SOUTH EDINBURGH MEETING

November 2025

Princes St from a side street 1947, by Milein Cosman, who arrived in the UK as a Jewish immigrant teenager in 1939. She visited Edinburgh for the inaugural Festival. Currently on display at the City Art Gallery.

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, late changes, and links 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 November is for **Edinburgh City Mission** and **Christmas hampers** More info and donate online at www.edinburghcitymission.org.uk Esther Shreeve will speak to this.

QUAKER EVENTS

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

Area Meeting South Edinburgh are the hosts for SESAM at 7 Victoria Terrace on **Sat 1 Nov**.

Meeting for Learning 1 – First of five sessions 'Celebrating the Quaker Way': two opportunities, 7.30-9 pm on **Mon 3 Nov** (Alison Chalmers hosting) or 2pm on **Thur 6 Nov** (Ian and Rosamond).

Based on ***Open for Transformation.*** Books via Friends House bookshop (£2+£2.20 postage) and/ or watch video at https://youtu.be/oRO-IGD9emM

Quakers in Scotland (QiS), the new body that has taken on the functions of **General Meeting**, has its second meeting at Edinburgh Meeting House on **Sat 8 Nov**. Details by email.

Remembrance Sunday – Meeting for Peace in Princes St Gardens, 10.30-11.30 **Sun 9 Nov** at the site of the Peace Tree, between the fountain and the Ross Bandstand. Followed by soup at Edinburgh Meeting House and then the Remembrance event 1.30-3.30 back at the Peace Tree. More info https://remembrance9nov.eventbrite.co.uk

Open for Transformation 2 – Second session on 'Our spiritual experience' **Mon 17** or **Thur 20 Nov**, same times and locations as above.

Local Meeting for Business after Meeting for Worship and a shared lunch on **Sun 23 Nov**. At this meeting we are asked to record our view on SESAM merging fully with QiS.

Fifth Sunday different – on **Sun 30 Nov** we will have 30 mins as usual, then 30 mins worship sharing.

Book Group on *Island of the Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak, **Thur 4 Dec** at 2 pm, venue tbc.

From Rachel Frith of Edinburgh Central:

Coffee at Rachel's house usually on first and third Thursdays. 10.15 am: please confirm with Rachel.

Central Book Group – third Sundays after soup. November: *Summerwater* by Sarah Moss.

Apoplectic Cardinals Harvesting Tomatoes on the Shore of the Red Sea. Alphonse Allais 1897 (p4).

May Drummond 1696-1777, neglected Edinburgh Quaker celebrity

Janette Walkinshaw (Wigtown Meeting) has recently completed a Glasgow MPhil about May Drummond, a remarkable Edinburgh Quaker of the 1700s.

> 'Crowds flocked to hear her speak. Young women looked to her as a role model, poetry was written about her … why then has she been forgotten in her native city?'
>
> In Bristol: "*the throngs have been so great that several Supporters have been added to the Gallery, to prevent any Accident by its falling*"'

The Drummonds were a prominent family. May's older brother George was Lord Provost of Edinburgh six times. Both were prominent in the campaign to fund the first Royal Infirmary, May rallying numerous Quaker as well as other donations. However she was out of step with her family in adopting Quakerism. She became a renowned local and then national Quaker preacher, but later her activities and associations became controversial with Edinburgh Quakers, and she was eventually disowned. Apparently the records from that process furnish rich material for academic study.

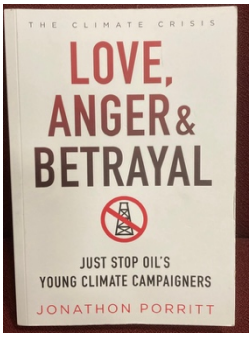
Janette has written a short learned account for the Old Edinburgh Club* at https://bit.ly/4nhtbfH or you can download the whole thesis at https://theses.gla.ac.uk/85322

Image: May Drummond 1733 by Jonathan Richardson (British Museum).

* The OEC, established in 1908, presents interesting things about Edinburgh history at the Augustine United Church during autumn and winter.

Climate things

Love, anger, betrayal



An account of the witness statements from 26 Just Stop Oil activists in their 20s – putting their lives, their careers, their all on the line – with a revealing commentary by one of Britain's most sage environmentalists. Porritt is in awe of the directness of the civil disobedience/ nonviolent direct actions taken, and his co-writers share their sanguine views on the sentences handed down to them as much as the dystopian future they face.

David Somervell (who can lend a copy)

What can we do?

You can demonstrate (see first item on back page). The Grange Association has collected good information on how to maximise your personal energy and carbon-efficiency, even if you live in one of Edinburgh's well-ventilated Victorian houses. https://grangeassociation.org/home-energy

In other churches: snakes and folk

For those seeking a contrast, this from 'the last snake-handling church in Appalachia'. Its ancestors apparently date back to 2010. This live recording is from the Pastor Chris Congregation's two-hour service, in which shouty world-is-going-to-hell gospel (First track: *What has happened to this generation?*) is set to rousing rock and hillbilly guitars, 'trance-like rhythms, and howling vocals'. They claim to be the first church that merged Rock and Roll with firebrand preaching, and that the music was stolen from them by Satan, they are the true originators. It truly is something else.

Available on https://bandcamp.com, search for **west virginia snake handler revival**. Do try it. We must continue to record music and culture that feels as if it may be about to disappear …

Folk without snakes

A BBC archive clip www.instagram.com/reel/DQUSSp6EQN_ draws attention to the Alan Lomax collection of Scottish folk music, from his UK tour in the early 1950s. Flora MacNeil's (left) Gaelic singing from Barra was heard at the beginning of the clip – or find all of the recordings at https://archive.culturalequity.org/field-work/scotland-1951-1958 (all free). The fine collection of playground songs collected by teacher James Ritchie from Norton Park School in Edinburgh is also available there.

