

# Greenbank Connections



April 2024

Issue 724

Scottish Charity SC011325



*The Uniformed Organisations' Service*

## Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

*Online version:* [www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/](http://www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/)

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## Minister's Letter



### Resurrection Hope

Some might remember when the 300-year-old Sycamore Gap Tree (which once stood in a dip next to Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland) was felled last September. The Sycamore Gap Tree was witness to movie filming, marriage proposals, the scattering of ashes and many other sentimental moments. The loss of a life, of a landmark, of a witness to so many memories treasured made it a devastating loss for many.

I thought that would be the sad end of the Sycamore Gap Tree story, but then this week, on the cusp of Spring, I read about new beginnings. Although most of what remained of The Sycamore Gap Tree was cut up and taken away to be repurposed, some important parts were kept and nurtured. And now, new life has sprung from the rescued seeds and twigs. Even a deliberate act of van-

dalism, could not put out the spark of life that lay nestled deep in the tiny cells of the tree.

I am reminded of verses from the Book of Job:

‘For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.’ (Job 14:7-9)

Job knew what it was like going through rough times; to feel cut down, only a stump left in the ground. These verses offer hope for those of us who perceive this season of “cutting back and cutting down” in the Church of Scotland as too extreme. We cannot see beyond “the stumps” that we fear will be all that remains, and the gap where something beloved once stood.

Some of the “pruning” during this season may indeed turn out to have been too extreme, and we may suffer losses. Holy Week

reminds us that mistakes and missteps are part of life and that for the journeys that matter there is no way back, only forward; there is suffering and grief, and the long waiting. And then, Resurrection.

The Resurrected Christ is with us, and the Holy Spirit moves amongst us. Although some of the roots and stumps of churches and the old ways of “doing church” may wither and die, we live in faith that the Living Water of God will work through us, growing new things out of the old, encouraging us into new ways. While it is hoped that the original Sycamore Gap Tree will regrow from its trunk, it will take up to three years before experts know if this is possible. We too must be patient (but not passive!) and wait and see what happens – at Greenbank and for the Church of Scotland. Will the stumps bring forth new life? With our nurturing, what seeds will germinate and grow into saplings? In the meantime, we must continue to do the Gospel Work Christ calls us to do in this world. May we continue to live in Resurrection Hope.



*Julia A Cato*

## Presbytery Mission Plan (PMP) Update

Organisational change is always challenging and when it affects something so dear to our hearts as Greenbank, it is even more so. Greenbank and its people, our mission, and our work are so important to us all that we want to ensure we are creating the best possible future for us to continue. This means that, although there is work being done constantly on creating our future as we work through this time of huge upheaval and uncertainty with our partner churches, it's not always easy to see that progress is being made.

Our most recent discussions centre on the possibilities of Greenbank together with Fairmilehead and Morningside Parish churches – three churches with two Ministers – so a union with one or both of these churches.

A union of churches in this area really only makes sense if it is between those which share a parish boundary. (A union of Morningside and Fairmilehead would not help Greenbank get a minister, but would also leave our parish like the filling in the sandwich!). That leaves as possibilities, a union between Greenbank and Morningside or between Greenbank and Fairmilehead or amongst all three churches together.

A 3-way union would give us a huge parish requiring an enormous

amount of work. To create the kind of church we want, to support the worship and mission and work that happens now in each of these congregations, and to find ways forward which suit all three of the current congregations is not impossible, and hasn't been ruled out. It seems that a two-way union with either Morningside or Fairmilehead is a more realistic target right now. Once any union is enacted we would work together with all the churches in our grouping, continuing to develop connections with and support each other.

It has been said before, but it is worth repeating, that each of our church buildings is to remain open as the busy and vibrant place of worship and community that each of them is, and the continuation of worship in Greenbank is very much part of that.

More meetings are planned for next month, and we will keep you up-to-date with progress after that. Some months there may be little to report that is new, but that does not mean that nothing is happening.

**Rona Sommerville**  
Session Clerk

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## All good things, the Rev Julia Cato ...

