



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

February 2025



From the Braid Hills

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.

Arrangements for children: 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 February is for the **Campaign Against the Arms Trade**. Deirdre Armstrong will speak to this, and there is more information at the foot of p3.. <https://caat.org.uk> (donations top right).

QUAKER EVENTS

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

Book Group – *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. **Thur 15 Feb** at 2pm.

Local Meeting for Business will be held after Meeting for Worship and shared lunch on **Sun 23 Feb**. Approx 12-2.

Quakers in Scotland – SESAM are holding a workshop and threshing Meeting to consider options for organisation within the proposed single charity. At Victoria Terrace Meeting House on **Sat 1 Mar** 11 am to 3.30 pm (details by email).

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: February, *The Fraud* by Zadie Smith.



St. Valentine's Day

From *Gleason's Pictorial*, 12 Feb 1853n. Via <https://commonplace.online> – the Journal of Early American Life (dangerous rabbit hole). More troublesome women on p4.

Varieties of Quaker experience

Ministry on Sunday 29th December displayed the rich and diverse spiritual backgrounds of 21st century British Quakers. We heard of experiences within our own meeting of evangelical to liberal branches of Christianity, as well as with other faiths and to atheism.

Dorothy Buglass points to the **Quaker Universalist Group** (QUG), established in 1979 “based on our understanding that spiritual awareness is accessible to everyone of any religion or none, and that no one person and no one faith has the final revelation or monopoly of truth. We warmly welcome both Quakers and non-Quakers to join with us.” <https://qug.org.uk>

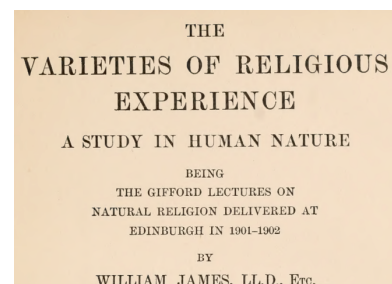
A curious thing, this matter of God (William James 1882)

William James’ 1902 book *Varieties of Religious Experience* presented individual experiences of those of all faiths and none. The text came from his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh. James was a Harvard psychologist and philosopher, ‘father of American psychology’, and also brother of the author Henry James. A key conclusion was that studying such experiences was a more revealing way to approach the study of religion than studying different religious institutions.

An online summary of a 2010 Harvard exhibition (James died in 1910) gives insight into a fascinating man as well as his work. <https://bit.ly/4iQzRjX>

“In his celebration of novelty, his warm tolerance of all manner of spiritual experience, his championing of multiple perspectives for apprehending reality, James stood apart from many of his contemporaries.”

One exhibit shows his answers to a 1904 questionnaire about religion. He attached great importance to spiritual experience, and felt that the concept of God to be essential, but did not attach himself to any church. *‘I can’t possibly pray, I feel foolish and artificial’*. Yet he also wrote *‘Every sort of energy and endurance, of courage and capacity for handling life’s evils, is set free in those who have religious faith.’* More at <https://bit.ly/4gZW2CB>



3. Why do you believe in God? Is it
(1) From some argument? *emphatically no*
Or (2) Because you have experienced His presence? *No*
Or (3) From authority, such as that of the Bible or of a
Or (4) From any other reason? *Only for the sake*
If from several of these reasons, please indicate carefully the order
more powerful all, from own ideas I can't see him very
4. Or do you not so much believe in God as want to use Him? *I*
but rather as an ideal to live by? If you should become thorough
any great difference in your life—either in happiness, morality, or
is only not
5. ~~Is~~ God ~~very~~ real to you, as real as an earthly friend, though d
Do you feel that you have experienced His presence? If so, pleas
ague or how distinct is it? How does it affect you mentally and ph
If you have had no such experience, do you accept the testimony
y? *Yes! the whole line of testimony on*

Transition, renewal, roots

Quaker Renewal has a Facebook Group, and there has been a flurry of ‘Whither Quakers?’ articles in The Friend, Friends Quarterly, SESAME, and online. Craig Barnett’s (Local Development Worker for Yorkshire) Transition Quaker blog recently asked *Is it time to give up being theists and nontheists?*

Christianity and Quakers North American Friends have a Friends of Jesus Fellowship. In the UK, a blog Friends in Christ (www.plainquakers.org) appears to be dormant. An advert in the back of recent issues of *The Friend* (3 January) asks *Are You Drawn to Christ-Centred Quaker worship?* But gives only an email address*.



The *Friend* advert uses Doyle Penrose’s second-best-known Quaker image, which feels rather ghostly for 2025? Penrose (1862-1932) was a Quaker artist and father of surrealist Roland Penrose, who is well represented in the Edinburgh Museum of Modern Art. (Photos via John Hall on Flickr, some of his many Creative Commons Quaker images there).

*QuakersinChrist@gmail.com – Mark Dibben and Matt Rosen.

Not-so-plain Quaker stitchery

Isabella Rosner wrote her PhD on Quaker needlework 1650-1800, and is now a BBC New Generation Thinker, curator for the Royal School of Needlework (RSN), and social media person. [@isabellarosner.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/isabellarosner.bsky.social)

She describes her Quaker project in a 15 min radio programme at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001xf14

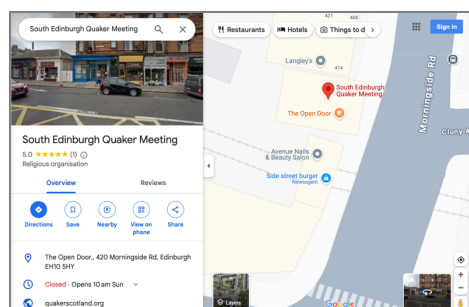
She is speaking at the Dovecot Gallery at 1pm on **Sat 1 Mar** about highlights from the RSN collection 'A millennium of textiles'. £12 at the gallery or <https://bit.ly/3WagGaT> So not specifically about Quakers, and anyway there's an unfortunate clash with SESAM's workshop/threshing meeting (page 1).