Lomax and his father, but other family members too, collected and publicised thousands of singers and musicians, first in the USA for the Library of Congress, where recordings included many Blues musicians who became known again and influenced UK popular music of the 1960s. Alan later toured many parts of the world. A remarkable story and legacy that you can explore at https://archive.culturalequity.org/collections/field-work

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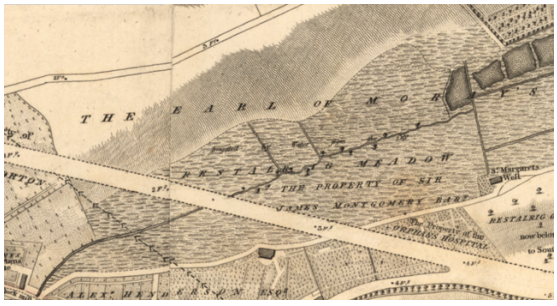
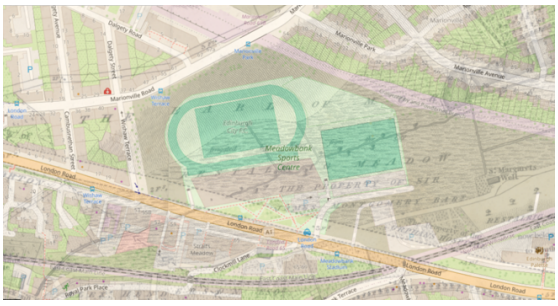
That stinks (1880s)

Edinburgh's sewage originally discharged into its streams and rivers (more in Sep 2022 issue). To the North the Water of Leith, and to the South the Jordan and Braid burns. The outflow from both slopes of the High Street fed into streams that merged to form the 'Foul Burn', which was exploited to irrigate and fertilise grass-growing meadows to the East. The grass was profitably used to feed the huge population of cows and horses that lived in the city.

"A very large tract in the eastern environs, extending all the way from the vicinity of Holyrood by Restalrig to the Firth of Forth, is disposed in foul water irrigation meadows – being kept in a state of constant swamp by the diffusion over them of the contents of great common sewers from the city. This irrigation produces indeed large crops of herbage, but is a serious nuisance, loathsome to look upon, horrible to the olfactory nerves, and probably, even when the noxious gases arising from it are diluted with the pure air of the surrounding high grounds not unaccompanied with material injury to the public health".





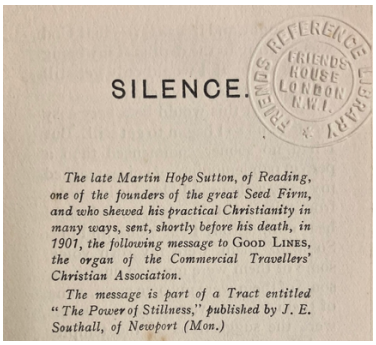
First image via Andy Arthur shows streams/ sewers in orange (https://bit.ly/3Lb2xrw and https://bit.ly/49rxqSt) Second via NLS is Kirkwood's 1817 map with Open Street Maps overlay to right showing location of Meadowbank stadium on the site of the meadows and bank of the burn. Quoted text is from the *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: A Survey of Scottish Topography, Statistical, Biographical and Historical*, ed FH Groome, Grange Publishing Works, Edinburgh, 1882-5.

Other news and future events

Scotland's climate march and rally: a better world is possible. **Sat 15 Nov** to coordinate with COP30. Glasgow Green from 11am; sign up and info at https://act.foe.scot/climate_march_2025

Congratulations to **Phil Noble**, shown holding his **Cycle Champion of the Year** award from Cycling Scotland. He has retired after 30 years working in active travel for Edinburgh Council. Nice tribute at www.spokes.org.uk/spokesworker – Oct update.

Edinburgh Young Friends Discussion Group (for those 18–35ish) meets fortnightly on Friday evenings at the Meeting House. They also have a WhatsApp group. Contact Central Edinburgh clerks (edcen.clerks@gmail.com) to get in touch.



More on Silence – who wrote the 1910 leaflet with over a century of publication that Mary Steven reminded us of? A Canadian presbyterian founder of missionary organisation, it turns out. Neil Turner tells the tale in *The Friend* https://bit.ly/3WkO12N

Our newsletter is published near the last Sunday each month. Halloween horrors and Christmas crumbs to neilturn@gmail.com
Find this edition, plus archives of previous, at **www.quakerscotland.org/south-edinburgh**

Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday to **Ted** who will be 15 on 24 Nov. May your output be as famous as Harry Wingfield's (1910-2002).

One of Wingfield's over 600 Ladybird book illustrations. More in Walsall Art Gallery, in exhibitions curated by Helen Day (@LBFlyawayhome), and in the learn-to-read Peter and Jane books on which your grandparents/ parents/ you were raised. These sold 80 million copies 1964-2012.

South Edinburgh email lists

South-Edinburgh-Announce emails – our weekly messages now come **from a new address south-edinburgh-announce@quaker.scot**
Contact Sandra if you'd like to be added to or removed from the list, sandra.riddell@talktalk.net

The **South Edin Newsletter** goes to a different list. Contact neilturn@gmail.com to be added to or removed to that, or with suggestions for content.

The First Communion of Anaemic Girls in Snow. Alphonse Allais, from his April Fools Album, 1897. https://bit.ly/3L5ttce (Public Domain Review)