SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

November 2026



Gwen John *Girl reading at a window* (1910). On loan from MOMA New York, currently part of excellent exhibition at Edinburgh Modern 2. The face is John's. Another version uses a face from a Durer *Virgin*.

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, details at **www.quaker.scot/south-edinburgh**

Children are welcome anytime. For details of planned activities, see online.

Other local meetings

Central Edinburgh and Portobello-Musselburgh are closest. For full info, times, and a map, see www.quaker.scot

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 charity in November is **Edinburgh Direct Aid International**, an entirely volunteer-run charity which delivers aid to far-away places including Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine, Syria, Kashmir, Balkans. www.edinburghdirectaid.org has info about donating money or clothes, scrap, supplies, and a Donate button. Deirdre will speak to this.

QUAKER EVENTS

Latest updates at https://**bit.ly/SEdQuakEvents**

Quakers in Scotland (QiS) in Edinburgh – in person and hybrid meeting 1030-1630 **Sat 7 Nov**. Drinks from 10 am. Details by email. There is a pre-meeting online, **Thur 5 Nov** 7-8.30 pm. Volunteers needed to contribute home baking and help serve and tidy after tea/ coffee; edcen.clerks@gmail.com with offers please.

Remembrance Sunday Meeting for Peace on **Sun 8 Nov** – we are invited to worship at 7 Victoria Terrace at 11 am, then (after soup) to the newly replaced (we hope) Peace Tree for placing of white crosses. Or join Friends there at 1pm.

Coming to quiet – Sandra Riddell will share ways of stilling ourselves for Meeting and everyday life. **Mon 9 Nov** 7-9 pm at Alison Chalmers (6.30 for tea and catch up). Repeated **Thur 12 Nov** 2-4 at Ian & Ros Robertson's.

The work that reconnects – residential workshop at Wiston Lodge near Biggar, **Fri 13-15 Nov**. Details in last issue; Qs and signup via Lesley Morrison lesleyjmorrison3@gmail.com

The People's Emergency – the widely talked about film on the climate emergency will be shown at Edinburgh Meeting House on **Sat 14 Nov** followed by discussion on actions. 3-5 pm. Book at https://bit.ly/4j5RRcz

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) meets in London on **Sat 21 Nov**. More info www.quaker.org.uk/ym

Fifth Sunday – on **Sun 29 Nov** we will meet at the Chaplaincy Centre at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital *instead of at the Open Door*, and with 11 am start.

Discuss our draft new book of discipline – first of several focusing on different sections. Runs twice, pick either **Mon 30 Nov** 6.30 for 7-9 pm at Alison Chalmers, OR **Thur 10 Dec** 2-4 pm Ros and Ian's.

Book group at 2pm on **Thur 3 Dec** – *The Accidental Tourist* by Anne Tyler, location tbc.

From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

Coffee at Rachel's house, 10.15 – 12.30 first and third Thursdays. Please contact her in advance, rachelfrith162@gmail.com or as in book.

Central Book Group third Sundays after meeting and soup. November: *tbc*.

Get to Know – John Quinn



We chatted over drinks at the Leaf and Bean in September 2026.

John was born into a Quaker family in Inverness and was a regular attender and participant in Quaker activities throughout his childhood and adolescence. After he left home to study Computer Science (first at Cambridge University, then Edinburgh for his Ph.D.), he no longer attended, except when visiting family. But he never lost sight of Quaker values and at the time of the Gaza war breaking out, he found he really wanted to be alongside Friends who had similar concerns to his own; at that point he began to attend Meeting at South Edinburgh when he could.

But a lot happened in the intervening years. His Ph.D. was in the field of medical technology, working on monitoring equipment for premature babies. On the day that he submitted his thesis, he set off for Kampala and thus began a 10 year period working in Africa, originally in Uganda as lecturer in Computer Science, then later in Ghana, where he met his wife, Sophie. He had long had a sense that he should work in Africa but never envisaged that he would be there for such an extended chapter in his life. His initial field of interest was in medical diagnosis and crop disease and he began to work for the United Nations. Then he became involved in mapping. It had become evident that much of Africa was unmapped and that it was a priority for governments, aid agencies etc, that this should be addressed. He began with mapping refugee settlements (a fluid target) and became interested in planning and emergency issues. There were great gaps in knowledge about where people were living, and where they were moving to.

He moved to work for Google who opened an office in Ghana and stayed with them for 5 years. He had joined on condition that his work should be made publicly available. It was a busy time; he was mapping all the buildings and roads in Africa (including 500 million buildings). This was vital information for planning infrastructure, utilities etc.

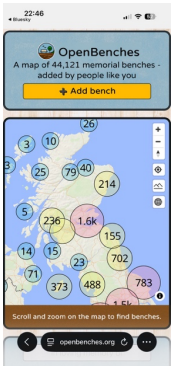
John and Sophie came to Edinburgh at the start of Covid, and John continued to work for Google until 2025. Their 2 daughters were born here – Anna (5) and Julia (3). They feel very settled and expect to stay for the foreseeable future. John started a non-profit enterprise, Sunbird AI, which specialises in language translation tools for African languages. The business is based in Uganda and John visits once or twice a year to catch up with his team of 12.

It was a real joy to listen to John's story; catch him over coffee one Sunday and learn more.

Esther Shreeve

Open benches

There are blue plaques to commemorate the famous and influential figures of the past. For everyone else, there are memorial benches. A quiet reminder of the people gone but not forgotten. A spot to rest your weary legs and give silent thanks to "Alice – who loved this park". www.openbenches.org









The project is designed and built by Terence and Elizabeth Eden, www.openbenches.org/blog/about

Getting to Know Jane Morrice

Art and prayer underpin Jane's life and spiritual journey.



