 30 mins Mon-Fri.

Every Wednesday at Victoria Terrace: 12.30-1.00 followed by a simple lunch.

At Portobello: 1st Sunday at Old Parish Church Bellfield St, EH15 2BP at **7.30 pm** for half an hour; and **4th Sun** at **10.30 am** at CHANGES Community Health Project, 108 Market Street, Musselburgh EH21 6QA.

At Barony St: 4th Sunday. 7pm at 33 Barony St (buzzer 7 via Albany Lane doors). More info: Tony Gross or Marjorie Farquharson.

Central Edinburgh meeting has an early Sunday morning meeting at 9.30am in addition to the regular 11.00am meeting at Victoria Terrace.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

March's special collection is for the **Friends World Consultative Committee** which encourages fellowship amongst all branches of Quakerism and is responsible for offices at the UN in Geneva and New York. www.fwccworld.org. Alison Burnley will speak to this

LOCAL MEETING EVENTS

General Meeting for Scotland Perth on **Sat 3rd**, St Matthew's Church Hall, Tay St, PH1 5TF

First Sundays – focus for children. Bring 'em, do stuff; also followed by **Mini-mart** in aid of Wiston. www.wistonlodge.co.uk

Sustainability – Threshing day to kickstart our response, Sat 10th March, 10.30-3/4pm at Victoria Terrace. Bring your own lunch.

Meeting for Business 18th March after Meeting at the Open Door

Area Meeting Sat 31st March at Kelso, 11.30-4.30

OTHER QUAKER EVENTS

Working with Children Toolkit day at Victoria Terrace, Sat 24th March 10.00-3.30. For booking or info contact Mary Jane Elton, maryjcamell@gmail.com

Quaker Knitting – NLS cafe 5-6.30 pm weekly. Contact moragferguson@hotmail.com (or call)

Being Salt and Light study worship sharing group – Mondays 5, 12 and 19 March, 7-9pm at Victoria Terrace. Subtitled *Friends living in the Kingdom of God in broken world*, it is the theme of the 6th World Conference of Friends being held in Kenya. Come for one or all; call Jasmine P

The Drop-In Group 1st Monday afternoons. Anyone who is interested and available is welcome, contact Sylvia Massey.

Singing Group on second Tuesdays, 7.30pm at Victoria Terrace, contact Rachel Frith. Ask also about the Penicuik Vault Singers, Sunday afternoons in different places.

Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship meets on 2nd Wednesdays, 7pm at the Glasite Meeting House, 33 Barony St (buzzer 7 via Albany Lane doors) Contact Mary Woodward or edinburgh.glgf@gmail.com or 07543 975 590.

Reading the bible with Friends Third Tuesdays, 7-9 pm at Victoria Terrace. Using the Friendly Bible Study Method – no previous experience necessary. More info from Henry Thompson.

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group 3rd Wednesdays at 7pm. www.edinwig.org.uk.

Book Group. Usually third Sundays, 1pm at Central Edinburgh. Arnold Bennett (The Card?) on 18th March and Stet by Diana Athill on 22nd April, which is a 4th Sunday. *Rachel Frith*.

[More Events on the Back Page](#)

Getting to know you: Rachel Howell

What drew you to Quakers?

I was brought up a Catholic; this was a strong part of my identity and my faith was important to me as a child. I went to a Catholic school and to church every week. When I was 13 I moved with my family from Suffolk to Northumberland where I found the church dreary and uninspiring and I also met non-Catholics for the first time. My best friend was an Anglican; we went to each other's churches and actually found them quite similar. In my early teens I remember speaking with my Dad about what my ideal church would be like – including no priests and a circle for worship, and he said “it sounds like you should be a Quaker.”

I can still remember some things that are important to me from my Catholic upbringing, like the need to forgive and the importance of saying sorry. My Catholic upbringing fostered my passion for social justice, which then drew me to Quakers. But in my late teens my view of God changed and my faith has changed. “As I get older I believe more and more strongly in less and less”, as Gerald Priestland said. For me, God feels rather an absence, like someone you wish would hold you, but isn't there. But that doesn't mean they don't exist in your life: I don't believe in God as a Being but I can't do without God altogether.

Rachel first went to meeting for worship when she was in her second year at university in Durham. As well as the silence and lack of hierarchy she liked the notices! They spoke of things Rachel felt important: belief in social justice and community action. Rachel also says that silence was important to her from when she was young. She developed an increasing Quaker identity, although she didn't become a member until 2009 in Edinburgh when she was asked to become an Overseer.

I know you are the eldest of 6 – what was it like growing up in a big family?

Until I was 11 or 12 it was fun; I enjoyed games with my 3 younger brothers and I liked the fact that being a big family made us different. We didn't know many other local children and were unusual in our village in going to a Catholic school, so we played together a lot.

When I got older I found it difficult, noisy and busy. There were tensions and difficulties between me and my younger brothers. I enjoyed my youngest sister, who was ten-and-a-half years younger than me, but as I became a teenager I withdrew from my family and lived a lot in my head. Mealtimes were quite painful, lots of bickering. Sharing meals in a positive way is very important to me now, I think because of this earlier experience.

