



## SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

March 2014



Inspired by the knitting in the last issue? This is a knitting machine made from Meccano. See it in action at [youtu.be/ccf-raLMsg8](http://youtu.be/ccf-raLMsg8) Quakers have a remarkable industrial history too.

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

**At Barony St:** 4<sup>th</sup> **Sunday.** 7pm at the Glasite Meeting House, 33 Barony St (junction with Albany Lane). More info: 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

In March is for **Scottish Churches Housing Action.** Alastair Cameron will speak to this. [www.churches-housing.org](http://www.churches-housing.org)

### LOCAL MEETING EVENTS

**End of life concerns** – Sharing thoughts on **Sat Mar 1<sup>st</sup>** 10.30-3.30 at the home of Alison Chalmers, see back page.

On first Sundays a **Mini-mart** is held after meeting in aid of external charities. We're looking for a volunteer to organise these. Or this will be the last one. Really.

**General Meeting** in Glasgow **Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Mar** 11am (tea and coffee from 10.30). Afternoon discussion around the independence referendum.

**Listening attentively and speaking non-violently** – a workshop organised by the Edinburgh Peace Initiative, **Sun Mar 9<sup>th</sup>**, 2-5pm at Central Edinburgh Meeting. Bookings via [mariannefr@phonecoop.coop](mailto:mariannefr@phonecoop.coop). This is also the day of a Faslane Meeting.

**Local Meeting for Business** will be held after meeting on **Sun 16<sup>th</sup> March**. Suggestions for the agenda to David Somervell please.

**Preparation for Yearly Meeting Gathering,** 11.30-2 on **Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Mar** at 71 Nile Grove – MfW for Learning followed by soup in the kitchen.

### OTHER QUAKER EVENTS

The **Drop-In Group** 1<sup>st</sup> Monday afternoons, contact Sylvia Massey.

**Singing Group** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, 7.30pm at Victoria Terrace, contact Rachel Frith, who also offers lifts for Penicuik Vault Singers on Sunday afternoons. [www.kosmoid.net/penicuik/vaults](http://www.kosmoid.net/penicuik/vaults)

Rachel Frith continues to offer **Coffee at Rachel's** at 10.15 on first and third Thursdays

**Reading the bible with Friends** meets third Tuesdays 7-9pm at Victoria Terrace. Contact Henry Thompson for more info.

**Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group** meets on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays at 7pm.. [www.edinwig.org.uk](http://www.edinwig.org.uk).

**Book Group** on third Sundays at 1pm, Victoria Terrace. Mar Mrs Gaskell *Wives and Daughters*; Apr John Williams *Stoner*. Qs to Rachel Frith.

[More Events and News on the Back Page](#)

## GETTING TO KNOW – Sue Robertson

I was born in Edinburgh (in the Simpson Memorial Maternity Pavilion) in 1954, the second child in the family, with a brother five and a half years older than me. I had an uneventful childhood - a stable, secure one. My father, a policeman, who had not had the opportunity to stay on at school or go to university, wanted a good education for me and I went to James Gillespie's High School for Girls (as it was then) and then to Stirling University where I studied economics.

After university, I entered the National Finance Training Scheme of the National Health Service in Scotland, working as a trainee accountant in Ayrshire then Stirling with block release time in college in Glasgow. After qualifying, I worked for a time for the NHS in Glasgow in the District office, which was responsible for the finances of several local hospitals. Then I moved back to Edinburgh (which pleased me) and for a time worked in the Housing Department of Edinburgh District Council, as it was known then, before moving back to the NHS in the late eighties.

I later became Deputy Director of Finance at Lothian Health Board at a time when there were many changes. Firstly we set up Trusts and GP Fundholders and then I moved to work at a Trust in time to assist dissolution of Trusts at the same time as GP Fundholding came to an end. Anyone with a long career in the public sector has probably spent much of it going in circles. I was also involved in the move to the new Royal Infirmary, working with a team of people to equip it and help make the move as seamless as possible. It was interesting to collaborate closely with medical and technical colleagues in this project.

However, it was also difficult at times working under a lot of pressure, sometimes as acting Director of Finance, in the very political atmosphere of the NHS. Other events contributed to my stress levels, including the death of my father followed by the death of my brother a few years later and the breakdown of my marriage.

Shortly after my brother's death, I trained to be a hypnotherapist and worked part time in finance and part time in that field. I took early retirement from the NHS in 2008 and continued with the therapy work. I joined a small complementary therapy business which I now run with one business partner and friend. We work in a GP Medical Centre, renting two rooms from the GP practice and sub letting them to other therapists. I do less hypnotherapy now but, not surprisingly, look after the finances for our business.

I like working with figures - not simply as an auditor checking accounts, but seeing the patterns and wondering what's happening and where we will end up if we continue on this path. It's the same with the hypnotherapy work, looking for the pattern - a kind of detective work.