As was notified to the congregation recently, our Associate Minister, the Rev Julia Cato, has been called to Edinburgh Northwest Kirk. Julia's last day with us will be Sunday 12th May and, after a couple of weeks' break, she will be inducted into her new charge on Thursday 30th May at 7pm in the former Old Kirk and Muirhouse Parish Church, 42 Pennywell Gardens, EH4 4PE. All are very welcome to go along and join with that congregation as they welcome Julia as their Minister.

We will have a new Locum at Greenbank – the Rev Ian Gilmour will join Greenbank from 1st June,

having most recently been the locum at the former Cramond Kirk which is, of course, now part of the newly united Northwest Kirk. Before that he was at St Andrew's and St George's West, and at the Scots Kirk Sri Lanka.

We will also be getting a new Interim Moderator when Dorothy Anderson's term ends. Her name is the Rev Moira McDonald.

Julia, we wish you all the very best in your new charge and thank you for all that you have brought to Greenbank over the last 18 months or so.

Rona Somerville  
Session Clerk

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## CPR and the Yellow Box

If someone collapsed because their heart had stopped would you know what to do?

The British Heart Foundation **RevivR** ([revivr.bhf.org.uk](http://revivr.bhf.org.uk)) is a 15-minute internet training programme that shows you when and how to do CPR to potentially save someone's life. All you need to practise is a cushion.

The yellow box outside on the corner of the wall of the Church holds our defibrillator. By phoning 999 and giving the code written on the box – **SJS-156z** the call handler will

give you the number for the keypad to access the defibrillator.

Most importantly the call handler will organise the ambulance and other help to be on its way – post-code for the Church is EH10 6ES.

After Church on Sunday 28th April there will be an information table and someone to help you find the **RevivR** training on a mobile phone or tablet. We can also take you out to the defibrillator and show you how it can be opened.

Gillian Sweetman

## Thought for the Month

### Who is our greatest Influencer?

The word “influencer” has grown in prominence and significance in recent years. Once it would have been in use simply as a noun from “to influence”. Now we see it everywhere. The Cambridge Dictionary has two definitions – “someone who affects or changes the way that other people behave” and “a person who is paid by a company to show and describe its products and services on social media, encouraging people to buy them”.

There are positives and negatives in the concept. It can be a good thing, if, for example, an influencer provides reliable information about a product we are thinking of buying, based on their own experience. Or, an influencer might be a good role model whose behaviour it is worthwhile to copy.

On the other hand, what about the negatives? Anyone can aspire to be an influencer – if someone identifies and develops a product or lifestyle and chooses their social media platform, they can start posting content – on blogs, social media accounts, photos, videos – and begin to cultivate a following. If they “get it right” and they gain enough



followers to become attractive to commercial sponsors they can be paid to promote a brand. While that process is not, in itself, harmful, it can become so where the followers try to be identical to the influencer, say in appearance, and don't succeed. That way lies loss of self-esteem, and feelings of inadequacy and failure. Let's face it we can't all be identical copies of celebrities, and how boring that would be anyway. Surely difference, independence of thought and an ability to question and challenge are more to be valued than sameness?



But, what if we insert “Jesus” in place of “someone” in the definition of influencer? Does that make us more comfortable? In terms of numbers surely Jesus is the greatest influencer of all time. He started



## The Guild

The Guild ended the session with an interesting talk by a speaker from the Vine Trust in which he was able to bring us up to date with the work going on in Kazunzu. the Village of Hope in Tanzania for which we raised funds in 2022. They were, of course, very much hampered by Covid as they could not have visiting teams coming to work and there were difficulties with construction as well as the health effects of the pandemic.



Sadly they also suffered from theft from the fish farm and vandalism. They have however made some good progress and the first families are now well settled in their homes and the children are their usual cheerful, exuberant selves.

We are now in the throes of planning our summer activities; an outing and our usual coffee mornings which will be on 4th June, 2nd July, 6th August and 3rd September.

