



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

May 2023



Interesting things in Braidburn Valley Park (p4).

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings **every Sunday 10.30-11.30 am** at the Open Door, or remotely by Zoom (hybrid, except on the fourth Sun of each month). Garden or other locations may become possible during April!

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 meet for **30 min at 7.30 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 May is for our meeting place **The Open Door**, which has for 40 years provided support to the elderly, lonely, and others, and their carers. Eoin Rutter will speak to this. www.theopendoor.org.uk (Donate button at top R).

QUAKER EVENTS

Evening Meeting by Zoom on first Thursdays at 7.30pm, so **Thur 4 May**.

Area Meeting will be held at Edinburgh Central Meeting House on **Tue 9 May** from 7pm.

A key item for discussion will be the 'Options for Scotland' group's recommendation that Quakers in Scotland unite as a single body. More on this at <https://bit.ly/scotquaker-options>

Quaker and Edinburgh Uni Prof of Divinity Rachel Muers will deliver the **2023 Richardson Lecture** over Zoom on **Thur 11 May** at 7pm. Book at www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/george-richardson-lecture

Witness for Peace and meeting for worship in Princes St Gardens, **Sun 21 May** 10.30-11.30. Towards the West end of the park, just East of the Ross Fountain (about which, see April issue).

Local Meeting for Business – 12.30 pm after Meeting for Worship on **Sun 21 May**. Bring and share lunch before, which will also give time for anyone to join from Princes St Gardens.

Climate Justice – An Area Meeting event at the Phoebe Anne Traquair-decorated Walpole Hall, St Mary's Cathedral, on **Sat 27 May**.

From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

Coffee at Rachel's house, generally on first and third Thursdays from 10.15 am. Please contact Rachel in advance to confirm numbers.

Singing group, 7.30 pm on first Tuesday of each month at Victoria Terrace.

Book Group – usually 4th Sundays at 12.15 after Central MfW. May: *Kindred* by Octavia Butler. June: Annie Miller's *Basic Income - A Short Guide*. Apply to Annie for a copy.



Phoebe Anne Traquair murals at the Song School, 1888-92. The fine Leaderfoot viaduct (1863; crosses the Tweed East of Melrose), on the defunct Berwickshire Railway, is seen in the background.

Getting to know ... Rici Marshall Cross

We met for lunch just weeks before Rici was due to depart for France with her husband Daniel and Wee Esther. As this is the end of the Edinburgh era, we decided to start at the end, and see where our conversation led us.

Daniel comes from Edinburgh, and Rici was delighted to move to a city where they had some roots in 2018; she observed that 5 years in a place is a good length for a chapter. She has loved her time here, and says she is still discovering new and beautiful parts of the city. A keen cyclist and runner, in the past she has also had fun wind surfing and has not given up hope of returning to that, giving her kit to her parents to store for the time being. As if that were not enough, music is another hobby. She hasn't found the opportunities in Edinburgh she would have liked, but has enjoyed playing twice in the Scottish Sinfonia, playing viola. She hopes that in Paris she may be able to do some chamber music, which she has eluded her here.

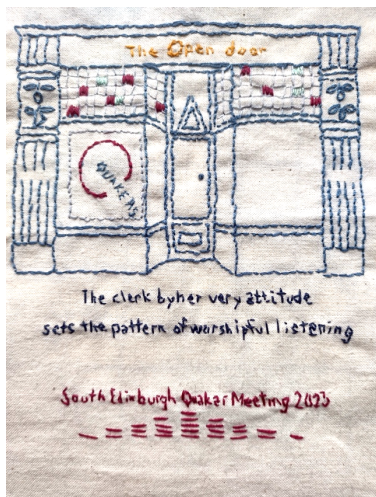


I asked what she is passionate about and she immediately replied 'climate change', part of her life since she was a teenager. She works for a company which helps other companies in the energy sector to transition to 'new energy'. Now a senior data analyst, she will be working with the same firm as an established leader with a young team in Paris. It is good to hear of an organisation which works hard to provide a happy and flexible working environment for its staff. Many will know that she is involved in the 'Loving Earth Project', offshoot of Quaker Arts Network, and is a Trustee of the Quaker Housing Trust.

South Edinburgh was her Local Meeting of choice, helped in no small measure from Rici having met David Somervell at a QPSW conference some time before she arrived here; she has been happy to be part of what she feels is a small and quite informal meeting. She has been a very competent and gracious clerk for the last 2 years and has helped us to see how jobs can be shared amongst us without pressure. We will try to replace her with a clerking team of at least 3 people!

