



## SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

November 2024



Colinton old railway tunnel's huge murals illustrate Robert Louis Stevenson's 1885 poem *From a Railway Carriage* (Esther, Chris, Dorothy).

### 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).

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 **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 November is for **Christmas Hampers for Refugees**. Esther Shreeve will speak to this. More at <https://edinburghcitymission.org.uk> (donations button top right).

### QUAKER EVENTS

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

**The Priest's Tale: Michael Mears** is performing his remarkable Hiroshima tale at Victoria Terrace Meeting House on **Thur 7 Nov, 7-9 pm** (doors open 6.30) – details on back page.

**General Meeting for Scotland** is at Dundee Meeting House on **Sat 9 Nov**.

**Area Meeting** will be held on **Sat 23 Nov from 2pm** at Bellfield, Portobello; also online.

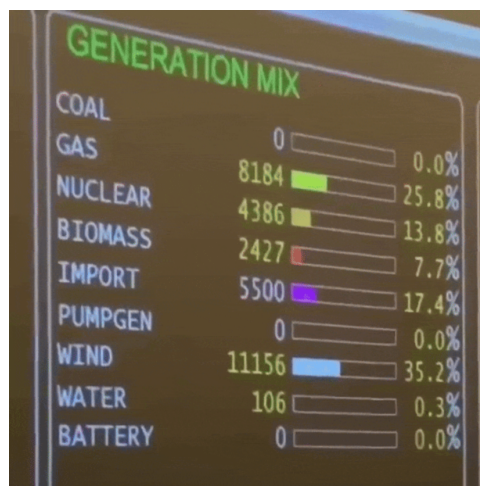
**Bring and share lunch** after meeting on 4th Sundays, so on **Sun 24 Nov**.

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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: **Nov tbc**.



**'Home of the Industrial Revolution closes last coal power plant'**, 30 Sep 2024. The UK burned 25 billion tons over 142 years (4.6 billion on power generation) (Carbon Brief). According to XKCD, equivalent to a 3-inch layer over the entire surface of the UK. Live updates showing how power is being generated are available by Googling 'UK power generation live'.

## In search of a new home?

At our June Meeting for Worship for Business, I offered to search for a new home for our Meeting as our number is increasing and in time we may well need a new home. I was mindful of how much energy and effort some members of our meeting put into getting our space ready. The Open Door space is not ideal, an issue explored at our last Business Meeting. Ron Halliday's account of an earlier search documents that it took fourteen years to find our current premises. In view of this it seemed a good idea to begin our search, an activity I saw as a welcome challenge.

After nineteen inquiries and eight site visits I have only one site for Friends to visit. There may be another waiting to be found. Any knowledge or access to an underused premises on a main bus route, do please get in touch. Here is a glimpse of my journey so far.



I had noticed premises that seemed tailor made for us. Full of optimism I arranged to meet the Administrator for the lively church that has taken over the Old School House, Morningside Road. The former occupants, the Brethren, have been replaced by such a growing congregation that a large assembly room at George Watson's College is rented each Sunday morning for worship, and there is an additional Spanish speaking congregation worshipping each week. The Old School House has been beautifully modernised with excellent facilities, but may be needed intermittently so is not available to us. The facilities are excellent at £70 per hour. (Photo taken c.1900).

George Watson's College can rent us a hall but at £180 for a Sunday morning.

Next was Church of Scotland buildings via their offices at 121 George Street and the Presbyteries. The response was consistently supportive and interested, but all the buildings I identified were either in use by the church on Sundays, had been sold, or were in alternative use. This includes Chalmers Church on Churchill formerly used by Napier University but once again in use as a church.

Columcille Centre in Napier Road, owned by the Garvald Trust, seemed an option, but a combination of poor disabled access and uncertainty about the centre's future ruled this out.

In addition I explored renting rooms from the Pavilion Cafe Myreside, Napier Conference Facilities, the Gillis Centre, Churchill Theatre, Morningside Library, the Eric Liddell Centre, Astley Ainslie Hospital, and the Royal School for the Blind.

Sadly Morningside United Church replied after weeks of delay to let me know that its ideally situated refurbished halls in Chamberlain Road were already let to the Romanian Orthodox Church. The German-speaking church in Chalmers Crescent is only available alternate weeks.

Contact with the Chaplain at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital (REH), Anthony Kramers, was rewarding. Anthony showed us a beautiful light room, devoid of clutter and already used for quiet reflection. Unfortunately practical matters presented insurmountable challenge within the NHS. We were invited to attend a concert in the hospital social centre, the Hive, to be given by the Bamberger Orchestra in Residence from Germany as part of the Edinburgh Festival. Turning up for the advertised programme Festival goes unexpectedly came across the residents' own concert, running late, (our Friend Edmondo on the drums) then the Bamberger Festival Brass Band members took the stage - a lively refreshing and inclusive event of the best kind. The bright yellow stained glass sun behind the scene fittingly declaring 'LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE'.



