

SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

September 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 September is for **Reprive**, a charity that Sylvia Massey has supported for many years. It works for justice on behalf of prisoners all over the world, including campaigning against torture, the death penalty, and such injustices as Guantanamo Bay and similar. Deirdre Armstrong will speak to this. More info and donate online at <https://reprive.org/uk>

QUAKER EVENTS

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

Local Meeting for Business after Meeting for Worship and a shared lunch is on **Sun 31 Aug.** – not 24 Aug as advertised in last issue. Date changed at 1 June meeting (notes on page 2).

Family barbecue, Vogrie Country Park, **Sun 31 Aug**, for all from SESAM but especially if you have children. Details by email; meet at from 2 pm, BBQ from 4. Queries to Rachel Fitzgerald.

Wiston Weekend – many Friends will be at Wiston over the weekend **5-7 Sep**. Climate and Palestine protests are also scheduled this weekend.

Area Meeting will be held on **Wed 10 Sep** at Edinburgh Meeting House, Victoria Terrace. Details in emails.

South Edinburgh Meeting Book group gets together on **Thur 11 Sep** at 2pm to discuss *Joseph Knight* by James Robertson. Probably at Catriona's.

Have you said Yes to the transfer of your GM membership to QiS? If possible do that soon, and before 20 Sep. More on page 2.

General Meeting, and the inaugural meeting of the new charity Quakers in Scotland, will be held in Perth on **Sat 20 Sep**. Details in emails.

Meeting for Peace in Princes St Gardens, 10.30-11.30 am **Sun 21 Sep** at the site of the Peace Tree, between the fountain and the Ross Bandstand. Dress for weather and bring something to sit on. Coincides with meetings at Faslane.

Quaker week is **Sat 27 Sep – Sun 5 Oct** (Quaker Day) on the theme 'Love Your Neighbour'.

From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

Coffee at Rachel's house usually on first and third Thursdays. 10.15 am: please confirm with Rachel.

Central Book Group – third Sundays after soup. September: "any book by Jane Gardâm".



Notes from Local Meeting for Business of 1 June

11 Friends met at the Open Door after a shared lunch. Full minutes have been circulated by email; apologies that these notes were omitted from the July issue. Key items of business were:

- **Money:** We agreed to donate £50 annually to Discovering Quakers, which provides information and resources for inquirers. And £50 to appeals received from around the UK for meeting house renovation or similar projects.
- **Comfort:** We will get a couple more footrests
- **Spiritual review** – we discussed the suggestion to hold meetings in Friends houses, and will take this further at our next meeting.
- **5th Sundays:** Should we do something different on these dates? Rosamund to follow up with ideas to put in an article for the newsletter.
- **BYM report** Dominant in BYM discussion was Gaza and Palestine. Quakers are the first church to state clearly that they believe we are witnessing genocide there, noted in BYM Minute 30. Further feedback will appear in SESAME and elsewhere.
- **Thanks:** To Central Edinburgh Friends for bringing Woodbrooke Study Days to Edinburgh, and to Ted for stepping into the technical support role in recent weeks.
- **Next MfB** was deferred by one week from the originally scheduled day to **31 August**.

General Meeting (GM) becoming Quakers in Scotland (QiS)

Friends have received an email about the changes taking place as Scotland General Meeting (GM) is replaced by the new organisation *Quakers in Scotland* (QiS). **Your assent to transfer your membership is needed!** This affects only your membership of GM, not of your AM, or of Quakers in Britain.

Quakers in Scotland is now set up to be ready to take on the responsibilities of our AM charities, but it needs members to make decisions and appointments! Three of our four AMs in Scotland have agreed to transfer their financial affairs and other charity responsibilities to QiS. SESAM has not yet agreed.

To show that you agree to your GM membership moving to QiS, you can do any one of:

- *Reply to the email* from the GM administrator, agreeing to transfer of your membership as described, and contact info and other data that GM has about you.
- *Speak to a Friend who could reply on your behalf*, confirming that you have read and understand the information and agree to membership and data transfer.
- *Send a letter* to the GM administrator at Edinburgh Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL

Please address any questions to the clerks, an elder, or a pastoral care Friend.

Image: Woman writing a letter, Johannes Vermeer c. 1670 (National Gallery of Ireland). Not shown, her maid by her side.



Time for reflection

Neil Crabtree (Inverness) gave the Scottish Parliament reflection on 17 June <https://bit.ly/40Ry6vn> on training young people to contribute to emergency responses to climate-related catastrophes.



Get to Know – Mary Steven

I was born in Surrey. My father was a vet and my mother a secretary and then a teacher, who gave up work to look after the family. My brother and I had a happy, conventional childhood. I was a shy bookworm. I could read before I went to school and read everything – novels and detective stories and history and even my father's veterinary books.



When I was eight, we moved to Edinburgh, and I went to St George's school. As a teenager I decided to become a doctor like my grandmother. I enjoyed Aberdeen University, and found that medicine opened up the world, offering varied experiences, opportunities to travel, and contact with people of different nationalities. During my journey I met the Dalai Lama, the astronaut Jim Irwin who had visited the moon, Kashmiri horsemen, wonderful Tibetan people, and countless memorable patients.

