



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

March 2024



Raspberry red

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings usually **every Sunday 10.30-11.30 am**

Held at the Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, or remotely by Zoom (hybrid, except on the 4th Sunday each month).

Notices, other options, 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 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 March is for the **Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)**. 'For nearly fifty years, Quaker Houses have provided a place where UN diplomats, staff, and nongovernmental partners can work on difficult issues in a quiet, off-the-record atmosphere out of the public eye.' Ola Oduku will speak to this. <https://quno.org>

QUAKER EVENTS

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

World Day of Prayer is **Fri 1 Mar**. The service was prepared by Christian women in Palestine, and calls for us all to 'bear with one another in love'. Greenbank Parish Church has a service at 10.30.

Local Meeting for Business will be held after Meeting for Worship on **Sun 3 Mar**.

General Meeting for Scotland will be held at Edinburgh Meeting House on **Sat 9 Mar**. Papers by email.

Meeting for Witness for Peace in Princes St Gardens, 10.30 am on **Sun 10 Mar**.

Area Meeting will be held at Polmont, all-age, all day on **Sat 23 Mar**. Details via email.

Book group The South Edinburgh Quaker book group meets on **Thur 28 Mar** at 2pm to discuss *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Contact Carol Jennings.

From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

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

Book Group – Now on **third** Sundays at 12.15 after Central MfW. March: *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding. The book for April will be *Trust* by Herman Diaz.



Snowdrops at Cammo

Getting to know – Ola Oduku

Ola was born into a medical family in Nigeria, the third of four children at that time, an older brother and two sisters. Her father undertook his medical training in Edinburgh in the 1950s and went back to Eastern Nigeria where Ola was born. Having heard good reports of the plastic surgery opportunities at Toronto, her dad prepared the family to leave Nigeria for him to pursue his postgraduate training there, but leaving her brother behind as he was about to commence secondary school. At the last-minute Ola's paternal grandmother, fearing she might not see the family back in Nigeria for some time, insisted Ola's sisters should also stay behind. So at six months Ola arrived in Canada with her parents. There is a photograph of her early days in Canada showing piles of snow eight feet high.

Toronto did not suit her father, who realised that General Surgery would be more relevant for his future plan in Nigeria. He returned to his medical roots in Edinburgh, where there was a large Nigerian post graduate community, studied and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. Ola's mother, a nurse and midwife, worked nights at Simpsons, in 1971 becoming the first black Assistant Chief Nursing Officer.

Ola and her family lived as tenants in the leafy setting of the Grange, with excellent nursery and schooling, and she has happy memories of this time. Sadly, over this settled childhood, from 1966 came the shadow of the Biafra-Nigeria civil war. In late 1969 her sisters were flown out of Nigeria on a mercy mission, including a new sister born earlier that year. Ola relished being part of a bigger family. As the war directly affected Eastern Nigeria, Ola's father settled for a series of locum jobs in Edinburgh, accepting that, probably due to racial discrimination, opportunities for using his skills more fully in the UK were limited. Then at the end of the war in 1972 he returned to Nigeria. The rest of the family followed two years later, on a cargo ship from Glasgow Docks with their possessions in tea chests. The near 4-week journey with the stops at various West Africa ports along the way prepared her for a very different culture and climate awaiting her.