Wee Esther was born during the first lockdown, but took to Meeting for Worship, once we meet 'in the flesh', like a duck to water. One of the loveliest, and most memorable Meetings was when we welcomed her to our Meeting when she was a year old; we were in Neil and Helen's back garden, it was a glorious June day, the sun shone and the birds sang. All was well. Wee Esther is clearly comfortable with the Quakers thus.

Going back, Rici was brought up as a Quaker; born in Middlesborough, she moved with her family aged 5 to S. Wales and attended Cardiff Meeting with her mother and sister. This meant she grew up with a group of Young Quakers and from around the age of 13 attended the Young People's programme at British Yearly Meeting. She was involved in Young Friends General Meeting for about 6 years, and was Co-clerk for a year and a half. Thus she understands how Quakers operate, a real asset in a clerk. Quite recently she has started to explore Quaker links to Christianity, and was excited by a Woodbrooke course on the book of Revelation. 'Quaker Shaped Christianity' by Mark Russ, has been a source of interest.



Rici went to Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge, where she read Chemical Engineering. She was usually busy with rugby on a Sunday, so it wasn't until she moved to Leeds when doing her PhD that she put down roots in a new Meeting (Carlton Hill); she felt part of the community immediately. Whilst studying, her determination to work in something that was environmentally useful became paramount. She met her husband in Leeds (he was studying in the same building, and was also a keen runner) and they married in 2016. After a short interlude in Birmingham, the opening in Edinburgh was offered and they moved here in February 2018. Our gain, Birmingham's loss!

Rici and Wee Esther – we will miss you. Haste ye back, when you can, and remember the Auld Alliance – our links with France are strong!

Esther Shreeve

*The clerk by her very attitude sets the pattern of worshipful listening
Catriona Courtier*

New clerking team

Following Rici Marshall Cross's move to Paris, the role of local meeting clerk is being shared by Kate Arnot, Bel Ingham, and Esther Shreeve. Support them in action at Local Meeting for Business on Sun 21 May (p1).

Getting to know ... Sue Freshwater

I was born in Hemel Hempstead in 1942 and lived there for three years before the many moves in my childhood. My father was serving in the army, and he was regularly 'posted'. First it was India for two years – Delhi and Simla. Simla was unforgettably beautiful, high in the Himalayas. In Delhi, I had an 'amah'. She lived with relatives in a local yard where I drank warm goat's milk and smoked marijuana in a hookah. A very young hippie! She brandished a fearful loofah in my bath!

After seeing grandparents in Britain, we were off to Gibraltar where I copied Spanish dance and learned to speak a bit of Spanish and to embroider, which was popular there. I also kept silkworms. My first school, when I was aged seven, was an R.C. convent.



My travels ended up being a grand tour of the religions of the world!

My sister was born in 1950, eight years younger than myself. A big gap in ages. We had servants everywhere we went, so mother was not keen on life in Britain which was grim anyway, following the war years. There were some rough winters here as well in those years.

After I sat my 11+, we were off to Berlin. I attended a boarding school (thousands of British services children did) near Hamburg, very far from Berlin. It was a long ride to school, through the Russian sector, which was a novel experience (refugees running away through the forest). A soldier with a gun accompanied me for one and a half days on the train (marching in the corridor).

Novel experiences were very much part of all my travels, and I have so much to remember for which I am most thankful. These memories help my library reading and keep my mind very active. I am still exploring, but in other ways. Now 81 years, I am contented, happier in my being, than ever before. And I have many people who help me with my disability and many friends. Thank you, Scotland.

Boarding school had a cinema, a swimming pool, stables, and a lake for sailing boats, and was a great place to start secondary education. My parents, bless them, paid for all the extras, and I learned to ride horses and to sail – I loved both. In Berlin in the holidays, I rode ex-police horses and swam in Hitler's sports stadium. After the rigours of wartime Britain, my mother was astounded by the change in our fortunes – her little girl doing this!

After Germany, I had a few settled years at Watford Grammar – five miles on my bicycle as a day pupil. It allowed me to get a good set of O-levels and for the first time, I had real school friends. Then Singapore in 1959, missing my friends.

Going through the Suez Canal was memorable. So was stopping in Gibraltar where a very old nun showed a picture of me in my class aged eight. Then we stopped in Sri Lanka. I distinctly remember my parents going ashore for the day in Colombo and me staying aboard all day just to get some time alone.

