



## SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

July 2026



### 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: note that **P&M have made recent changes to their times**. Times for all local meetings are listed in SESAME, but for full info and maps 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 charity in July is the **Refuser Solidarity Network**, an international organisation established in 2003 to support Israel's conscientious objectors. Ian Roberston will speak to this. Read more and donate online at [www.nfpb.org.uk](http://www.nfpb.org.uk)

### QUAKER EVENTS

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

**Tangled Roots: Swarthmore Lecture 2026** with lecturer Stuart Masters. 7 Victoria Terrace on **Sat 4 July** 10-4.30. Booking (£40; young people £20) and more info at <https://bit.ly/42BWAJC> Lecture recording at [https://youtu.be/WCInrgAf\\_ck](https://youtu.be/WCInrgAf_ck)

**Area Meeting** SESAM meets in Kelso on **Sat 11 July**, 11 am - 3.30 pm. Details by email.

**Book Group** on *The Glassmaker* by Tracy Chevalier, **Thur 16 July** (postponed from June). 2 pm, home of Alison Robertson Morish. Then a break till September.

**Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM)** meets again in Manchester on **Sat 18 July**, 9.30-4.30. More info at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym) (Next meeting is 21 Nov in London)

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From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

**Coffee** at Rachel's house usually on first and third Thursdays, please confirm with Rachel.

**Central Book Group** – change of date this month to **Sun 19 July** after soup (usually third Sundays). *Helm* by Sarah Hall.

*Both take a break in August, resume September*



Mediterranean temperatures evident in this by Claude Lorrain (Claude Gellée), *Landscape with Apollo and the Muses* 1652, in the National Gallery on the Mound. His visions were implemented in many 'English landscape' gardens as you can see in many UK country house estates from the 1700s.

## Notes from Local Meeting for Business on 14 Jun 2026

Full Minutes were circulated by email, but key points were:

- **Discussion of how to use Sue Freshwater's legacy** informed by a report from the small group set up to consider options, led to 6 donations of £500 being agreed: Wiston, Ramallah and Brummana High Schools in Palestine and Lebanon, EAPPI (ecumenical accompaniers programme in Palestine and Israel), Quaker Disability Equality Group, John Wigham Enjoyment Trust.
- **Where we hold our meetings** – we are now quite often tightly packed at the Open Door. A brief report of a visit to St Oswald's Centre (by Viewforth) was heard.
- **Meetings with our MPs** Daniel Johnson MSP, and perhaps Lorna Slater (Green, but Central Edinburgh) were discussed and will be arranged if possible for the Autumn, maybe opening up input to other local meetings. Kate Arnot and David Somervell will find possible dates.
- **5th Sundays** – 30 August at Helen and Neil's (p4).
- **Appointments** were agreed. Carol is stepping down from trusteeship of the Open Door, which has been intense recently. We aren't seeking to replace her in the role.
- **CLERKING TEAM AND OTHER ROLES** – Kate and Esther are continuing as clerks but would welcome others to the team. We'd also like to identify additional Pastoral Friends, plus there are other roles for which supporters would be welcome.
- **Next meeting Sunday 13 September** after Meeting for Worship.

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### A visit to Wester Hailes

Edinburgh Friends received an invitation from the Community Wellbeing Collective (CWC) in Wester Hailes wanting to learn about Quakerism. The CWC is 'a group of some 30 people living in and connected to Wester Hailes, who work collectively to run a local Community Wellbeing Space. They describe themselves as a diverse, intergenerational, intercultural, working-class social arts organisation imagining, practising and creating space for collective wellbeing towards change.'

David Somervell, Elizabeth Allan, Rosemary Harthill, and Rosamond Robertson joined the group for their monthly session. We were made very welcome and took part in their activities. We held a short period of Quaker worship, which felt gathered and was well received. It was a really positive experience and we were glad we took up the invitation. The Collective is a remarkable example of local initiative and community strengths, it was good to be able to respond promptly to their invitation. We offered follow-up meetings but look to them for any further developments.