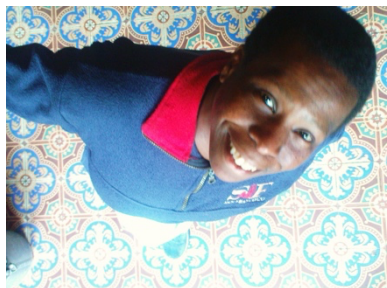


Education after Sciennes School was quite a shock. Ola was now in a traditional girls' grammar school as a boarder. She passed the Nigerian Universities Entrance exam 'JAMB' aged just 15, choosing Architecture as her subject. Being in a close-knit friendship group of girls whom she knew from school, and used to living away from home, she coped well with University life despite her youth. In her first year General Studies programme she discovered the joy and freedom of doing her own research, an element which proved the inspiration for the rest of her career. After a six year degree in architecture, Ola worked for a couple of years in Lagos and gained her professional architectural qualifications, and then in 1989 was accepted for an M Phil Architecture degree in Cambridge, funded by the British Council. This was followed by a PhD and then a Fellowship which 'allowed her to walk on the grass' as one of her College porters happily informed her! Her academic recognition was quite an achievement in an institution where Ola was often assumed to be the wife of someone or even a cleaner, and not a young academic in her own right. The cultural and social atmosphere of Cambridge for a Black woman from Nigeria at that time – white, elitist, and entitled – mirrored the shock Ola experienced on arriving back in Nigeria aged nine.

On the personal and faith level, Ola's family in Edinburgh had worshipped at the Methodist Church in Nicolson Square out of respect for their kindly landlady Mrs Wilson, who was a member. Ola's little sister was christened there, the family celebration of this being captured in the photograph. In Nigeria, Ola was confirmed in the Anglican Church, and a regular churchgoer, but years later whilst a student in Cambridge, attending Great St Mary's the main Anglican church there, was disturbed by the preaching of a 'just war' applied to the first Gulf War, and actively sought out Quakers. There at the Friends Meeting House at Jesus Lane, she found stillness and the emphasis on peace and equality she valued. Quakers and the Testimonies Ola view as foundational to her life, providing a moral compass for her ever since.

As a postdoc in Cambridge, Ola's career took her to South Africa at a time of great change just before the elections of 1994. Further academic research on housing and a post as a junior lecturer in architecture at Liverpool University followed. She then held positions at Strathclyde, Edinburgh, and Manchester Universities

before her current position back in Liverpool. Ola married in 1998 and her daughter Esme was born four years later. After ten years Ola and her husband parted ways. Ola's career then seems to have followed a tale of many cities, although after Liverpool she moved back to Edinburgh, which she feels is 'home'. She has always commuted to her jobs, first in Glasgow, later on Manchester, and now Liverpool.



Eighteen months ago Ola was appointed to the Roscoe Chair in Architecture and Head of the School of Architecture at Liverpool University. This Chair was endowed in honour of the remarkable life of one of Britain's first abolitionists, enabling Ola to accept it with a clear conscience in a city renowned for its part in the slave trade.

For some years Ola has pursued her research and teaching interest in among other areas, social infrastructure, hospital and school design. It would seem that her years in Nigeria are able to inform and motivate her to bring a remarkable international perspective and outlook to her work. The concern for the wellbeing of communities and individuals, and the

infrastructure needed to achieve this, underpins her research.

At the close of our conversation I am left amazed that Ola manages to also take an active part in the life of our Meeting. I am left wanting to hear more.

Ola was in conversation with Rosamond Robertson on 2 February 2024.

Bill Brockie

We were sad to learn of Bill's death in June last year. He was a welcome, if infrequent figure at South Edinburgh Meeting.

In the late 1970s he became Minister at St Martin's Episcopal Church in Gorgie. He was a force of nature; a man with great heart and community spirit, who encouraged others to go out and live their faith. As a teenager, I have memories of him at hostelling weekends at Coldingham, which were always great fun despite the unpredictable weather. Many years later I would see his easily recognisable figure cycling around Edinburgh adorned with Spokes and Green Party badges.

More recently, I recall him sharing with me how much he valued attending Quaker Meeting for the stillness, silence and acceptance it provided. He would particularly choose to attend on Remembrance Sunday, as he felt 'more kinship' with others present at meeting, than in other places of worship. I sometimes wondered how naturally he might have found a home amongst Quakers.

Holding his wife Jenny, and their family, in the Light.



Bill, from obituary on Edinburgh Green Party website, <https://bit.ly/4b10lep>
(Photo WJ Dorman)

Sue Noble

News and future events

Quakers and Prison Abolition: A Conversation Organised by the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network. Glasgow Meeting House, 10 am - 3.30 pm, **Sat 13 April**. Hybrid. Contact anneke.kraakman@gmail.com to register or with Qs. More about the Community Justice Network: <https://quakerscotland.org> – Our work.