Army officers were at that time faced with the choice of leaving their children in England in boarding school (if they could afford it) or taking them abroad. I have heard that those in boarding school could feel abandoned, which seems awful. Being with them, I had a problem that they were rather 'ever present', and their presence in my life was not balanced by other friends and acquaintances, as I would have had in a more settled life. Well, mustn't grumble, as people used to say! I think that I learned to be a survivor.

In Singapore, I went back to school and got two A-levels. Then I was unable to work officially because Singapore had gone independent and I had a stamp in my passport saying that I was dependent on my father and not allowed to work on the island.

First, a car drew up every morning with miscellaneous army wives going to help at a multi-cultural kindergarten school. I squeezed in. I was in the office, doing the books, answering phones etc for £4.50 a week. My parents took every penny which I accepted at the time. They were never well off in spite of many advantages.

My second job, for a small travel company, was better, but I was asked to hide in a large cupboard when a government official came to snoop. I did a lot of studying about the city – its sights and culture and places to visit. I could speak French and German and had a smart uniform and mike, and met busloads of people off the ships. The boss, an Indonesian, occasionally visited up country in Malaya and we staff went, too, in his car. This was always enjoyed.

It was my mother who finally realised how truly unhappy I was and talked about sending me 'home'. I was in correspondence with a fellow-student at Watford, and her parents were asked if they would keep an eye on me. They met me at London airport and took me to their home. (I didn't know them.) This arrangement didn't work as all my group at Watford were heading for university, and a joint rented flat in London collapsed at Christmas when they all went home to be looked after. I had found a job – typing – and that is all I had. London

was swinging, but very lonely. Women did not earn much and now I had to support myself. In Singapore, there was no one my age And London was also a desert in that respect.

I was saved three years later by a train to Edinburgh and four happy years at the university studying psychology, philosophy and social anthropology. It was quite an ambitious choice of subjects.

I emerged with an MA hons but no way of making my living. I could not take more study as my daughter, Siobhan, was with us, born in 1968. In 1980 my relationship broke up with bitterness and I slogged on at the Scottish Council for Research in Education where I had a sort of 'technical' job until my health broke down in 1990. Between 1971 and 1990 I was a Trade Unionist (Unite), a totally convinced and active feminist and a disability activist. The Disability Discrimination Act was coming in in these years.

After a short stint volunteering at the Peace and Justice Centre in Princes Street, I met Elizabeth and Geoffrey Carnall, key Friends at the centre. I was retired at only 50 years of age.

I became a member of Central Friends in 1990. I was a bit of a wreck at the time, most especially since my daughter and granddaughter became estranged, apparently preferring their father and grandfather. I am extremely grateful always for the loving support of new friends at that time. They gave me a bed for a while and emotional and spiritual support and friendship.

Recently, I have refreshed by my Buddhist attachments (Samye Ling 1984) with refuge in the Wildgeese Sangha at Edinburgh St Marks where I now practise. I moved to Morningside and South Edinburgh Meeting in 2005 where I have made many friends and been happier than ever before in my life. A warm, new relationship with my sister is a source of joy and my daughter is also now in touch again.

Sue Freshwater and Alison Chalmers had a number of discussions, after which Sue enjoyed writing this account of her life.

Under your feet: the Old Town's 350 year old water supply, and some walks

The answer to April's 5+7 **puzzle** (photo from Canaan Lane) is that these mark the course of pipes taking fresh spring water to the top of the Royal Mile. The oldest dates back to the mid 1670s.



Covered spring heads can be seen in gardens and common land in Comiston as in the first photo. They are piped to Comiston Water House, from where pipes lead to the Old Town. The line can be seen on the Kirkwood map of 1817, crossing Braid Road and the Braid Burn at the Hermitage bridge. Note there is a canal but no railway - the other black line is the pipe – and no Comiston Road yet, or South Edinburgh as we know it.



Through Braidburn Valley Park



Stone markers in Canaan Lane, (Whitehouse Lane not shown), Hope Terrace, Strathearn Road.

The first piped water to the Old Town was sourced from several springs on Comiston Hill in the 1670s, and directed to Comiston Water House, which is dated 1676. It travelled then by gravity and siphon via a lead pipe that ran along the East slope of what is now Braidburn Valley Park, but then was farmland, with a dairy on Braid Road opposite the entrance to the Hermitage. The pipe passed beneath the Braid Burn at Braid Road, then almost in a straight line across South Morningside, Grange, the Links and Meadows. It bent to pass through the grounds of Heriot's School and went down to cross Grassmarket diagonally, then steeply up by the steps to a cistern at the top of the Royal Mile. Thence it was distributed by various stone taps/fountains in the Grassmarket and down the Royal Mile. Some still exist.

