



## SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

July 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 July is for **Lend With Care**. This is a microfinance initiative for low-income developing countries run by Care International UK. At <https://lendwithcare.org> there is a 'start lending' button which shows projects you can pick from. When your loan is repaid you can lend it on to another project, or reclaim it, or donate it. Catriona Courtier will speak to this. <https://lendwithcare.org/info/how-it-works> has an informative explanation.

## QUAKER EVENTS

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

**Princes St Gardens Meeting** for witness and worship for peace at the Peace Tree **Sun 29 June**. Between fountain and the Ross Bandstand, 10.30-11.30. Coincides with meetings at Faslane. Dress for weather and bring something to sit on.

**Meeting with our MP** Ian Murray in the café area of the Open Door, **Fri 4 July** 12.45 for 30 mins.

**The meaning of Quaker Community**, workshop by this year's Swarthmore Lecturer, Emily Provance. 10-3 pm on **Sat 12 July**. Details on back page.

**South Edinburgh Book Group** is on a break, resumes September.

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From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

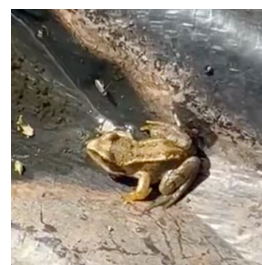
**Coffee** at Rachel's house, from 10.15 am on first and third Thursdays. Please confirm with Rachel.

**Central Book Group** – third Sundays after soup: July *Old Filth* or any book by Jane Gardâm.

Note holiday in August, resume September.



**Puzzle:** Finlay would like to know what these markings mean. ↑ 7 ' (number varies; sometimes with a thing resembling an apostrophe as here). Usually found on late 1800s buildings low on a pavement-adjacent wall (including garden walls), near a water pipe entry point.



MHT

## We want Eight and We Won't Wait

*Dominick Jenkins*

How was the public persuaded to support the vast naval buildup before the First World War, illustrated in our June issue? Winston Churchill observed, "The Admiralty had demanded six ships; the economists offered four; and we finally compromised on eight."

Newspaper owners were keen on stories which presented Britain as the navy champion of liberty, law, and trade. And Lord Palmerston taught a generation of British politicians the art of using naval deployments to show that the British Empire was the champion of the global rule of law and free trade.

In the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century more countries developed an industrial base capable of producing modern battleships. France led the way. It was followed by America, Russia, Germany and Japan. It was difficult to see how the Royal Navy could retain the two-power standard it deemed essential to maintaining the command of the world's oceans that it had achieved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and confirmed at the battle of Trafalgar. Britain sought to maintain its naval supremacy through an alliance with France. This made Germany the nation whose naval building mattered to Britain. German leadership in the second industrial revolution (chemicals, electricity and steel), and its armies' use of railways to rapidly defeat France, made it plausible to represent its naval building as already threatening British naval superiority.

To persuade the German public to support the building of highly expensive battleships, their navy told the German papers what line to take and contrary stories were censored.

In the UK the approach was different. The Royal Navy took advantage of popular delight in showing British superiority over foreign nations, nicely captured by the popular 'MacDermott War Song':

*We don't want to fight but by Jingo if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men, and we've got the money too.*

It also took advantage of a widespread conviction that the German acquisition of a high seas fleet of battleships was part of a plan to conquer Britain by destroying its fleet and then landing a German army on British soil, as in Erskine Childers' book *The Riddle of the Sands*.

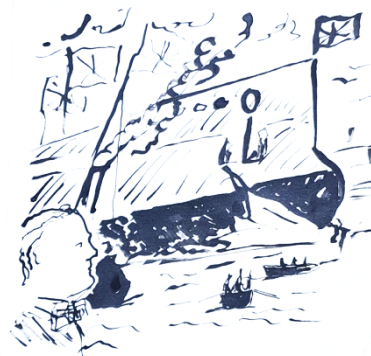
The Navy did so by spectacular battleship launches and fleet reviews. These showed the public that it took the German naval threat seriously without directly saying so.

In the decade before the First World War British naval strategy was dominated by the First Sea Lord Admiral 'Jacky' Fisher. He counted George the fifth and Winston Churchill among leading allies. *HMS Dreadnought* was the first of a new and expensive generation of battleships. It was propelled by oil and steam turbines, and equipped with the latest guns, gun control, and armour. It was seen as making all other warships redundant, and launched an international arms race.

Did Fisher himself believe that the German high seas fleet was a real threat? Statements to King George the 5<sup>th</sup>, and other Royal Navy investments, show he did not. Fisher played up the naval armaments race to secure funds for a completely different and an offensive strategy to secure not Britain alone, but Britain and its world-wide Empire against all comers. Mines, torpedoes and the means to deliver them. submarines, torpedo boats, and aircraft would ensure that the Germans would keep their hugely expensive battleships safe in port. At the same time fast cruisers armed with long range guns, and coordinated by radio, would cut Germany off world trade and ensure that Britain's imperial partners could supply the British Empire with the men and materials it needed. The German will to fight would collapse as shortages of key materials impacted its economy and as civilians began to go hungry and to starve.

I leave to another occasion of how should we evaluate Fishers naval building program and his belief that, despite the fact that British success in developing into an industrial nation was being successfully copied by other nations, he believed that an aggressive high-technology navy could maintain its dominance in all the world's oceans.

Works Used: Jan Ruger, *The Great Naval Game* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Lambert Nicholas, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (University of Carolina, 2002).



