



SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

August 2013



MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Every Sunday at 10.30 am at the Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, EH10 5HY, with separate Children's meeting.

Every weekday at Victoria Terrace – DURING THE FRINGE, Aug 15-24th, Mon-Sat, 8am and 1pm for 30 mins.

Every Wednesday at Victoria Terrace: 12.30-1.00 followed by a simple lunch.

At Portobello: 1st Sunday at Old Parish Church Bellfield St, EH15 2BP at **7.30 pm** for half an hour; and **4th Sun** at **10.30 am** at CHANGES Community Health Project, 108 Market Street, Musselburgh EH21 6QA.

At Barony St: 4th Sunday. 7pm at the Glasite Meeting House, 33 Barony St (junction with Albany Lane). More info: Marjorie Farquharson.

Central Edinburgh meeting has an early Sunday morning meeting at 9.30am in addition to the regular 11.00am meeting at Victoria Terrace.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

In August is for **War Resisters International**. Which was founded in 1921 to promote nonviolent action against the causes of war. Chris Booth will speak to this. www.wri-irg.org

LOCAL MEETING EVENTS

On first Sundays a **Mini-mart** is held after meeting, in aid of external charities.

Also on first Sunday, **Aug 4th**, from 12pm children and parents will join with others from Central meeting for a picnic in Portobello.

Children on Aug 18 and 25th are meeting at Victoria Terrace to use the theatre space for the story of Fierce Feathers.

OTHER QUAKER EVENTS

Lots of things don't happen in Edinburgh in August, to make space for all the extra things that do. Where August arrangements aren't stated please check.

The **Drop-In Group** 1st Monday afternoons, contact Sylvia Massey.

Singing Group is on holiday in July and August

Reading the bible with Friends meets third Tuesdays 7-9pm, Victoria Terrace.

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group meets on 3rd Wednesdays at 7pm. www.edinwig.org.uk.

Book Group on third Sundays at 1pm, Victoria Terrace, missing August but for Sep, John Lanchester *Mr PhilliLps*; Oct, RL Stevenson *Weir of Hermiston*; Nov, Monica Ali *Brick Lane*; Dec, Dickens *Our Mutual Friend*. Qs to Rachel Frith.



[More Events and News on the Back Page](#)

Benefits Sanctions – an insight

"Every fortnight at the Job Centre I have to prove I've been looking for work. You don't fill in a Job Diary anymore, but use a website. There are no guidelines and I find that hard, so I've spoken to my advisor about needing help with it. I have to apply for 6 jobs a fortnight, but two weeks ago when I went in, I had only applied for 5.

Because I had only applied for 5 jobs, my advisor said she was going to put me forward for a four week sanction on my benefits. No money for 4 weeks. She makes the recommendation for the sanction and it gets passed to the Decision Maker who is someone you can't phone or speak to - it's a decision that comes from on high.

I started asking lots of questions, I wanted to know if I was going to lose my Housing Benefit too, and they couldn't tell me. Said I would get a letter letting me know of the decision. I was ushered out of a side door with no explanation. I was annoying them by asking questions.

I knew my power and food would only last a couple of days. I felt so frustrated and violent, felt like I was going to snap. It made me think about getting the jail. The idea of going to the jail and getting three meals a day and being warm was good.

My money was stopped two weeks ago, and I still haven't had the letter telling me about it. Just suddenly, your money isn't there. And I won't be able to adequately prove I've been looking for work this week, because I've been too hungry. I'm losing so much weight.

After 2 weeks you can apply for a hardship allowance of £70 a week. I refuse to do that though no matter how hard it gets, that feels like a slap in the face. "You've just robbed me and now you want to give me a fag."

I can't deal with going to the Job Centre. It feels like they're against you from the moment you walk in. I feel there's a lot of pressure on advisors to sanction people.

The worst thing is being alone, so I try to keep busy, volunteering, talking to people. It keeps you going, having someone smile at you, someone to talk to. Otherwise, having no food and no power, it makes you desperate.

I have to work hard to keep going. My friend and I were writing comedy sketches about the things that are happening to us the other night. Sometimes all you can do is laugh."

This story comes from the Poverty Truth Commission www.povertytruthcommission.org.