Almost a hundred years later the Comiston source was supplemented by a second pipe from Swanston. There again, several springs were captured, and small early reservoirs in the Pentlands were added to both sources. Swanston water house is dated 1761.

Walk 1 Track the pipe markers along the upper East slopes of the Braidburn valley, make a little detour to Comiston water house and the nearest covered spring up the hill at Cockmylane, then return to the Burn, following it all the way to Dreghorn woods. You need to divert up some steps to The Gallolee and cross Redford Road to find the entrance to the woods after crossing the burn. In the woods take the West branch that is Bonaly Burn to pass on a path under the ring road, into the Pentlands.

Walk 2, 'Robert Louis Stevenson's route to Swanston' is as at least as good, and with a café at the end. Start in Braidburn Valley park as above, but carry on walking up past Comiston Water House along the route signposted 'RLS route to Swanston'. The path goes round Swanston Farmhouse garden, and a bit further on you might like to divert along White Lady Walk (story at <https://bit.ly/3LfQG7M>) to see the ghost, old stables and ancient tower, Comiston House, and Fairmilehead Park. You can then return to the line of Stevenson's route via the ancient Caiy Stane in Caiystone View, looping down Oxfangs Road to join Swanston Road and cross the ring road.

The cafe is the top floor of golf central, straight ahead. Swanston water house, dated 1761, is tucked away (<https://bit.ly/3zVTeTx>) to the right along the road just before the farm buildings, on the route to Swanston ('Stevenson') Cottage, which you can gawp admiringly at from the path after a zig-zag left then right through the livery yard, turning right between a stone mounting block and chickens. A thatched cottage was built as part of the water development, but later enlarged to create a substantial house that was rented by the Stevenson family each summer from 1867, where Robert Louis Stevenson liked to write. You can admire its garden over the wall on the Pentland (south) side, and continue to Dreghorn and cut back (at Dreghorn link take the little path to the right that takes you above and later across the road, giving you wooded pathway all the way back to the Braid Burn). Or if you've had enough already, return by bus from Hunter's Tryst.

Stevenson and South Edinburgh The Stevenson family home was in Heriot Row, and RLS romantically described this walk to Swanston in *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes*. He also made clear his dislike for the development of South Edinburgh, which was progressively urbanising his route:

Day by day, one new villa, one new object of offence, is added to another; all around Newington and Morningside, the dismallest structures keep springing up like mushrooms

The builders have at length adventured beyond the toll which held them in respect so long, and proceed to career in these fresh pastures like a herd of colts turned loose.

Only Esther S supplied a correct answer to the puzzle. However she lives by Comiston springs, and has a collection of photos of local spring heads. Exclusion forgotten, a sherbet fountain is awarded.

Quaker Relevance: 32%

NEWS

Summer Shindig for those aged 11-16 is being held at Ackworth School, **29 Jul-5 Aug**. Details at <https://summershindig.wordpress.com> and there is further detail in March SESAME.

MEET A QUAKER, Zoom version **Sat 13 May**, 10.30-13.00. And/or **in person** in Falkirk on **23 Sep**, details to follow.

We will share our personal experiences of being a Quaker and the journey to membership. There will be plenary discussions and small group conversations and suggestions for reading and other resources. We hope to be warm and welcoming and to help you on your way to membership. Book by contacting Mariot, dallasfalkirk@btinternet.com or 01324 639245

Edinburgh is now a Woodbrooke Place. Some day events and perhaps residential courses will be held at Victoria Terrace Meeting House ...

Reading the Bible with Early Friends is the first Edinburgh-Woodbrooke event. All day **Sat 17 June**. Max 20 places. £35 includes lunch, under-35s £17.50. Ask Pastoral Friends if fees are a barrier to attending Quaker events. Bookings at <https://bit.ly/3GI6Zc5>



No Venue 40 this year



During August, 7 Victoria Terrace will be **Fringe Central**. The Fringe is renting the premises throughout the Festival, but it will remain available for Quaker meetings on Wednesday and Sunday. Fringe staff will run it at other times.

More News

Peace at the Heart is an exhibition about peace education in schools that is coming to the Scottish Parliament on 26-28 Sept. It stems from a report you can read at: www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education-case

Can you think of other venues across Scotland that could display this? If so, please contact Zoe Prosser, zoep@quaker.org.uk

David and Ida Turner An inspiring Memorial Meeting for David and Ida was held on 16 April.



David's bike. Highlights the relevance of the Climate Justice event on Sat 27 May (listed on page 1). Below: Classic beach scene featuring Ida with Sylvia.



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