The launch of *HMS Dreadnought*  
(woodcut by DJ)

## Reflections and Initiatives for South Edinburgh Meeting

Dear Friends, over the past year as we have been growing in number and depth, there has been inspiration and encouragement for those who have attended Woodbrooke events at Victoria Terrace. In addition Portobello-Musselburgh Meeting has shared its rich experience of conducting a Spiritual Self Survey (reported in November's SESAM minutes and in SESAME). Four questions formed the core of their review:

- What do I value in our Meeting?
- What is my experience of Meeting for Worship?
- What is missing in our Meeting?
- What can I contribute to the life of our Meeting?

Our Pastoral Carers and Elders would like to invite all of us who worship together to help explore these questions as part of our own Meeting Spiritual Review.

Offering Meetings for Learning has been a regular part of our activities. As a suggestion, and inviting your comments, we would like to offer an autumn evening series based on the Swarthmore Lecture 2014 *Open for Transformation* by Ben Pink Dandelion. This would be an opportunity to address these questions and enrich the spiritual depth and breadth of our life together. We would like to involve as many Friends as possible in, and through participating, find we grow in 'knowing one another in the things that are eternal.'

We suggest we cover the five study topics provided in the Swarthmore Lecture through two groups meeting regularly in the homes of local Friends, commencing in late September. (We used *Becoming Friends* a few years ago.) The sessions cover:

1. Celebrating the Quaker way
2. Our spiritual experience
3. Identifying our gifts and needs as a meeting
4. How our meeting works
5. Living the Quaker way

As a Meeting our recent initiatives, alongside our usual Quaker witness, included

- What is Ministry? An enriching session after meeting attended by 18 Friends led by Jo Swanson and David Somervell. Worship sharing led to openness and understanding.
- Welcome to newcomers evening – shared conversation, food and drink were much enjoyed. As some Friends were unable to attend that day and new Friends have joined subsequently we would like to offer a repeat of this over the summer. Invitations to follow.
- Still to come: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025 day workshop at Victoria Terrace led by Emily Provance on this year's Swarthmore lecture she gave on Quakers and community. Registration necessary - places still available and funding if needed.

We invite your suggestions of any activity you would like to do alongside Friends and any subject you would like to learn about? Please send emails to me on [ros.robertsonpark@gmail.com](mailto:ros.robertsonpark@gmail.com) or share ideas at our next social event. If you would like to volunteer to help take any of this forward do please offer!

*Rosamond Robertson (elder)*

## Other news and future events

**Stories of Belief** An audio-visual journey through 900 years of faith and belief in Edinburgh. Celebrating the ways in which our communities continue to enrich and contribute to the city. **23 June - 3 July** – Details of locations and timings at <https://tinyurl.com/storiesofbelief>

Emily Provance, who gave the 2025 Swarthmore lecture ([https://youtu.be/BkGD\\_7dacGM](https://youtu.be/BkGD_7dacGM)), will be delivering a workshop exploring **The Meaning of Quaker Community** at Edinburgh Meeting House 10-3 on **Sat 12 July**. Lunch not provided; bring your own. Book (££; ticket numbers limited; financial support available, speak to pastoral care team) at <https://bit.ly/4kEY3pk>

**Swarthmore lecture** – the recorded lecture is online, with links to additional information, at [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/research/swarthmore-lectures](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/research/swarthmore-lectures)

**Edinburgh Meeting House Fringe 2025** The Meeting House will again be a “C Venues” location. From **Sun 20 Jul** to **Sun 31 Aug** there will be reduced space in the Meeting Room; 9.30 am Meeting will be online only; teas and coffees after Meeting served in the meeting room itself, and there won’t be soup afterwards.

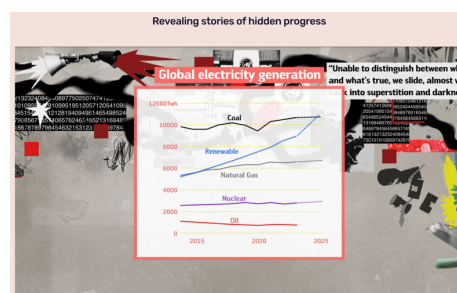
**Wiston weekend** our annual all-age weekend near Biggar, is **Fri 5 – Sun 7 Sep** on the theme of **Building Community**. Bursaries available. We have the whole venue this year, and the event is advertised across Scotland. More info and booking at <https://bit.ly/wiston25> or send Qs to [QuakerWistonWeekend@gmail.com](mailto:QuakerWistonWeekend@gmail.com)

**Last year in parliament** – Mark Bitel (Central Edinburgh) spoke to MSPs in May 2024 about truth and integrity. Watch or listen at <https://bit.ly/3SIFjiP>

Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday each month. July junketing to [neilturn@gmail.com](mailto:neilturn@gmail.com)  
Find this edition, plus archives of previous, at [www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh](http://www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh)

## The Web, sans AI

### Is this the time of monsters or miracles?



Angus Hervey lays today’s high-profile bad news against the less-heard positive stories. 10-min TED talk at <https://bit.ly/4mEEKP4>

Read his *Fix the News* newsletters, or subscribe to them at <https://fixthenews.com> (£ optional).

**Editors confession** Sadly I do most of my proofreading after I hit sned (@dadsaysjokes on Threads)

## Not the Web



Amy Linton, *Sea of Plastic*. Items picked up from the beach at St Bee’s. Displayed at the Florence Mine, Europe’s last deep iron ore mine (1914-1980), now the site of an arts centre. More info and abandoned site photos at <https://bit.ly/4nlbSGb>

