

Greenbank Connections



June–August 2020

Issue 690

Scottish Charity SCO11325



*One of our 'Lockdown Life' photographs, submitted by Janet Edwards:
Gingerbread Keyworker — Remembering the hardworking veterinary profession
(See page 5 for more details of 'Lockdown Life')*

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

Online version: www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/

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Staying in Touch

Martin continues to send out a weekly email to the congregation and friends. In order for us to comply with Data Protection regulations, unless you are an Elder or Board member you need to register on the website before you can receive it. This is done by going to:

www.greenbankchurch.org

then clicking on the line *sign up for regular email contact with Greenbank* and following the instructions.

Since all events normally held on Greenbank premises have been cancelled, there is no monthly calendar in this issue.

All 10.30am Sunday morning services continue to be livestreamed via the website.

From the Minister

Dear Friends,



*Emerging from lockdown –
with patience and caution ...*

It seems like Lockdown has been going on forever! Well, it has been a while since our last public worship in-person during mid-March. Since then, we have been able to gather to worship online in our Sunday livestreams as the “living stones” in our homes, and to welcome people to our worship from all over the world. Some of the aspirations for streaming have already been met: enabling our more vulnerable members to be connected to worship; reaching out to the wider community and world; exploring the possibilities of growing an online congregation where home location doesn't matter; giving our members who were unable to gather in the church on a Sunday the chance to “catch up”; our wondering about whether we could offer something to people from churches where worship wasn't possible due to a lack of leadership. All of these aspirations have been fulfilled in the last two months. We

now have a “Greenbank edition” of online worship thanks to the skill and expertise of a number of people: Katie, Josh and Steve, who are always willing to have a go at the challenges I set them; a crowd of people willing to record readings; the background work of preparation and ongoing maintenance of streaming from David Ferguson, Ewan Walker and John Murison; a bunch of organ pieces “in the can” at the start of lockdown from Alberto Massimo. Thank you to you all! We can be proud of what we are doing for Greenbank and beyond – and it feels like “us”.

The medium term

On Thursday 21st May we heard of the Scottish Government’s plans for the relaxation of lockdown. It will be a long road towards a time when COVID-19 is no longer a threat, and our own response to the changing scene will follow government and church guidelines, and be appropriate to Greenbank circumstances.

Our role as a community hub is both a blessing and a challenge in these times. When will we be able to meet freely without precautions? When will our community groups begin again? How will they begin? How will worship be possible?

There is a seasonal pause in community activity during the summer, and our preschool will not restart until August, all being well, so it is very likely that our halls will remain closed to activity until then. Worship is more challenging. What lies between our current fully online pattern and a return to fully in-person livestreamed worship? Even in phase 4 of lockdown release, appropriate social distancing and hygiene will need to be observed. Masks and disinfectant will be the order of the day for some time. Until there is a vaccine for COVID-19, we would be very unwise to

sing together in the sanctuary, as this is one of the most effective ways of spreading the virus. Social distancing would reduce the capacity of the sanctuary to around 50 people. How would we decide who could attend? What would this gathering look like on a livestream? I don’t think that there is a satisfactory middle ground which will work on a Sunday morning.

However, at some point in the autumn, I think that it would be good to be able to gather for reflective worship (without singing) on Sunday evenings, observing all public health guidelines. This wouldn’t replace Sunday mornings, but it would be a chance to be in the sanctuary and to worship in a different mode – hopefully a helpful way to end our Sundays and begin a new week. For the foreseeable future, it is our intention for Sunday morning worship to continue to be livestreamed without the congregation in the building. Hopefully in the near future we will be able to include live contributions of readings and prayers, and we will look forward to our guest preachers during the Creationtide focus in September.

Our patience will be sorely tested, but ultimately we are driven by a desire for the safety and wellbeing of our congregation and community. There is a kind of exile involved here – a distancing from the community that we know and love at Greenbank – but we have a chance to be close to God in different ways, and that is a blessing in itself, even if it’s a strange and unexpected one.

With my love and gratitude to you all.



Martin Ritchie

Managing the Business of Greenbank During Lockdown

Although the normal meetings of the Kirk Session and Congregational Board cannot take place for now, there are decisions that still have to be taken on behalf of the congregation. At the start of lockdown the Session and Board agreed that the Moderator's Committee, that is normally convened only to take decisions during holiday periods, should be given responsibility to take necessary decisions until normal arrangements can be restarted. The Committee is chaired by the Minister and made up of the Session Clerk, Preses and Clerk to the Board, Treasurer, Property Convener, Staff Elder, Health and Safety Adviser and Robert Young, former Treasurer. The Committee has met online three times and is in frequent touch by email. The Administrator, handyman, cleaner and evening caretakers and the organist are all on furlough for the time being. The church has claimed payments from the Government's Job Retention Scheme for 80% of salaries and made up the rest so that everyone is still on full pay.

The Annual Business Meeting, scheduled for 31st May, will not take place. The Moderator's Committee will consult other trustees about the annual accounts and then approve them. A summary of the accounts, along with reports from the Treasurer, Preses and Property Convener, will be made available with the weekly email in early June.

Those people who cannot access communications online receive a hard copy of **Connections** by post. During July and August, when **Connections** is not published, a monthly digest of highlights from the weekly newsletter will be prepared and sent to those currently receiving **Connections** by post. The June edition of the digest will cover the annual reports mentioned above.

If you have questions about these temporary arrangements, please contact me by email at Valerie.macniven@gmail.com.

Valerie Macniven

Twitter

Hot on the heels of the success of our live-streaming, you may be interested to know that we have now extended Greenbank's digital presence, with the launch of our Twitter account. This adds to our existing Facebook platform and gives us the opportunity to promote the work of Greenbank, to inform a broader audience about what we are doing and to facilitate debate



on topical issues.

The account is run by Martin, Richard Dunbar and Katie Harling-Lee. Please follow the account at [@GreenbankParish](https://twitter.com/GreenbankParish) It has already been very active – with over one hundred followers from across Scotland and beyond, and almost two hundred “tweets”. Please join the conversation!

Richard Dunbar

‘Lockdown Life’ Photographic Competition

Our weekly *Lockdown Life* photographic competition is in its ninth week as we prepare this issue of *Connections*. The weekly competition finishes on Wednesday nights, and you can then vote for your favourite photograph on Thursdays. In his weekly newsletter, Martin includes mention of *Lockdown Life* and announces the winners of the competition just concluded.

The congregation’s love of animals, of all shapes and sizes, has been particularly noticeable throughout the running of the competition! If you have been following *Lockdown Life*, which has included a number of beautiful, thought-provoking and humorous photographs, you will know that it operates from the Greenbank website, with en-



Catherine Hardie: Now I know who is lining their nest with my doormat!

tries submitted by email. You can find the details of how to enter, and to see all the photographs submitted thus far, by going to the home page of the website:

www.greenbankchurch.org

and clicking the bottom rightmost button labelled ‘**Lockdown Life (photo comp)**’.

Thanks to those who have supported the competition by submitting photographs, and particular thanks to those who have done so regularly. Featured on our cover this month is the latest contribution from Janet Edwards, one of the competition’s regular supporters.

To quote Martin: ‘*At the end of our lockdown period we’ll have an exhibition at the church to show these meaningful images.*’



Pamela Jack: Sun departing, moon and planet appearing!

John Murison

The Guild

The Guild are keeping safe and in touch with each other through emails, long phone calls and chats – on doorsteps at two metres distance of course.

Both the *National Guild* and *Edinburgh Guilds Together* keep us up to date by email. There have been some good suggestions of useful things to do to avoid boredom. One very good one was instructions for making laundry bags for Health or Care workers who have to take their uniforms home to wash. Some of us have had lots of exercise in unusual places round the local area. We are very lucky that there are so many lovely walks within reach: the Hermitage, Blackford, the two Craigmlockhart Hills, Mortonhall, Braids and Merchants Golf Courses, Braidburn Valley, even Morningside Cemetery. New technology like Facetime and Zoom has come into its own



and some of us are being dragged screaming into the 21st century – it's amazing what you can learn to do when you have to. We are also enjoying Martin's letters and the photo competition; we look forward to seeing the photos displayed later.

Looking ahead, we have a draft syllabus in preparation for next session which looks interesting; everything from *Haggis Breeding*, *Pontius Pilate (Wimp, Loose Cannon or Calculating Political Operator?)*, *Experiences of a Paramedic*, to the *CrossReach* project *Join the Dots* which we will be supporting in 2021–22 and which will be very relevant as it is working on combating social isolation.

We will have to wait and see if we can have any form of Summer Coffee Morning... it might be in pairs in a garden or park!

Edith Armit

September issue of *Connections*

Normally at around this time the editors send an initial letter to all the organisations connected with the Church, to remind them that we like to have articles from them later in the summer detailing their numbers, programme, meeting time and so on. (This information is included in the September issue of *Connections*, which goes out to all the houses in the Parish.)

This year we are hampered by not knowing how much freedom we will have by September to hold meetings and by the question of whether we will be able to deliver *Connections*.

However, we would be grateful if leaders of organisations could be thinking ahead to prepare the information, so that when we are able to move forward they will have it ready. In July we plan to contact all the organisations, asking for their details.

Edith Armit

Have you looked at the
Greenbank website recently?
www.greenbankchurch.org

Youth Ministry in Bits and Bytes

It has been an unexpected Spring! The shift onto so many digital platforms has changed the form of ministry in some respects, though the heart remains the same. Text messages, emails, Zoom meetings, and more have taken on special relevance for us in this time. Our weekly E-Costa meetings have turned into an international and intergenerational chat with some of my brother's youth group in Pennsylvania. E-QII via Zoom has remained a valuable chance for us to catch up week to week, and explore a bit further the nature of the Christian faith in the circumstances of the moment. Sunday Club for Springboard-aged children has started to bring together a small community of friends. Scouts has gone digital too, with weekly Zoom meetings that I have been fortunate to be a part of since the lockdown began.

This has not, of course, been without challenges for young people and families alike. I have been thinking increasingly on the spiritual principle that 'Silence magnifies

the soul' – by which I mean not that silence enlarges the soul, but rather that it draws out that which is in our souls. In silence, you might start feeling angry or jittery, which is revealing! It allows you to ask further why you are feeling those ways. This has been a lesson that I have been endeavouring to bring up in our varied Zoom meetings across the Spring, and will keep mentioning into the Summer. While it does not eliminate the challenges that people face, it is a practice which helps to inform and engage with those challenges.

Of course, there is an open question as to Holiday Club 2020. The odds are low that we will be meeting in-person for it – and I know how much you were all waiting to see my next silly costume! Worry not! There have been emails flitting to and fro about some Holiday Club 2020 programming, taking into account the circumstances of the moment. More on that in good time!

Steve Chaffee



Zoom session during Sunday worship

New Faces: The Waller Family

We have lived in Greenbank for twelve years and used to go to Morningside Baptist Church. When that became Central Church and moved further into town, we were prompted to look at more local churches – as community is very important to us. This was reinforced after a two year ‘adventure’ in New Zealand from which we returned in 2018 – and found our church was on our doorstep! We have been coming ever since and have seen and loved the changes Martin has brought and the sense of life and music there is about the place.

There are four of us in our family ... and three cats. Rob is a Consultant Psychiatrist who works at the Royal Ed and in Leith in a mix of clinical and digital roles. Susanna has just started her own business as a Childminder in our home, called ‘Susanna’s Garden’. James is finishing his first year at Heriots and will be starting

senior school in August. He loves Rugby and generally any kind of sport. David is in P5 at South Morningside Primary School and loves Lego and Star Wars.

We have enjoyed getting involved in the life of our community in Greenbank. Susanna has a passion for prayer, particularly for the people in our local community. Rob plays in the Praise Band and is a Scout Leader, with the boys in Scouts and Cubs respectively. Rob and Susanna made their debut in the Advent Community Choir last year which was a new, enjoyable and challenging experience for them both.

We believe God is using Greenbank church as a local hub, which is exciting, and our prayer is for God’s love to continue to flow out from there in many different ways using the varied gifts He has given us in our community.

Rob, Susanna, James and David Waller



Worship at Sea



Earlier this year I had the pleasure of travelling on Cunard’s flagship liner Queen Mary 2. It is a large spacious ship so there was never any feeling of being in a cramped environment. One of its many features was the 10am Interdenominational Sunday morning service held when at sea and not in port.

Described as the “Traditional Maritime Church Service” it followed the Anglican form and was led by the Captain, who was clearly a committed Christian, supported by several officers, one of whom read a lesson. The services were held in one of the two theatres on board and were well attended. In each service, one of the ship’s resident pianists accompanied the hymns and gave a short recital before the service as the congregation gathered. A hymn sheet of 28 well-known traditional hymns was issued, including *Praise my soul the King of Heaven*, *Lead us heavenly Father lead us*, *Guide me O thou great redeemer*, *How great thou art* and *Eternal Father strong to save*. All were sung with great gusto.

Whilst the choice of hymns varied with each service, *Eternal Father strong to save*, with its poignant concluding lines so per-

tinent when at sea, was always included. The Captain delivered a series of excellent meditations on aspects of the Titanic disaster and a Christian response to these, e.g. the courage and self-sacrifice of clergy on board refusing places in lifeboats to remain ministering to people for whom there was no place in a lifeboat.

Having attended this large live service in the morning I latterly was also able to tune into the livestream from Greenbank in what for me was evening, as by that time the ship was in tropical waters off the northern coast of Australia. It was rather a strange experience seeing that at Greenbank it was still morning and it brought vividly to life verses 3 and 4 of one of my favourite hymns, *The day you gave us Lord has ended*:

*As o’er each continent and island
the dawn leads on another day,
the voice of prayer is never silent,
nor dies the song of praise away.*

*The sun that bids us rest is waking
your children ’neath the western sky,
and hour by hour fresh lips are making
your wondrous deeds resound on high.*

Kathleen Patrick

Karen's Personal Lockdown Challenge



One of our members, Karen Young, during her exercise periods, set herself the task of clearing litter from one end to the other of the main road over the Braid Hills.

We 'bumped' into Karen on one of our daily walks. She was clad in heavy duty gloves, a hi-viz vest, and was brandishing a 'grabber' litter picker and refuse sack full of her day's litter-picking. We had a chat, at a social distance of course, and she told us that she was appalled by the amount of roadside litter at the start of lockdown and vowed to pick a bag a day as her daily exercise.

In the early days of the lockdown, when there were fewer cars on the road, Karen started her litter-picking on the non-pavement side. By the time we saw her, she was a good half-way along the opposite side, with many more cars buzzing past. I asked

her if she had found any unusual or surprising litter and she confessed that in her **56 bags** of litter so far, she had picked up 25 golf balls; many many cans, cartons and packets; mangled traffic cones; and a pair of underpants!

Karen said that she had received many supportive comments from walkers and cyclists, thanking her for her efforts. She encouraged them to join litter picks organised by the Friends of the Braid Hills, or their local sister organisations – the Friends of the Hermitage and Blackford Hill, or Friends of Braidburn Valley Park. Details are usually posted on social media, websites and local noticeboards. As litter picks are outdoors, these should continue to be possible when lockdown is eased.

It would be nice to think that after people have walked and cycled and got to know their local area better, less litter would be dropped in the future, to respect and enjoy our beautiful green places.

Hats off to Karen for reflecting our *Care for Creation* objectives.

Pam Jack



Making a Virtual Choir



Feedback indicates that people enjoyed their first taste of our virtual choir. I thought it might be good to record how this and other musical items for the live-streaming have been created.

Firstly consider the concept of recorded tracks. Each track usually contains just one “voice”, be it soprano, bass, piano, flute, organ, drums or whatever. For the choir piece, Katie and Josh Harling-Lee sent us **seven** files by email: detailed instructions about how to record our track, the sheet music, and **five** recordings of music. The recordings all started with a ‘One, Two, Three, Four’ from Martin, then into the music. One version had all four voice parts: Katie singing the three parts of soprano, alto and tenor (what a range that girl has) and Martin singing bass, with piano. Then there were four versions each with piano and one part emphasised, for us to sing along with as appropriate.

In order to record our own part we needed to have two electronic devices: one to play the provided track which we listened to on headphones (see us all with various ear pieces) while we sang, and the other to do the Selfie Movie with sound. John and

I used my smart phone held against the window with Blu Tak, and listened to one of the recordings on his computer nearby with wireless headphones.

We then had to send our recordings to Josh. These were very large files that were too big for ordinary email, so we had to learn another skill just to send them (we used the *WeTransfer* app). Then Josh and Katie wove their magic to edit it all together, getting the sound balance and syncing our videos just right. While we all listened to piano accompaniment while singing, this was removed so that the Virtual Choir seemed to sing *a cappella*.

It all made us appreciate just how much hard work Martin, Josh and Katie are putting into the hymns and songs that sound so lovely every week. Sometimes there is an organ accompaniment by Martin, often Josh puts in an extra instrument or Katie sings extra parts, and last week we had Richard Dunbar on drums. All of this has to be done by recording separate tracks then editing them into a combined piece. Many thanks for all the hard work Josh, Katie and Martin.

Alison Murison

Questionnaire Feedback



I hope that you all found something of interest in our last Eco group report.

Eco matters are not simple and it is obvious that there are no black and white answers to the challenges ahead. We would be pleased to receive feedback on these reports, whether it be supportive or in disagreement. Hopefully this is the start of a conversation that will run and run.

In the questionnaire (January 2020) we asked “*As a congregation what three steps should we all take to immediately reduce our impact on the planet?*”

Whilst a serious issue, one answer did raise a wry smile – “*Too big a question.*” This was not the only response in the questionnaire that communicated a sense of being overwhelmed by the situation facing us all.

When considering the feedback, it should be remembered that the survey was taken in a time before Coronavirus had even been heard of. In response to the “*what three steps question*” a number of people proposed the following:

- ▷ Use cars less
- ▷ Fly less
- ▷ Avoid short flights

All of the above are, at the moment, forced upon us during the current situation. Let’s not forget to reconsider these items when a sense of normality returns.

The Church and its Property

Turning to the other responses I would like to look, in this edition, at those pertaining to the church and its property. I have listed a few responses below and hope that many of you will come forward with comments and ideas on how these could be implemented:

- ▷ Paperless orders of service.
- ▷ Stop using plastic milk bottles.
- ▷ Use less paper.
- ▷ Clearer recycling in the church halls. (This item is already being addressed with the acquisition and trials of new recycling bins.)
- ▷ Greenery outside the front of the church. David Jack has carried out a lot of work on this; however, implementation is currently on hold until the local authority completes the permanent one-way system in Braidburn Terrace.
- ▷ Church Flowers – Use Fairtrade produce or stock from the gardens of the congregation.
- ▷ Sort the Upper Hall. Please be assured that this item is the subject of much discussion in various groups at Greenbank. The final solution will probably be dependent on the outcome of a master plan for the entire hub area. Please feel free to send me any constructive ideas on what could be done to improve this hall.
- ▷ Save energy/LED lighting/Better temperature control. A lot of unsung work has been done in this field, including large scale conversion to LED fittings. The Church buildings are, by and large, controlled by an intelligent heat-

ing system which has allowed us to reduce gas consumption.

- ▷ Solar panels on roof / Alternative heat sources. We are actively looking at solar and/or alternative heating sources; these will figure for discussion in our large capital spend programme in the future.
- ▷ Use Fairtrade or Traidcraft products including in catering.

In closing, can I leave you with this thought? Whilst online shopping has been a fantastic support in the current situation, it should be remembered that this is at the expense of local shops and increased traffic on the roads. In a period of approximately two hours there were five separate “white van” deliveries in my street of 21 houses. Let’s not get too used to this method of shopping.

Donald Milne

Postscript

Some work on reducing energy consumption began before the Eco Group was set up, partly at the instigation of the late Liz Shiel. I organised a company to install insulation in the loft above the Main Hall. With that kind of intervention and the intelligent heating system, our gas consumption has declined by 45% since we started with these measures in 2013. The gas bill has reduced by 38% over the same time period from £7,368 to £4,555.

Although the energy saving light bulbs have been beneficial, the intelligent heating system requires some pumps, which means that our electricity bills have not shown such a dramatic fall.

John Ferguson

New Arrival

We welcome a new arrival to our church family.

Malachi James Ferguson, a son for John and Hayley, arrived on Sunday 24th May weighing 8lbs. Mummy Hayley is doing well, and pictured here is big sister, Anja, with her new little brother.



Summer Walks (and Bike!) Update

I have heard from several members who have followed their own and other walk routes during lockdown. Quite often we meet other church friends “on the road”, so it’s a good way of getting up to date, two metres apart!



Old Pentland Churchyard

We await further scope for longer walks if lockdown is eased – as I write the only concession is to take more than one exercise outing during the day.

Many people will have taken in Easter and Wester Craiglockhart Hills on their outings. Fresh views are always possible from these vantage points, and the access over golf course ground is helpful at present. It’s worth looking up the various references to the antiquities of Wester Craiglockhart Hill in particular. A pre-historic defensive ditch with the remnants of an iron age hill fort can still be seen. Artefacts from this era and later Roman items have been documented. It has not helped that these reminders of our ancient past were in part destroyed by the installation of gun emplacements in the 20th century!

If you can range further (and a bike is helpful) you might be interested in heading south, across the by-pass at Lothianburn, and on to the easterly turnoff on the back road signed for Old Pentland. Pass the Secret Herb Garden and visit Old Pentland Churchyard, set back from the

road on the left, and attractively screened by yew trees. Here you can look west to the Pentlands, and the scene of the battle of Rullion Green, a covenanter encounter with royalist forces under Tam Dalyell. The graveyard con-

tains several covenanter tombstones dating from the battle, and the more recent, and somewhat gloomy, Gibsons Mausoleum. A round trip can be achieved by carrying on to Straiton retail complex, back north under the by-pass, and down to Frogston Road or Braid Hills Road, for the return to Greenbank.

Now while on the subject of bikes, I have a barely used Gents EBC Country Traveller, which is surplus to requirements. It is well kitted out, and the first £90 secures it, with half going to the church funds!

David Jack



Welcome Teams

Since the congregation is not currently attending worship at Greenbank, there will be no requirement for Welcome teams until further notice.

Teams will be contacted when congregational attendance at worship in Greenbank resumes.

Flower Rota

As the Church is currently closed, provision and distribution of flowers is suspended until further notice.



Congregational Register

Omitted from the online version of Connections

Coffee Rota

Since the congregation is not currently attending worship at Greenbank on Sunday mornings, there will be no coffee after the Sunday Service until further notice.

Coffee teams will be contacted when congregational attendance at Sunday morning worship resumes.

The Ministry Team can be contacted directly

Rev Dr Martin Ritchie (Minister)

tel: 07984 466 855

email: MRitchie@churchofscotland.org.uk

Mr Steven Chaffee (Youth Associate)

tel: 07729 000 788

email: stevechaffee@greenbankchurch.org

Note that the Church Office and buildings are currently closed to personal callers, and the Administrator is on furlough.

The office telephone and email account are monitored for messages:

email: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

To make contact with any organisation featured in Greenbank Connections, please use the telephone number or email address given, if there is one. Otherwise email the Church Office.

Website: www.greenbankchurch.org

***Postal address: Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 6ES***

Material for the September issue of Greenbank Connections should be delivered to the Church Office or to the Editors' pigeon-hole in the Main Hall by Sunday 16th August or sent by e-mail by 9am on Friday 21st August to

greenbankconnections@gmail.com

Calling all Greenbank botanists & flower lovers!



Flower A



Flower B



Flower C



Flower D

Many of my daily walks have taken me through the Midmar Paddock and I have found an amazing number of wild flowers in what looks at first like a rather blank expanse of grass. (I took photographs of 12 different species, although there is only space here to show four of them.) Some of them I know, some I am uncertain of, and some I may have got the name wrong. I am sure that there are many people in Greenbank who will recognise these. I would be very grateful for your help in identifying them.

Look at the photographs and if you can help, please email me.

Edith Armit (Email: e22armit@yahoo.co.uk)