



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

October 2022



Happy 40th Birthday to The Open Door.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings **every Sunday 10.30-11.30 am** at the Open Door, or remotely by Zoom (hybrid, except on the last Sun of each month, for a trial period). Late changes and notices sent by weekly email. To join the South Edinburgh Announce email list, see <https://quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh>

On the **First Thursday of each month** we also meet for **30 min at 8 pm** by Zoom, followed by chat.

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 Central Edinburgh's **Midweek Meeting on Wednesdays**, 12.30 for 30 mins at Victoria Terrace meeting house. Tea and coffee are available, and you can bring a packed lunch.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

Our collection in October is for **Quaker Housing Trust**. More information and an online donations button at www.qht.org.uk

QUAKER EVENTS

It is **Quaker Week** 24 Sep to 2 Oct, on the theme 'Share your light', particularly focusing on engaging with and welcoming families. We are doing that, but there no local special events planned this year.

Evening Meeting by Zoom on first Thursdays at 8pm, so **Thur 6 Oct**.

Local Meeting for Business will be held after MfW on **Sun 9 Oct** (brought forward from the originally planned date of 23 Oct).

Open Door 40th Anniversary Our meeting place is celebrating 40 years of work, summarised at <https://youtu.be/tLsIZkV5Lsk>

All are invited to a Thanksgiving service at Greenbank Parish Church (Braidburn Terrace EH10 6ES), on **Sat 29 Oct** at 3pm. Refreshments afterwards. Its website is back online at www.theopendoor.org.uk

South Edin friends are welcome to these Edinburgh Central events. In-person only. Qs to Rachel Frith.

Coffee – at Rachel's house, usually on first and third Thursdays from 10.15 am, but this month 6th and 27th (which is fourth Thur). Please contact Rachel in advance to ensure numbers OK.

Singing group, 7.30 pm on First Tuesdays at Victoria Terrace.

Book Group – meets 4th Sundays at 12.15 after Central MfW. For Oct: *The Great Passage* by Shion Miura.



Transporting a bicycle by train in 1953. Tales of Obsession, p3.

Hilary Davies

Born Abertridwr, South Wales 24 August 1941, died Edinburgh 3 April 2022

Some 50 years ago, when Hilary was working as a social worker supporting families in Leicester, a colleague's husband had been charged with an offence he had kept secret from her. She had decided not to face the court hearing, but felt she could not go to work that day either. Hilary told her that she herself had already arranged to take the day off too, so she could be with her that hard time. 50 years on, her colleague gratefully remembered the loving caring empathy typical of Hilary.



Hilary was born in a mining village, her parents' second and last daughter, and attended school and university in Wales, studying history at Cardiff. She was always pleased when people recognised her Welsh accent. Her father ran a shoe shop, then a chain of cinemas. Her mother was a gifted pianist, who accompanied Kathleen Ferrier in early tours in Wales. But the marriage was tense. After her father's death, when Hilary was still a student, one morning she found her mother had committed suicide by gassing herself.

It was after that young-life trauma that Hilary decided to train as a social worker at Bristol University, specialising in children's care. This led to a long and varied career in social work practice and teaching. Her time in Leicester was very formative in a ground-breaking project with an interdisciplinary team involved in community work and social work with children and families. She also worked in Bath, and London, and held important posts in training at Glasgow University and Barnardo's Edinburgh for 25 years, retiring to Dunblane for some years before moving to Edinburgh.

Hilary had retinitis pigmentosa, gradually losing her sight from 1979 until she became completely blind in her last years. She was an intrepid and indefatigable campaigner in disability equality work from the mid-1980s.

Hilary moved up to the teaching job in Glasgow to be nearer to her sister and husband and the baby her sister was expecting. The baby turned out to be twins. The move allowed her to have a deep and lasting relationship with her nieces, and much later with her great nephew.

Hilary was brought up an Anglican, but left to search for something with more reflection and more closely related to the practical challenges of everyday life. Over the years she was a member of the Iona Community, St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow, and attended Quaker Meetings in Glasgow, Dunblane (where she became a member), and South Edinburgh. She was always a searcher and drew spiritual strength from the Iona Community, Ignatian spirituality, and many other sources. In her last years, she moved to worship in the Unitarian Church where the spiritual sharing, companionship and music suited her then needs better.

She was an intrepid and courageous handler of her blindness, determined to be as independent as she could, going out by herself with a white stick, searching out the latest and best IT, keen to keep engaging with people, singing in the local community choir, campaigning on behalf of disabilities, travelling. It could feel all too unsafe lying by oneself on a foreign beach, while a companion went for a short swim. But she loved the joy of different noises, smells and sounds of abroad, the movement of a ferry and the wind in one's hair.

She found some of us lacking in insight into the difficulties of a blind person, but was notably successful in guiding people to guide her, and to understand how important is identification and verbal communication.

In committees addressing disabilities, Hilary had a remarkable way of quietly but firmly bringing up issues and demanding answers and solutions. She took part in many working groups, forming policy within Quakers, where she helped set up the Quaker Disability Equality Group, taking part in the Glasgow and Edinburgh Council Access groups, and was particularly proud of her contribution to the advisory disability group on the design of the Scottish Parliament. This included protesting at the thick report provided in advance of the first meeting. She was active wherever she lived in highlighting problems for people with partial sight. The work could be frustrating, and tangible achievements sometimes hard to see. But she achieved a lot, influenced legislation, and always highlighted inequalities in ways which made others see how they could change.