Photo: Elizabeth Hall's embroidered nutmeg (1683).
<https://bit.ly/41XXbWU>

More stitchery on p4. Alison Burnley's 'My life with needles' was in Q Eye of *The Friend* on 3 Jan.

We're on Google maps



And in just the first month or so our profile had 213 views, quite a number of people asked for directions (seems improbable?), and a massive 3 people clicked through to our web page.

You might like to search for us, and leave a stunning review?

What we do with data – an occasional reminder of our Privacy Notice

We keep contact details of members, and of attenders who have opted in to this, in our Local and Area Meetings records, and with General Meeting for Scotland. We don't pass details on to other organisations, and we ask your permission before we publish them in our Book of Members. We will contact you about major things, but you can opt in or out of non-essential communications, and change your preferences about how we contact you. *How to make email list changes was explained in our January issue.*

You can ask for your name to be removed from our records, and so far as we are able, we will do that. We are obliged to keep some records for varying time periods by law. There is more information about these and some other details in General Meeting's longer document at <http://quakerscotland.org> (click on Privacy Notice at the foot of any page).

Campaign Against the Arms Trade – our appeal for February

CAAT, now in its 50th year, works to stop the export of UK arms. So many countries buy UK arms and use them on civilians, in horrifying attacks breaking basic international human rights. Focus is now on Israel, to whom the UK sell parts (some made in Edinburgh) for F35 bombers, used to kill civilians in Gaza.

Through careful research, legal battles with the UK government, and exposure of manufacturing companies, CAAT has worked to stop the arms trade across borders, building solidarity with different struggles, and publicising the worst arms human rights atrocities caused by arms exports.

CAAT is working now to resist the Sep 2025 international Arms Fair in London. It needs funds for all this work and has always been strongly supported by Quakers. More information, including invaluable fact sheets, at <https://caat.org.uk/challenges>

Deirdre Armstrong

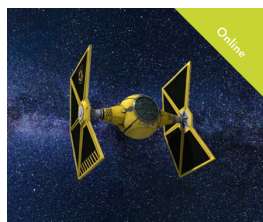
Other News and future events

BYM 2025 CORRECTION: Last month's table of events for 2025 showed the date for BYM incorrectly. It is **Fri 23 – Mon 26 May** (not July). This and other lesser errors are corrected online in both the events page and January newsletter.

Booking is now open – more info and registration via www.quaker.org.uk/ym Deadline **27 April**, earlier for preparation, early, or children/ young people's sessions.

Book of Members and Attenders 2025 published by General Meeting for Scotland will be available soon, at an expected approx £4. Physical copies are produced every 2 years. Please sign up at Meeting if you'd like one, or contact Esther Shreeve or Kate Arnot (clerks).

Woodbrooke 2025 – an enticing array of offerings goes beyond just thought-provoking, informative, and guiding to include a few along the lines of *Troublesome women* (see below), *Quakers in film and TV*, and **Are Jedi Quakers?**



Quakers and Star Wars

Tuesday 13 May – Tuesday 27 May

www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses

More troublesome women – Themes of recent exhibitions *Stitchery* at the Dovecot and *Women in Revolt* at MoMA meet at <https://bit.ly/4aeMSzQ> in an essay by Gemma McKenzie.



She describes how she got into stitchery noting that in an 1854 magazine a Mrs Ann S Stephens described crochet as

'a gentle means by which women are kept feminine and lady-like in this fast age'. 'On no occasion does a lady seem more lovely than when half occupied with some feminine art which keeps her fingers employed, and gives an excuse for downcast eyes and gentle pre-occupation.'

Her work focuses on rights around childbirth.

Floppy rifle from *Warm Gun* by Natalie Baxter.

Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday of each month. Comments, contributions, consternation to neilturn@gmail.com

Find this edition, plus archives of previous, at www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh

The Mistake



Michael Mears performed this arresting play at the Festival in 2022, and *The Priest's Tale* recently at Edinburgh Meeting House. He is now seeking to take *The Mistake* to the USA for the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but needs funding. Can you help? Further details, trailer, and donations accepted at <https://bit.ly/3WyWPCt>

Climate

Flagging again that Christian Climate Action Scotland holds a vigil outside Parliament on the **last Tuesday of each month**, 12- 2 pm. And from Stop Climate Chaos Scotland:



David Somervell and Carol Jennings with Sarah Komashko and Cath Dyer at Holyrood on 7 Jan.

Another competition!

From *Friends Quarterly*, the place for longer reads. Deadline 3 months before publication.

- For August, short stories inspired by the word **transformation** – choose to send up to 2,500, 1,500, or 75 word stories.
- For the last issue of 2025, full-length (3,000-3,500 words) articles around the theme of **Eden** (as in Garden of). See note below
- For the first issue in 2026, **power and authority** is the theme, again full-length.

More info in *The Friend* of 17 Jan; full length articles should be pre-discussed with editors. How to do that, or submit entries – next month?