At Local Meeting on Sunday 21 July, Sylvia Massey reported on her visit to the foodbank at the premises of Blythswood Care in Southhouse, and outlined some of the reasons that people need to use the foodbank – payments arriving late, someone falling ill &c. I added that people are regularly 'sanctioned' by benefits and Jobcentre staff; ie their benefits, such as Job Seekers Allowance, are suspended for infringements of the rules on claiming.

There are lots more stories around the web about sanctions, the 'bedroom tax' and others of the many changes to the benefits system currently being introduced. One source is Citizens Advice Scotland: www.cas.org.uk/features.

Groups of disability and unemployment campaigners are mobilising to challenge these policies and tactics on the part of the Westminster government and its agencies – often through direct action:

- Black Triangle has been established as a grassroots campaign for human rights for people with disabilities: blacktrianglecampaign.org.
- The Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty – which believes the manager at Leith Jobcentre is working to a target of 30% claims to be sanctioned – recently demonstrated at Leith Jobcentre, and found that the police invoked the Public Order Act to handle the situation: edinburghagainstopoverty.org.uk.

Our meeting cannot assume that we are immune from involvement in these issues – while many of us are on a decent wage, others will be reliant on a range of social security benefits, and may be encountering changes in the way they are administered. We are seeing an increasingly draconian approach being shown by Government, backed up by the right-wing press eager to drive a wedge between 'hard-working families' and 'welfare dependency'. This damages people's self-esteem and can make it difficult to share problems.

Even if we were not directly affected, we would have an obligation to be aware of what is happening to those who are, and to challenge injustice where it arises. This can be through direct support of the organisations addressing the issues; through our regular contacts with our political representatives; through our use of the democratic process. And not least, through taking whatever opportunities we have to link with individuals who are on the front line of these changes.

There was some interest in holding a meeting for learning to explore these issues further.

Meantime, Sylvia will organise a box in which we are invited to place items which she'll take to the Southhouse Foodbank – starting on Sunday 4 August. They are asking for:

Tinned meat or fish	Cereal
Coffee	Instant mashed potato
Tinned fruit	Tomato ketchup
Tinned rice or custard	Juice
Tinned veg	Sugar
Jar of pasta bake	UHT milk
Tinned sponge pudding	Jam

Alastair Cameron

Three poems

SPLINTERS

(For my father)

You picked splinters
with a pin each day
from under blackened fingernails;
shreds of metal
from the shipyard grime,
minute memories of days swept by:
the dusty remnants of a life
spent in the shadow of the sea;
the tears in your shattered eyes
at the end of work.
And your hands were strong,
so sensitive and capable
of building boats
and nursing roses;
a kind and gentle man
who never hurt a soul,
the sort of quiet knackered man
who built a nation.
Dad, I watched your ashes float away
down to the ocean bed
and in each splinter
I saw your caring eyes
and gracious smile.

I think of your strong silence every day
and I am full of you,
the waves you scaled,
and all the sleeping Tyneside streets
you taught me to dance my fleeting feet along

When I fly, you are with me.
I see your fine face
in sun-kissed clouds
and in the gold ring on my finger,
and in the heaving crowd on Saturday,
and in the lung of Grainger Market,
and in the ancient breath
of our own Newcastle.

Keith Armstrong

ACHMELVICH

Summer, early evening
Rain so soft it couldn't wet
long coarse grass
growing through sandy soil.
Then down to the bay
no rain here,
We kicked off sandals
my brother and I
and ran and ran
across white, white sand
Then looked over the calm sea
reflecting the clear sky
so there was no horizon
.. I belonged here once.

Catherine Somerville

HOW TO BEHAVE WITH THE ILL

Approach us assertively, try not to
cringe or sidle, it makes us fearful.
Rather walk straight up and smile.
Do not touch us unless invited,
particularly don't squeeze upper arms,
or try to hold our hands. Keep your head erect.
Don't bend down, or lower your voice.
Speak evenly. Don't say
'How are you?' in an underlined voice.
Don't say, I heard that you were very ill.
This makes the poorly paranoid.
Be direct, say 'How's your cancer?'
Try not to say how well we look.
compared to when you met in Safeway's.
Please don't cry, or get emotional,
and say how dreadful it all is.
Also (and this is hard I know)
try not to ignore the ill, or to scurry
past, muttering about a bus, the bank.
Remember that this day might be your last
and that it is a miracle that any of us
stands up, breathes, behaves at all.

Julia Darling



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