The Hive, a former church in the grounds, is made of corrugated iron designed for export to the hot colonies as a prefabricated 'flat pack' church. One such made its way, imported to Leith then erected in the REH grounds. In the past Alison Chalmer's husband Murray regularly conducted Church of Scotland services for residents. He really loved taking these services, so that climate challenge was clearly not too daunting. It now serves as a cafe and social venue for the residents.



A community initiative in the Sciennes area David Somervell had been following, was then pursued. A Community Room in a semi-basement was being planned and we were welcome to join in. However it was

evident that as only one room was available this would give no flexibility should children join the Meeting in the future. There were unknowns as to financial liabilities, poor acoustics and a seemingly long time- line before the room could be ready for use by SEM.

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School at 60 Spylaw Road EH10 5BR seemed promising from the outset. The Interim Head of the school Nick Brett showed us round and later the SEM Co-Clerks were invited for a further visit if they wished. Interested members of the Meeting visited on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October with a trial Meeting for Worship on 27<sup>th</sup> October including our shared lunchtime afterwards. The room chosen is light with an outlook onto trees. Comfortable padded chairs would be arranged ready for Meeting, plus there is use of kitchen and toilet facilities. The significant disadvantage of these premises is that the bus service is not as frequent or convenient as those to the Open Door. Friends can judge for themselves how important this is from our visits.

George Gorman recounts his Meeting facing challenges (QF & P 2.03):

*It was held in a rather hideous building: the meeting room was dingy. We sat on rickety chairs that creaked at the slightest movement. The whole place gave little hope that those who worshipped there might catch a glimpse of the vision of God. ... However it was in that unlikely setting I came to know what I can only describe as the amazing fact of Quaker worship. It was in that uncomfortable room that I discovered the way to the interior side of my life, at the deep centre of which I knew that I was not alone, but was held by a love that passes all understanding.*

The power of the ministry of the Spirit is not confined by our setting but we collectively need to discern whether having a less challenging physical space for the Friends preparing the space for our meetings and a more welcoming venue for visitors is an important consideration. We await the outcome.

*Rosamond Robertson*

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**Kenneth McIver** (left, with the sailing team at a New England summer camp) is away to Bristol Uni! After attending South Edinburgh Meeting as a child he joined other young people at Porty/Musselburgh Meeting. The group of young Quakers in his teenage years was very active in climate change actions. He had a great year off after leaving school, working, travelling and sailing. Now he is off to university, taking 2 bicycles, sailing gear, and whatever you need for the shinty team and Gaelic choir. Good luck from us all!



## News and future events

### The Priest's Tale – Hiroshima described



Michael Mears' powerful play brings to life a real survivor's tale of being under the bomb. Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House on **Thur 7 Nov**, 7-9 pm (doors open 6.30). A German priest gives a positive, wistful account, with (recorded this time) violin interludes. Free: cash donations to CND. Book at <https://bit.ly/3UfKjXu> (one at a time)

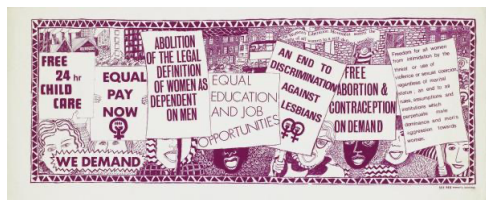
Live is best, but for a historic recording (60 mins) see <https://youtu.be/kU6VYDdTec0>



**Stitched: Scotland's Embroidered Art '80** exquisite pieces 1720-1920' jointly with National Trust Scotland. At the Dovecot Studios in Infirmary St until 18 Jan 2025 (£).

<https://dovecotstudios.com/exhibitions/stitched>

**Burrell Collection stitchery** Burrell was one of the founders of the Scottish National Trust, and his free museum includes lace, embroidery and tapestry, as well outstanding impressionist, oriental and ancient artworks. Its restaurant offers Angry Scotsman Pasta. Anger either from Scotch Bonnet chillis, or the lack of meat.



**Women In Revolt** covers just two decades of anger, 1970-90, but these include the women's liberation movement, Greenham Common, HIV, gay lib, and more. At Modern 2 until 26 Jan (£).

## Happy Birthday

Very happy birthday to Ted, who will be 14 on the 24<sup>th</sup>.



Direction finding in Antarctica

*Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday of each month. December discourses 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)*



**Women in the mainstream** In Old Parliament Hall, now the home of advocates, on Open Doors Day, Deirdre found a couple of women amongst the portraits. Margaret Kidd, first woman advocate at the age of 23, and Leona June Dorrian.

**Scottish Interfaith Week** 2024 is its 20<sup>th</sup> year. **11-18 Nov** with a theme of Discovery. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org> has (a little) more info. Organised by Interfaith Scotland, <https://interfaithscotland.org>

**Fáilte Project ends** Gareth Rae reports from the group supporting resettlement of a refugee family under the auspices of AM. Our two-year commitment is completed, and the family have managed to stay in their current location and schools. Very good news, huge thanks to the team for their substantial input.

**Chemistry tutoring for a refugee** Voluntary help required as soon as possible tutoring a Palestinian refugee, S5 Highers. Please contact Lynne Barty at [love.andsqualor@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:love.andsqualor@blueyonder.co.uk)