In her last years, Hilary had a deeply satisfying relationship with Phillida Sawbridge, a former social work colleague. They lived together for 16 years, and celebrated a civil partnership in 2018. Phil gave wonderful loving support as Hilary's partial sight declined into blindness, and as depression set in after the death of her sister in 2019 and the global impact of Covid, followed by exhaustion, some memory loss, other physical problems, and the lung condition which was the final cause of her death.

Hilary was a person of immense courage and can-do-ness, who loved to be joyful, but noticed and experienced suffering and, while able, did what she could to stand alongside others, with care and empathy. Bless her. May she rest in loving peace.

Adapted from memorial minute by Rosemary Hartill, Phillida Sawbridge, Deirdre Armstrong

More tales of Obsession: single author, single topic of the month

The Quaker blogger

Chuck Fager is a is 'an American activist, author, editor, publisher and an outspoken and prominent' Quaker. The quote is from his Wikipedia page (2 views/day). The author of that might have added 'driven and prolific writer', as evidenced by the number of his outlets, and frequency of updating his continuing personal blog at <https://afriendlyletter.com>

His posts are interesting and sometimes dig into fascinating history. The Quaker topics come from the liberal branch of American Quakers, but go well beyond Quakerism. Their mixture with politics may bother some, judging by the awkward controversy in *The Friend*, 22 Sep and a recent issue. He also does jokes:

One day God was looking down at Earth and saw all of the rascally behaviour that was going on. She decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. So she called one of her angels and sent him to Earth for a closer look.

When he returned, he told God, "Yes, it is pretty bad on Earth; 95% are misbehaving and only 5% are not."

God was not pleased. So she decided to email the 5% that were good, because she wanted to encourage them, give them a little something, to help them keep going.

Do you know what the E-mail said . . . ?

. . . Just wondering, I didn't get one either.

The railway enthusiast

A group that surely sets the pattern for obsessional interest. About the image on page 1, **Ben Brooksbank** wrote (www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2380637): The J77 class of 0-6-0T were Worsdell rebuilds in the early 20th century of superfluous Fletcher 'Bogie Tank Passenger' 0-4-4T's: No. 68391 (ex. 953) here having been built in 1874 and rebuilt in 1904 - it survived until 1957. @hammer provides more detail for real aficionados. <https://www.lner.info/locos/JJ77.php>

It is one of 9,517 images that retired medical scientist Ben Brooksbank (1926-2018) contributed to www.geograph.org.uk, most of railways, and all available for free re-use under a Creative Commons licence. The J77 engines were originally designed by Edward Fletcher, and first ran in 1874. Fletcher was part of Stevenson's team on the Rocket (1835, recognised as the first commercially viable steam railway engine). Some served for over 80 years, just into the 1960s. <https://www.lner.info/locos/JJ77.php> is from another railway aficionados paradise.

Geograph.org.uk is a treasure trove

The more than 7 million images at www.geograph.org.uk are all free to re-use non-commercially, and all tagged to positions on maps. A repository for narrow-topic enthusiasts, and a gold mine for everyone else. For example 783 images are tagged 'Morningside', 133 within 300m of the Open Door. You can win points by populating empty map squares with images.



The image on the left is copyright Leslie Barrie, provider of over 7,500 images.

www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3634288

To the right is a map of photos taken near the Open Door.

Our **Wikipedia page of the month** is the **Matthew Effect** (605 views/day). This is the principle that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, taken from

For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Matthew 25:29, Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

The Matthew attribution is not quite fair, as similar statements can be found in Mark and Luke. The extended concept, and explanations for why it is so often true, are well presented on the page.

NEWS

Our Friend **Peggy Bartlett** died on September 4th, at 102. Her funeral was held on 15 Sep, and the service was recorded and will be available for 28 days at <https://watch.obitus.com> – username maxa9304 and password 466314

Our Friend **Rachel Howell** died on September 6th, following a recently-diagnosed cancer. She was 48. Her funeral will be held in Yorkshire on **Fri Oct 7**. There will be a Quaker Memorial Meeting at 7 Victoria Terrace on **Sat 19 Nov** at 2pm. Her father Geraint wrote:

Thank you for all the supportive messages sent to Rachel over the past few weeks/days. She died peacefully at the end, and with her mother and me present. All her brothers and sisters also managed to see her within the last few days. We are all stunned by the speed with which this thing has moved but at least it means that Rachel was able to have a full and enjoyable life almost to the end and was spared a lingering death.

The People Woke Up *Ice and Fire Theatre* explores human rights stories through performance. Its latest tells of the 2020 revolution in Belarus. World premiere, Belarusian cast, pay what you can, at the Scottish Storytelling centre, 7.30 pm on **Thur Sep 29**. 2 hours. More info and booking at <https://bit.ly/3DK6UUt> and about the company <https://iceandfire.co.uk/about-us/>

Meetings for Witness for Peace in Princes St Gardens, to coincide with meetings held at Faslane. The last of the year is scheduled for **Sun 13 Nov**. 10.30 for one hour. w

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

CUTTING EMISSIONS IS NOT ENOUGH

A clear explanation of why not from Ola Rosling www.gapminder.org/lessons/zero-co2-emissions-to-stop-global-warming



Hans Rosling, the founder of Gapminder, was an extraordinarily talented presenter, making complex topics widely understandable, and bringing home striking points about development, population growth, population effects of religion, and more. Search for Hans Rosling on YouTube.

QUIZ: Test whether you know enough about such things at <https://upgrader.gapminder.org>

Regrettable Tweets of the month



Regrettable Tweets are topical, and so is Peace.

James Boswell of Auchinleck wrote an amusing but horribly honest (testing whether you can be too plain-speaking) diary for many years. He was repeatedly regrettable, but reliably confessed his transgressions to his diary and transiently regretted them. Extracts are tweeted to the world in daily segments.