Quaker Universalist Conference at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts and online, **April 19-21**. Topic: 'The future of religion worldwide'. Speak to Dorothy Buglass for more info. Details and apply at <https://bit.ly/3wes5wb>

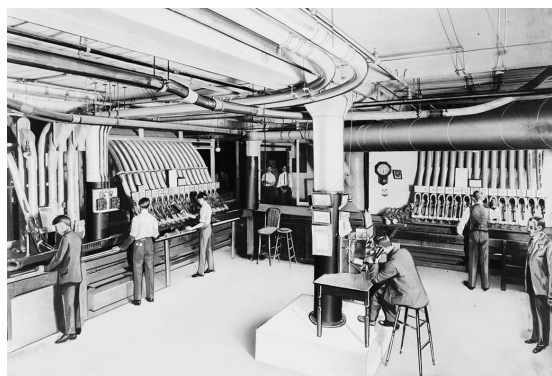
Woodbrooke Where You Are – AM's programme of 5 whole-day sessions at Victoria Terrace continues with *What happens in meeting for worship* on **11 May**. For booking arrangements see <https://bit.ly/SEdQuakEvents>.

Sign up for Shindig – 11-16 years old on 30 June? It's for you. **27 July – 3 Aug**, Millport on Isle of Cumbrae (West of Largs, Glasgow). Info for young people <https://bit.ly/3le8Shd> - info for adults <https://bit.ly/3wuHloR>

Wiston weekend 2024 – can you help? The venue is booked for **Fri 6 – Sun 8 Sep** but organisers for the weekend are still needed. Please contact iandouglassedwards@gmail.com

Fossil fuels in Edinburgh Our parliamentary engagement group points out that we have just till Mar 7 to reply to the Scottish Government's consultation on term plans to improve insulation and reduce fossil fuel use in our homes and businesses. Allow some time to read through the explanations and answer at <https://bit.ly/498EVe7>

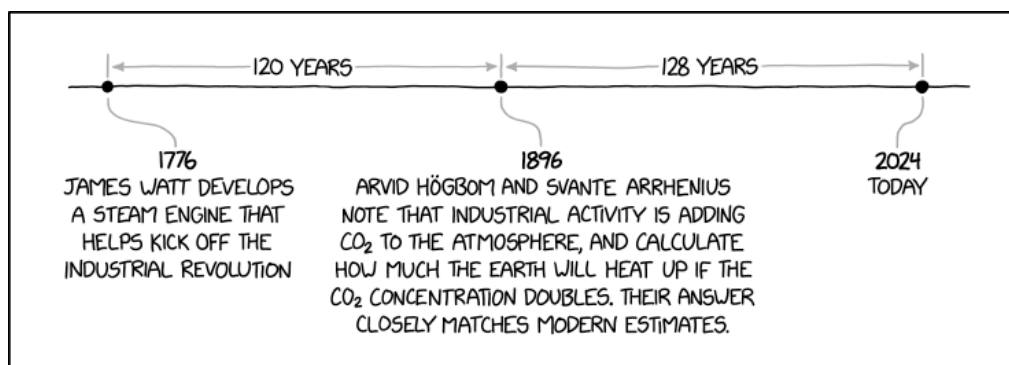
Before Amazon, there was



The famously wide-ranging Sears Roebuck mail order catalogue first appeared in 1893. By the early 1900s the business was enormous. The illustration shows the North pneumatic tube station of their Chicago merchandise building, part of a 40-acre site, in about 1918. [@JSTOR_Daily](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2586000) and Wikimedia Commons. The vacuum tubes sent paper orders, invoices etc round different departments

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

East African Crude Oil pipeline. A group of Quakers in Scotland are actively supporting the 'Insure our Future' campaign, along with QPSW. Concerns about the potential damage caused by 'EACOP' are highlighted in a ground floor window of Edinburgh Meeting House on Upper Bow, and at <https://bit.ly/stopeacopscot> where you can add your support to the campaign to block its insurance.



WE FIGURED OUT THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT CLOSER TO THE START OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION THAN TO TODAY.

xkcd.com (Creative Commons)