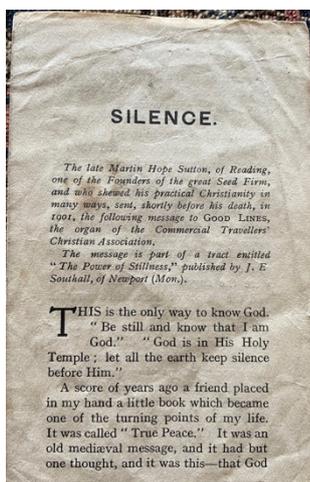
In my elective term, at the end of my degree, I went to Borneo to do research into typhoid. I took medical trips into the jungle and climbed into long houses built on swaying platforms, and saw shrunken heads (which apparently bring luck). Borneo is a multicultural area and there were different languages and customs, and it was a wonderful experience. I still have rattan bags which remind me of my time there.

After university, I trained in five or six different areas of medicine in hospitals in Aberdeen and Durham, Lancaster, Blackpool and the Borders, and had a spell as GP in Galashiels.

After this, I volunteered for six months in India, in the Himalayan foothills. I worked with a Tibetan and a Dutch doctor, running a small hospital, and going to remote places for clinics. People would wait for weeks for these visits and often travel long distances on foot for treatment. Medicine lets you be useful – it is a skill you can travel with.

After marrying Martin, I became a GP in Inverkeithing for 25 years, and balanced work with a happy family life with our two boys and an extended family. I loved being a GP, it is an honour that patients trust you with their story and you get to know them – those whose problems are quickly addressed and those who need more time and care over the years.

In retirement, I volunteer once a week at the Open Door elderly day care, and love being by the sea in our holiday flat in Millport. We recently had the great pleasure of hosting a Ukrainian family for a year; they have since moved on, but remain friends. I am interested in history and archaeology and have taken part in several digs and will be working on one this summer at Hadrian's Wall. I completed a degree in Classics through the Open University in 2023.



How did I come to Quakers? I was brought up in the Church of Scotland and went to Sunday School. At 10 or 11 I came across a little Quaker leaflet at home, *Silence*. The author describes how quiet listening could reveal a 'still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power, and comfort'. I was deeply touched by this, and used the tract as a bookmark for years, and still treasure it. Later my school took us to places of worship, and we came to the end of a Quaker meeting, possibly at Victoria Terrace. Then Martin's brother married Eric Caulton's daughter, and Eric (a member of South Edinburgh) gave me *Advices and Queries*, and 'A Light that is Shining' by Harvey Gillman. I read both books, and tentatively came to the Open Door. I was warmly welcomed by Ola and it felt the right place to be. It was only later that I found my quote about silence again, in *Quaker Faith and Practice*.

In the years since, there have been times when attending was more difficult and I felt more distanced, but I am happy to be here again and to be so warmly welcomed.

Mary was in conversation with Alison Chalmers in February 2025

*The leaflet that Mary read was based on an extract from a book first published in 1895. Unravelling its authorship is a rabbit hole tale for another time, but a very similar extract was published by Welsh language activist and Quaker JE Southall, and used as the basis of the first edition of the *Silence* leaflet by the Quaker Tract Association in 1910. Since then the leaflet has had an extraordinarily long life, recording its 35th reprint in 2002. The 2006 version is available under 'no longer in print' at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/free-resources/outreach-materials>*

Other news and future events

Holyrood Mass Lobby for Climate Action – Thur 18 Sep. Manifestos are being drafted, new Government plan in development, but commitments being rolled back. Speak directly to MSPs about the need for urgent, fair climate action, in groups by region. Middle of the day. Sign up and full details at <https://bit.ly/3TvlMwN>

Distressing times Many Friends have been engaged in protests against the actions of Israel in Palestine/Gaza, opposing anti-refugee agitation in the UK, and about Ukraine. To join a WhatsApp group about Palestine actions, go to <https://bit.ly/QPS-Scot>.

“The Palestine Action proscription is part of a wider effort to limit jury nullification.” Huw Lemmey in the *London Review of Books*, <https://bit.ly/4m6iQ5S>



Counterprotest at a refugee hotel, Falkirk, 16 Aug

Job opportunity Edinburgh Meeting House seeks a Meeting House Assistant, mostly evenings/ weekends and particularly Saturdays. www.equaker.org.uk/vacancies/meeting-house-assistant Deadline **Thur 11 Sep.**

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

Water supply decoding



Thank you Dorothy, whose extensive network of contacts within the Milestone Society provided a full answer, request for help, and a subject for a future item on Beautiful Obsession.

The engraved number shows how far the water main (not the stopcock cover) is from the wall, in feet (sometimes supplemented by inches).

Quakerish web

An atheist goes to Meeting – Jared, a US ‘atheist who loves religion’, coming from a fiercely Christian upbringing was very taken by it - www.discoveringquakers.org.uk/blog/atheist-reviews-quaker-meeting (20 mins). His accounts of other churches are often quite personal, but entertaining, enlightening, thought-provoking. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not get a good rating. More via his ‘Heliocentric’ YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/478Z3yG>

Beautiful strangeness is a series of 15 min radio tales from Rebecca Stott, another refugee from a fundamentalist upbringing about the importance of mystery and wonder in the everyday, and the value of pausing to appreciate it: ‘We must pause to wonder’ she quotes Einstein as saying www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/series/m002fv7z

Easy mistake: do not confuse the [Profanity Embroidery Group](#) with our [Parliamentary Engagement Group](#).

The PEG (Whitstable) has a distinguished 10 year history, but very little about Scottish government. And it is indeed profane.



Still showing



Wael Shawky - an Egyptian artist at the Talbot Rice gallery till **28 Sep**, showing a Muslim view of colonial history right back to Richard the Lionheart, with Sufi music, glass puppets. Recommended by Helen Pilling.



Resistance at Modern 2 till Sun 4 Jan, previously recommended by Margaret.

Aldermaston march, early 1960s