Rosamond Robertson

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### Ukraine

Following Jeanne Steinhardt's account of joining meetings in Kiev by Zoom, Simone Witney mentions that she is supporting glass artist Pete Halasovski to drive a convoy of humanitarian aid to Ukraine this Autumn. You can support his trip by buying his Ukrainian colours glassware from <https://pjhalasovski.sumupstore.com/products> or see more of his art (examples on R) at <https://bit.ly/4ez7LIw> or on Flickr [@peterhala](https://www.flickr.com/photos/peterhala)



### Palestine and the Middle East

Quakers in Britain has joined a coalition of church and faith charities calling for government action on illegal occupation of Palestine. <https://bit.ly/4vCiM2U>

David Somervell co-wrote on a QPS fringe event at BYM in *The Friend* of 22 May <https://bit.ly/3QgRiAP> and responded to an alternative view in a letter the following week <https://bit.ly/4xLINzt>

Erin Quinney (Nairn LM) is seeking support for an initiative to bring 23 year old English Literature graduate Mohammed Assalia from Gaza to an MSc on international conflict and cooperation at the University of Stirling. <https://bit.ly/4v9H2Zz>

Also see details of Rachel Shabi's Salter lecture on p4.

## Millions sacrificed for thousands

### David Hume's *Of Public Credit* (1752, 1777)

William Blake (see April issue) and the socialist *Daily Chronicle* were far from the only ones to see the problems associated with Britain's development of a fiscal-military state. Famous Scottish philosopher and historian David Hume had got there before them.

A look at the figures for total government expenditure show that throughout the 18th century British government borrowing to fund war grew at an extraordinary rate. In the short run it enabled Britain to mainly win its wars. But as the sharp upward curve of the graph shows, it also led to ever more indebtedness. The question was at what point would lenders panic, and it all come crashing down.

There were other unintended effects. To pay for the Seven Years War the government was forced to take the unpopular measure of introducing a new tax on imports into the Thirteen Colonies. It thought that it could do this without this leading to any serious resistance. But the colonists refused to pay and the American War of Independence followed.

It was all part of the development of a grossly unequal society in which the poor financed the war machine through a tax on beer, while the aristocracy kept the tax on land low.

The aristocracy was able to do this for a time as it had control over both houses of parliament. It was a further century before the cost of maintaining a navy able to defeat the next two naval powers combined led the government to introduce a land tax that would in time force the aristocracy to sell its stately homes or hand them over to the National Trust.

In his essay *Of Public Credit* David Hume had taken a cold hard look at what was happening in London. The state had discovered, Hume observed, that it could wage wars on an ever-vaster scale by paying for them on credit, creating a national debt. That debt had already reached enormous proportions. It meant that future generations, Hume wrote, would find themselves reduced to the level of slaves to pay for it.

The rational thing to do was for the government to default on the debt. The state might be refused credit – but not for long. He dismissed the argument that thousands – Hume calculated that the number of bond holders was about 17,000 people – should not be sacrificed for the sake of millions. What was happening was that millions were being sacrificed for the sake of thousands.

The fact that the government did not default on the debt showed, Hume argued, that it had ceased to act in the public interest. While Members of Parliament might not themselves be holders of government bonds, they had close family connections to those that were.

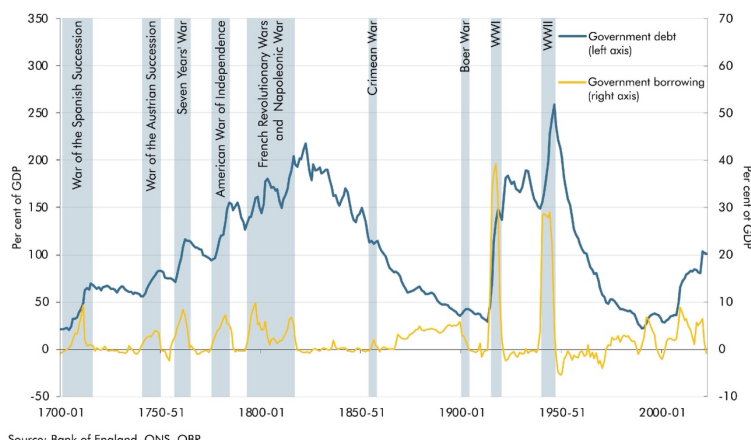
He predicted that the inevitable result was that the debt would mount ever higher, making the final crash more disastrous. To see this did not require, he concluded, entering into the ecstatic state of the Greek and Roman prophets. It merely required that one remain sober amidst the general intoxication.

Was Hume right or was he wrong?

Whilst the Napoleonic Wars did not bankrupt Britain, the enormous debts to the United States run up by the First and Second World Wars made the government accept that it would now play second fiddle to the United States ... which in its turn has since had to borrow vast sums from China ...

*Dominick Jenkins*

The full text of Hume's *Of Public Credit* and other political discourses is available at <https://davidhume.org/texts/pld>  
The figure is from <https://articles.obr.uk/300-years-of-uk-public-finance-data> where there is further corroboration and detail of national taxation and public spending over 300 years.



## Other news and future events



**The Middle East: a moral catastrophe?** – Rachel Shabi’s Salter lecture 2026. Short account and recording of the lecture from BYM news at <https://bit.ly/4vpDDXr>

**Edinburgh Young Friends** (18-35-ish) meet fortnightly in Edinburgh Meeting House on Friday evenings 7:30-9 pm. Next on **Fri 3 July**. They also have a WhatsApp group – please contact Isla to be added: [islawhateley@proton.me](mailto:islawhateley@proton.me)

**Fringe 2026 – Edinburgh Meeting House** will be a ‘C Venue’ again, so availability will be reduced from **Sun 26 July to Sun 6 Sep**:

- There will be reduced space in the Meeting Room, and no lunch after 11 am meeting
- 9.30 am Meeting will be online only
- Midweek Meetings (Wednesday) will continue

**Meeting and Gathering** in Helen and Neil’s garden (indoors if weather prevents) **Sun 30 Aug** (5th Sunday). *No meeting at the Open Door*. Followed by lunch; bring something to share if you remember, but there will be spare.

**Enquirers day** – a Scotland-wide day will be held in Perth on **Sat 3 Oct** (clashes with SESAM in Falkirk). Details to follow.

**BYM** meets again in London on **Sat 21 Nov**

**More events** at <https://bit.ly/SEdQuakEvents>

**Landlines are disappearing.** The spread of fibre broadband to South Edinburgh is likely to further accelerate this – and already has for your editor. So if your first call fails, please message or call a mobile number, or send an email.

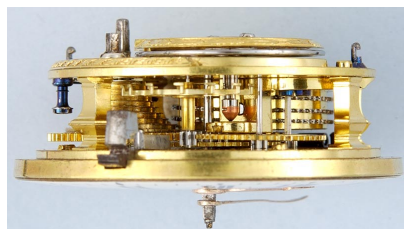
*Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday each month. Niche expertise and eccentric interest-based content to [neilturn@gmail.com](mailto:neilturn@gmail.com)*  
*Find this edition, plus archives of previous, at [www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh](http://www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh)*

## Happy Birthday

July is a bumper month for birthdays of notable Quakers, including:

**George Fox** (402 years).

**‘Honest’ George Graham** (347 years), Cumbrian clockmaker and maker of astronomical instruments whose mentor and later business partner was Thomas Tompion (1639-1713). Graham was married to Tompion’s niece, shared his house and business in Fleet Street for 17 years, and inherited the business and stock. He was buried in Tompion’s grave in Westminster Abbey in 1751.



Detail of a Graham watch from the 1730s. No. 5629 in the numerical series started by Tompion.

**George Bradshaw** (226 years), publisher of the famous Bradshaw railway guides from 1839. Regular editions continued to be printed for UK and international travellers until 1961.

**Seebom Rowntree**, (155 years) social reformer and industrialist who published influential serial studies of poverty in York over 50 years.

**Elfrida Vipont** (124 years), author of classic, readable Quaker fiction such as *The Lark in the Morn* (this newsletter Aug 2023).

## Dad Jokes

Father’s Day was signed into USA law in 1972 by a Quaker President (Richard Nixon). Quakers don’t do that sort of thing though, so proximity to the 3rd Sunday in June is coincidental:

- Where does the king keep his armies?
- Why do gorillas have big nostrils?
- Why does the Danish military put barcodes on its ships?
- What’s the difference between a dad joke and a bad joke?

*Answers at Meeting on 5 July.*