I came to Quakers about three years ago. In my childhood, I had attended Sunday School in a Church of Scotland, but had not had contact with any church after that. I had always been interested in Buddhism and meditation, and in the North American Indian culture with its spirit of harmony with the land. I am not good at being preached at, but like thinking for myself. A friend's husband took his son round various different religious establishments and I heard him talk of Quakers and I liked the idea of the silence. The Dalai Lama suggested that westerners, before turning to Buddhism, might rather look within their own culture to see if something there might fulfil their need, and so I came to a Quaker meeting to have a look and try it out. And it suited me. Just as, at my first hypnotherapy training session, I felt, 'This is right,' so it felt right at South Edinburgh. I like the silence and that people can have opinions, that Quakers are active and 'walk the talk.' I am aware that most of us in South Edinburgh are privileged people and share a concern about those less fortunate than ourselves.

I like organisations that work with people rather than simply giving them money, like Lend with Care which lends money to people with small businesses within their own community, which they give back when they are able. It is not charity. They take pride in repaying and retain self respect. I am uneasy with the attitude that we can 'help the poor.' It seems patronising. I believe that the key to improving people's lives is education, offering people choices. However, there are many times when there is no easy answer. For example, when I worked in the NHS, there were people in deprived areas who found it very difficult to come to maternity clinics and yet they sometimes most needed maternity care. We put a lot of effort into bringing clinics into those areas but other issues

such as a vandalised lift in a high rise block can still prevent attendance at clinics. It is not easy to address all health issues.

On a lighter note, I have been delighted, since taking early retirement, to own a dog and Leo, my black labrador comes to MFW with me. He was part trained as a guide dog and is beautifully behaved. He has a new companion, a Parson Russell terrier, Minty, who is delightful but unlikely to be as settled and biddable as Leo.

*Alison Chalmers spoke to Susan Robertson in 2013*

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Your noveletta could have appeared here

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## For the young at heart

Q: How many Quakers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Thirty-three: One to raise a concern at Local Meeting that the lightbulb is no longer working. Ten to set up a lightbulb replacement subgroup to send a report to Area Meeting. Three to work on the subgroup and report back. Fifteen at AM to discern that the right way forward is to change the lightbulb. One to report back to Meeting that the bulb is going to be changed. One person to change the bulb. One person to write an article for the newsletter about changing the bulb. One to write a letter to The Friend saying that the decision about changing the lightbulb had not been in Right Ordering.

Some images from our Facebook Group of the Month:



## MORE NEWS AND DATES

**World day of prayer** is **March 7<sup>th</sup>** with the theme *Streams in the Desert*, chosen by the Christian women of Egypt.

**End of life concerns** Many of us may know of our Area Meeting "Funeral Wishes" form but have not completed it. Other end of life tasks for ourselves and those dear to us may not yet have found space in our busy lives. On **Sat Mar 1<sup>st</sup>** 10.30-3.30 we hope to share our thoughts and experiences and learn together, at Alison Chalmers house. Soup provided, please bring a sandwich. More info from Stasa Morgan-Appel or Hilary Davies.

**Yearly Meeting Gathering** is in Bath, **Aug 2-9<sup>th</sup>**. Preparatory activities will include a meeting on **Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Mar** (front page) and another on **Sat 7<sup>th</sup> June**, and there is a wealth of information at [groupspaces.com/QuakerYMG](http://groupspaces.com/QuakerYMG)

**Opening Up, could you join the team?** Nominations, including self-nominations, sought for anyone who could join our "Sunday opening" team. We open up the premises and prepare the meeting room. Training is given, and one Sunday in about 9 is required. Any thoughts/Qs to Sue Freshwater [susan\\_freshwater@talktalk.net](mailto:susan_freshwater@talktalk.net)

## A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

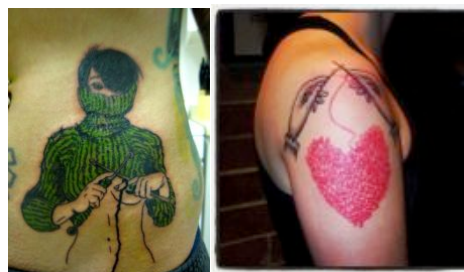
**Esme**, who will be 12.

## AND ON THE INTERNETS



Our **Facebook Group of the Month** is **The Association of Bad Friends** (1,595 members). ([groups/assbadfriends](https://www.facebook.com/groups/assbadfriends))

Though like most everywhere else it has a lot about cats and dogs, and too few videos illustrating Meccano knitting machines



*Meccano knitting machines not exciting enough for you? [theknittingneedleandthedamagedone](http://theknittingneedleandthedamagedone) blog recommends one of these tattoos.*

### What we're watching

*Wadjda* is a wonderful film from Saudi Arabia about a girl who wants to ride a bicycle. *NT*

*Searching for Sugarman* is about the rediscovery of a singer who had an unsuspected following in South Africa at a critical time. 'A gem' *MA*

*The newsletter is usually distributed on the last Sunday of each month. Send things you'd like to see to Neil Turner, [neilturn@gmail.com](mailto:neilturn@gmail.com). The deadline is the 2nd last Sunday. Read this and more at [quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh](http://quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh)*