Jane has a passion for her artistic expression which she describes as her 'Soul Occupation'. She paints professionally with the hope that her work will bring joy to others. From art college in West Sussex, through teaching and her first solo exhibitions in Bath, Jane has always painted. Her landscapes are beautiful, sensitive and flowing. Her creative and spiritual drive also led her to train as a Feng Shui practitioner, an ancient Chinese practice that focuses on harmony and balance in our home environments.

Prayer was perhaps the dominant theme of our sharing. Jane was born into a Presbyterian Church-going family but felt no specific spiritual connection to that community, herself. Through a difficult period at art college, where Jane felt directionless and floundering, without close family ties and unhappy lodgings, Jane took time and comfort in prayer.

A welcome change in direction led to a teaching degree in Chichester, where Jane made friends with a young Christian who introduced her to a House Church. Here, there was a focus on accessing the Holy Spirit through chanting, singing and praying, which Jane described as 'spiritually powerful'. She felt deeply that this supportive influence of 'another power' could be called upon. However, the prescriptive nature of the House Church and its focus on Biblical text eventually led Jane to move on in her spiritual search.

Whilst teaching in Bath, Jane met and fell in love with Andrew, a doctor and practising Quaker, who worshipped in Street, Somerset. Though they attended Meetings for Worship together, Jane found them dull and uninspiring. Where were the music and hymns she loved? She felt that her lack of previous experience of meditation or silence in Worship was a disadvantage to understanding the Quaker ways. However, connections made with Quakers at that time seeded lasting friendships.

Jane and Andrew wanted a spiritual life together, and their two children grew up with an understanding that the Spirit is integral to their lives. However, time constraints, a young family, the work-led demands of a GP, and the conflicting styles of worship between the Quakers and Christian Church resulted in an impasse. Travelling to Quaker Meeting, the Methodists, Church of England, even to Wells Cathedral where Andrew had been a chorister in his youth, created unnecessary division. So prayer, 'where the better self is open to the divine, a deep experience of being in the presence of God and Christ', became their keystone in the absence of a formal religious community.

Many years later, and about 4 years ago at the time of writing, Jane and Andrew moved to Edinburgh. Jane found the music and hymns at St Giles wonderful and a return to a place of comfort. She joined a women's group at Greyfriars, which continues to provide spiritual nourishment. However, yet again, the experience of the traditional, prescriptive teachings and the rituals of church worship felt barren.

Jane sees strength in adapting to idiosyncrasies, letting go of preconceptions and allowing change. So, could Quaker Worship offer a way forward? She found South Edinburgh Meeting at Morningside and initially attended with the specific intention of bringing her prayerful consideration. However, she began to realise that in openness, that small voice within was finding an alternate agenda. Jane admits that she still feels like a novice but, as time goes by, she feels more open, more at peace and is enjoying the gentle and welcoming quality of our Meeting.

Olivia Cox met Jane at Olivia's home and shared stories whilst September sunlight dipped towards the East. We covered far more than there is space for here.







Other news and future events



Bayeux tapestry at Dovecot – save the £30 admission fee and avoid the London trip and queue by going to the Dovecot Gallery in Infirmary Street, **21 Nov 21 – 9 April** 12-3 pm (10-5 Saturdays), to see (free) a full-size photographic replica laid around the balcony of the old swimming pool. Better lighting and smaller crowds, plus a modern copy of one panel and actual tapestry version of another, and bonus view of other tapestries in production. Free unless you indulge in their fine coffee shop.

How do you feel when you see a flag? From *The Friend* 11 Sep, the news that should you see unofficial display in public places of flags with undesirable intent, an 8 metre 'magic wand' for their removal is available from Oxford Friends, office@oxfordquakers.org

More events at https://**bit.ly/SEdQuakEvents**

Mainstream niche



Knitted biscuits by JaneTalbot. Two key Quaker themes in one. No AI.

From www.nicecupofteaandasitdown.com, a historic but exquisitely researched and written website dedicated to biscuit reviews. Index/archive at https://bit.ly/2HzKCF0

Response to Jane Talbot: I'm very impressed by your attention to detail, it elevates what could have simply been an average common or garden knitted plate of biscuits, with a knitted cup of tea and a knitted selection tray of biscuits and knitted cellophane pack complete with illustrations and knitted insert tray, to something truly extraordinary. https://bit.ly/4iowUcv

Happy Birthday

November birthdays of notable Quakers include:



Sarah Grimké (234y, 1792), US abolitionist, early feminist, writer, education campaigner '*I ask for no favor for my sex. All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks'*.

John Bright (215y, 1811) Radical Liberal politician who fought against the Corn Laws which restricted imports of cheaper grain 1815-46. Other campaigns were for shorter working hours, and against the Crimean War.

Philip Noel-Baker (137y, 1889) Olympic medallist, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and politician. Established and led the Friends Ambulance Unit in 1914, campaigned for multilateral disarmament.

How I became a Quaker (2)



I couldn't escape: Birthright young Quaker, seeking anonymity behind a punk mask, is foiled by EHM's resourcefulness. Lesley Webster, Friends House librarian 1972-8, in *A Quaker Miscellany for Edward H Milligan* (Head librarian) 1985.
'Borrow online' https://bit.ly/4rEoYX7 (Internet Archive).

Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday each month. Be added to the list to receive it by email, or send niche expertise and eccentric interest-based content to neilturn@gmail.com

This edition, plus archives of previous, can be found at **www.quaker.scot/south-edinburgh**