Being part of community seems to be important to you

Yes. I had a powerful experience of community when I was 20, in the summer between my 2nd and 3rd years at university. I lived for six weeks with the Sisters of the Assumption (Catholic nuns), and shared meals, washing up and prayer times with them. The quality of being together was very strong. I think a good community is like a good marriage in that it values who you are, delights in difference and tries to help you be the best person you can be.

What do you consider the highlights of your life so far?

Living for a year at St Francis House in Oxford and getting my MSc in 2006 -07 in Edinburgh. I loved South Edinburgh Meeting and living with Bob and Bronwyn Harwood. This led to me coming back to Edinburgh in 2009 to work towards my PhD in How we can encourage people to live lower-carbon lives which I hope to finish in the coming year. I realise now I want to be an academic and that I love teaching.

As a child I had a zest for life which was very apparent to others. At some points I lost that along the way, as the path I chose with its drive towards peace and justice led to some difficult places emotionally. These difficult times have been a fruitful part of my life and made me a better listener.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

The important things in my life now are Quakers, community and teaching and I want to find a way to combine these in my life. I've had some dark periods in my life but at present I'm in love with my life most of the time. In 5 years time I would like to have a permanent lectureship and involvement in community, both to live in and in the wider community.

Kerry writes: I have had to leave out many inspiring and interesting stories about Rachel's journey so far, especially (in my opinion) her involvement with communities – speak with her to find out more! Rachel also has a great sense of fun and mischief that is worth getting better acquainted with and is an inspiring singer and musician. I would like to finish with her description of what is important to her in her life journey – her 'God view':

“The power of love, beauty, joy, truth, and creativity is always there – we can choose to align ourselves with this, or not.”

Kerry Oliver

Advices and doggerel

Rachel Howell

Last Sunday, at meeting, my stomach
decided “Today is the day
to throw off my normal reserve
and enter the ministry fray.”

Friends, this was no daffodil ministry,
or a brief, catchy ‘Thought for the Day’.
For a third of the hour my stomach
was determined we’d listen, come what may.

It whined, squeaked, and squealed
while I vainly appealed,
“Is this really for the whole meeting, Friend?”
“May we now have some silence
to consider your message?”
“It’s time for this ministry to end!”

To all of my pleas, whether kindly or stern,
my dear stomach answered me “Nay.”
“The Spirit moves guts, as it moves hearts and
minds –

by the Light, I will have out my say!”

So my thoughts turned to spiritual matters,
reflecting on people today
who are voiceless within our society,
and how we can help in some way.

The moral of this tale I hope should be clear:
in the Red Book I advise you to delve;
should your stomach embarrass you in meeting,
remember Advice number twelve!*

** “...Receive the vocal ministry of others in a
tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning
deep within it...”*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To **Ben**, who will be 7 on the 18th, and

To **Esme**, who will be 10 on the 22nd

And apologies that last month we overlooked (Good Guy Greg would not have done this)

Yoni, whose 7th was on Feb 2nd

Saul, whose 15th was on the 17th

“It wasn’t as good as Star Wars”

Your recommendations here! Items up to 50 words welcome as Twittered from your cool blog, or by email, or scribbled on a used copy of The Fiend.

MORE EVENTS AND NEWS

World Day of Prayer is the first Friday in March.

Morningside Justice and Peace Group at the Open Door for an hour from 10.30 on, is holding a series of meetings with candidates for City Council elections. They asked to address local government services, housing, and transport. morningsidejandp.org

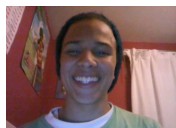
29 Feb SNP (tbc)
7 Mar Melanie Main, Green Party
14 mar Elaine Aitken, Conservatives
21 Mar Jenny Dawes, Lib Dems
28 Mar Eric Barry, Labour

One world peace concert – Sat 24th March – part of the Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace Festival, more info at mesp.org.uk St John's Church Princes St (£14/£12)

DATE and VOLUNTEERS PLEASE

Our weekend at Wiston Lodge will be 7-9th September. The theme will be Reflections. Volunteers needed to join the organising group. Please contact Alison Burnley if you can help.

Need something done?



Ade is still available, seeking £ for Mongolia trip. Please text him on 07584 079470

Cover photo: Robert Fergusson (1750-74) was a Scots language poet who was a strong influence on Robert Burns. This statue of him stands on the Royal Mile in front of Canongate Kirk, where he is buried beneath a headstone paid for by Burns.

UNMISSABLE ONLINE

Sustainability at quaker.org.uk/sustainability has lots of resources, links to Quakernomics, sustainability stories, and Fbk discussion

Our Facebook Page of the Month is **Annoying Facebook Girl** (9,142 Likes).



Talking of re-used images:



This woodcut image is from an anti-Quaker pamphlet of 1655, 'The Quakers' Dream, or The Devil's Pilgrimage'. Interestingly, although this image appears to be ridiculing the 'naked quaker' protests of the era (see previous issue), the same image had featured in at least two previous pamphlets on different topics (Mercurius Politicus, recycled woodcuts: bit.ly/v4gOdv)

This newsletter usually comes out each month on the last Sunday before; speak to Neil or contact neilturn@gmail.com with items or comments.

You can download electronic copies at quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh.