



## SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

March 2025



### MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

We meet on **Sundays 10.30-11.30 am** at the Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, and remotely by Zoom (hybrid).

Recent notices and late changes are sent by weekly email. Join the email list by clicking the link at <https://quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh>

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

Children are welcome anytime. For details of planned activities, see online.

### 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 **Midweek Meeting on Wednesdays**, 12.30 for 30 mins at Victoria Terrace meeting house. Tea and coffee available, you can eat your packed lunch.

### SPECIAL COLLECTION

Our collection in March is for **Quaker Peace and Social Witness**. Alison Burnley will speak to this. <https://bit.ly/4hU07cm> or [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work) (which has a Donations button) give more info.

### QUAKER EVENTS

Latest updates at <https://bit.ly/SEdQuakEvents>

**Quakers in Scotland** – Workshop and Threshing Meeting for SESAM to consider options for organisation within the proposed single charity. At Victoria Terrace Meeting House on **Sat 1 Mar**.

**General Meeting for Scotland** will be held at Edinburgh Meeting House on **Sat 8 Mar**. Hosted by Central Fife. Details by email.

**Princes St Gardens Meeting** for witness and worship for peace at the Peace Tree **Sun 9 Mar**. Between fountain and the Ross Bandstand, 10.30-11.30. Coincides with meetings at Faslane. Dress for weather and bring something to sit on.

**Book Group** – *The Vanishing act of Esme Lennox* by Maggie O'Farrell. **Thur 20 Mar** at 2pm. Contact Carol Jennings.

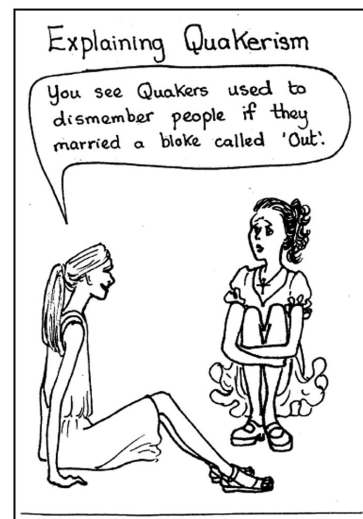
**Area Meeting** will be held on **Sat 22 Mar** at Old Kirk, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy KY1 1EN. Tea and coffee from 10.30, meeting 11-3.30. Children welcome. Please bring your own lunch. See emails for further details, including how to join online.

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From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

**Coffee** at Rachel's house, from 10.15 am on first and third Thursdays. Please confirm with Rachel.

**Central Book Group** – third Sundays after soup: *The Fraud* by Zadie Smith.



There's much discussion at the moment of both membership, and of how to present Quakerism. (Chuck Fager, author of *Friends are Funny* and <https://afriendlyletter.com>)

## Notes from Local Meeting for Business held on Sun 23 Feb 2025

16 Friends met. Full minutes circulated by email, or ask for a paper copy. Discussions included:

- We puzzled over the outsourcing of some of BYM's outreach to the new charity Discovering Quakers, and will return to the question of donating to this initiative separately.
- We noted that the outsourcing of management of suscriptions to *The Friend* had been accompanied by an appeal for additional direct funding towards that, too. (We agreed a donation at our last MfB).
- Meetings for Peace in Princes St Gardens – additional attendance would be welcome, locally and from AM. Future dates for the year are on the back page and at <https://bit.ly/SEdQuakEvents>
- Carol Jennings will join the Open Door management group.
- Phil Noble presented Local Meeting accounts. We are running negative again, but have around 12 months of expenditure (£4,500 annually) in the bank. So we agreed to close one bank account and send its contents (just over £2,000) to AM. We commented on the opaqueness of needs of local vs Area vs GM needs: Phil and Neil will attempt to find more info in order to write something explanatory in advance of this year's annual appeal and schedule.
- Increased participation in the Opening Up rota was welcomed, but more are needed – could you?
- Next MfB is provisionally re-scheduled for **Sunday 1 June** (replacing Sun 25 May)

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### Get to know – Edmondo

Edmondo is a resident of Cramond Ward at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, as he has been for many years. Happily he now has a pass to go into Morningside on his own and comes to Meeting unaccompanied. We have appreciated our contact with the ward staff. He is in his late 50s.

Edmondo was brought up near London in a Roman Catholic family and attended a Roman Catholic school, which he found harsh. This did not sound to be a happy or nurturing period, especially as there were long periods of family ill health and difficulties. From school, which he disliked, at 16 he went to further education, studying maths, physics, and computer science at Merton College in Morden, Surrey, (and its park). He did not finish his studies.

When about 16, Edmondo and his sister made contact with Friends in Sutton, south London, in relation to campaigning for nuclear disarmament. They had both recently left the Catholic Church. Edmondo wasn't sure how long he attended Meeting in Sutton but certainly until he was 18. It seems that recollection of this contact prompted him to search out his local Meeting and find us!

Currently Edmondo is not in touch with any family member or person from his past. He does enjoy participating in some communal activities offered in the hospital, including plays the drums in the residents' community centre, but hopes to live in supported accommodation as soon as this becomes available.

We hope that Membership makes Edmondo have a real sense of belonging and welcome in our Quaker community. Spiritual and religious concerns occupy much of his thinking, and he articulated in vivid metaphor the idea of each person having what Friends express as 'that of God within each of us', though he does not use 'God' language. We would hope that feeling part of a worshipping community helps all of us feel grounded and belonging.

Friends see each of us as equal in our relationship with God. I hope Isaac Pennington's words from 1667 apply equally to us here in South Edinburgh: 'Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing with one another ... praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.' We are pleased Edmondo has found a home among us.

*Edmondo was welcomed into membership at SESAM on 23 Nov 2024. Rosamond Robertson and Chris Holman spoke to him in preparation for his application.*



## Get to know – Kate Arnot

Kate, one of our co-clerks, grew up in Dumfries, the older of two sisters. She attended local schools and the Church of Scotland, where her mother was a keen member. There she became aware of how male dominated the church was, women not being allowed to be Elders or Ministers.

From a young age Kate describes herself as a 'quirky', questioning – a female child in the 1950s having a mind of her own was not really welcome! Self-determination and seeds of feminism were to shape her life in years to come. Sadly her mother died from cancer when Kate was eighteen. Kate's father had not told Kate of her mother's illness, perhaps illustrating her limited relationship with her father, but also the tendency of the time to 'protect' children and even patients themselves from such things. A lasting spiritual heritage through accompanying her mother to the local church appears to have endured however, and is evident in Kate's ministry and ecumenical outlook.



Kate studied English and Principles of Religion at Glasgow University, and afterwards (1968) went to West Cameroon with International Voluntary Service. There she taught English and Maths in a girls' boarding school. West Cameroon had become independent from Colonial domination and had chosen to join with the much larger French speaking East Cameroon because of the recent Biafran war. Ibo domination of the marketplaces and elsewhere led to riots.

There followed for Kate four unsettled years, due to an unsatisfactory relationship that resulted in her taking short term jobs. Kate, by now twenty-seven, had had enough of instability so wanted to work in a library, but having a degree precluded her from being accepted; training would be expensive for her employer. Training as a Primary School teacher in Aberdeen instead was going well until (1974) Kate was pulled up for an essay judged to be political as too left wing! She was asked to rewrite her essay but defended her position. To remain on the course Kate was obliged to rewrite it taking a suitably conservative stance, but her left wing political views were if anything reinforced by this incident.

Although Kate enjoyed teaching, a difficult headmistress and dreich Scottish weather prompted a return to Africa and sunshine. Unfortunately her teaching job at a private school in Mombasa turned out to be a poor choice. Mombasa had its compensations however, as after two years Kate returned to Falkirk with her son from a brief relationship. He has been the delight and joy of her life. 'He's just wonderful!'

From this time onwards Kate found her true calling in working for Women's Aid in various capacities. Beginning with a part-time maternity cover post Kate took on increasing responsibilities, delighting in a job that sat well with her political and moral convictions, such as Falkirk Women's Aid, which functioned as a collective.

After ten years there, Kate was headhunted by Glasgow Women's Aid to set up a centre in Greater Easterhouse for women who were being rehoused, and to be a Women's Aid resource within the communities there. It was as challenging a task as it sounds. With demolition going on around them Kate was expected to undertake every aspect of building up the service, but managed this remarkably well. Her skills were further enhanced at the national office in Edinburgh, and later again at Glasgow Women's Aid, where she was asked to set up a Credit Union, change its website, and develop educational and training opportunities for women living in refuges.

Although Kate attended Quaker Meeting for the first time in the 1970s it was not until the mid 1980s that she attended more regularly, as up until then her keen hill walking activities took up Sundays. Kate became an active Member of Polmont Meeting, only moving to Edinburgh at the request of her son Ian who wanted his mother to be within easy reach if she needed support.

Leaving Polmont Meeting and other good friends was a wrench, but her new flat and South Edinburgh Friends have helped with the transition. She describes Meeting for Worship as providing a necessary connection with others, and being essential to her wellbeing – 'If I don't come to Meeting I feel very twitchy'. Meeting for Worship enables solving issues and answering questions. That sense of being grounded with others in silent worship.

*Kate spoke to Rosamond Robertson in January 2025*



## Other news and future events

**Princes St Garden meetings** – Witness for peace and meeting for worship at Princes St Gardens, 10.30 am at the Peace Tree. These meetings are simultaneous with our regular meetings at the Open Door, and dates coincide with meetings at the North Gate, Faslane, where meeting starts at 11 am. Area Meeting is asking for others to support this initiative, which has come from South Edinburgh Meeting. Dates for 2025 are:

Mar 9	Jun 29
Apr 13	Sep 21
May 18	Nov 9

The Peace Tree is towards the West end of the gardens, between the bandstand and the Ross Fountain. For both Princes St Gardens and Faslane you need clothes appropriate for the weather, and something to sit on.

For more information about going to Faslane contact Mary Alice Mansell (Glasgow Meeting).

## Write for Friends Quarterly

To enter their **short story competition** (deadline May 1st?), send your short story inspired by the word **transformation**. You can send up to 2,500 words, or 1,500, or even 75 ('micro-fiction') to [editor@friendsquarterly.org](mailto:editor@friendsquarterly.org)

**Or a long read** – FQ also seeks full-length essays, for the December issue which has the theme *Eden* (as in Garden of, presumably as a metaphor but maybe you could try a horticultural perspective), and for early 2026 on *Power and Authority*. For these 3,000-3,500 word pieces you are urged to discuss your idea with the editors well before the copy deadline, which is usually a full 3 months before the publication date. They will be looking for several complementary approaches. So a summer project or sooner.

*Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday of each month. Aspirations for April to [neilturn@gmail.com](mailto:neilturn@gmail.com)  
Find this edition, plus archives of previous, at [www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh](http://www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh)*

## Happy Birthday

To **Sylvia**, who was 99 on Feb 4<sup>th</sup>. Photo shows her winning at Rummikub.



## Films: One long and three shorts



**All We Imagine as Light** – strikingly authentic, ultimately positive. Three women struggle in Mumbai, coming to respect and support each other across cultural boundaries. Multiple award winner and rightly so. 120 mins. Streaming, BFI, etc.

**Tall Dark and Handsome** – an ideal couple, until he discovers her boyfriend history. Oh. 14 mins, [https://youtu.be/8\\_BAI3K2NWM](https://youtu.be/8_BAI3K2NWM)



**Mum and I cover Creep by Radiohead** – Avie Sheck adding in his classically-trained Sufi-singing mum gives him his viral break. Beautifully performed and recorded. 4 mins, <https://youtu.be/nZoHuoFQyrl>



**That's the way we do it in the Western Isles** Great song with spirit, fun, and from the Western Isles. Peat and Diesel – pub band gone big. 3 mins, <https://youtu.be/zo2zuDxqf6A&t=45>