Looking forward to seeing you there.



**Edith Armit**

P.S. We'll have the tea, coffee and cake ready for you!

/Thought for the Month contd.

with 12 disciples – now the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity quotes a figure of well over two billion and still growing. No human influencer comes anywhere close. And, what about the messages? The key messages of Jesus are positive and long lasting. They don't date or go out of fashion like commercial trends. Love, kindness, compassion, comfort, forgiveness are all enduring. Secular influenc-

ers need to gain the trust and ability to motivate their followers. Jesus will motivate us by unconditional love without conditions or passing judgement; and he will forgive us when we fall short and encourage us to keep trying.

May we all make Jesus our most important influencer and let him use us to influence others to follow in his way.

**Valerie Macniven**

## Christian Aid News

### Christian Aid Week 12th to 18th May 2024 – volunteers needed

The Christian Aid Week appeal this year will focus on Burundi, one of the poorest countries in Africa where malnourishment and poverty affect more than 70% of the population and many people rely on insecure, casual work. There are also problems associated with climate resilience, gender justice and ongoing conflict resolution following years of war. Christian Aid's team in Burundi works in partnership with local organisations attempting to lift communities out of poverty, often through empowering women, thus helping families.

For the last three years we have distributed delivery only envelopes in our parish, inviting donations to an online fundraising page or by returning envelopes to the church office. This has been very successful, and last year we raised over £3,600 including Gift Aid. The Christian Aid Week appeal in 2023 raised £800k in Scotland which was 15% of UK fundraising.

Greenbank will be doing delivery-only envelopes again in 2024 and I am presently contacting volunteers from previous years. It would be good to have additional volunteers – it involves delivering envelopes to between 30 and 50 houses during Christian Aid Week

12th to 18th May.

There is no need to return to collect the envelopes.

Please contact me if you can help with this.



### Local Christian Aid Week Events Holy Corner Book Sale

11th and 12th May

Following successful weekend sales over the last two years, this will be held again in Morningside United Church on Saturday 11th May (all day) and Sunday 12th May (afternoon only.) There will be a huge range of books on all subjects at very reasonable prices, look out for further information.

### Coffee Morning Saturday 18th May

Last year we organised a joint coffee morning with the other local churches and this was a success, so we have decided to do it again. The coffee morning will be held at Morningside Parish Church on Saturday 18th May from 10am to 12 noon. There will be several stalls and a musical performance. Further details and tickets will be available nearer the time, but in the meantime – save the date!

Fiona Watt  
Christian Aid Co-ordinator



## Mrs Valerie Smart

Mrs Valerie Smart (Val) died suddenly on Monday 11th March 2024. Her passing was quite unexpected and has left her many friends and acquaintances shocked and saddened.



Val had been a faithful and active member of Greenbank for more than sixty years. She played a major part in all the organisations she was associated with – for example, the City Hospital Tearoom, Sunday School (later Young Church), the Church Choir, The Guild. In the 1960s, Val and her friend Margaret Gardiner started a daily playgroup at Greenbank for pre-school children. She was a strong supporter of Scottish Love in Action, and visited the orphanage in Tuni (Andhra Pradesh, India) in 2011 as a volunteer. She had been a volunteer at the Open Door ever since its inception. She ran the Friendship Club. She has been a faithful District Visitor for many years (D60).

She was an ever-present at Sunday worship, either at Greenbank or up north in Rannoch.

Val was a primary school teacher, qualifying in Edinburgh in the late 1950s. She taught in Jamaica following graduation, before her return to Edinburgh and marriage to Alasdair. They had three sons and

a daughter: Kenneth, Dougal (who tragically drowned in Australia), Hamish and Kirsty.

Val was an accomplished country dancer. She and Alasdair were for many years members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance

Society and took part in demonstration dances. She even danced at the Edinburgh Tattoo.

To her family and her friends we offer our sincere condolences. Val was a pillar of the community on whom we depended. She will be greatly missed.

**John Murison**  
(formerly Elder of D60)

## Friendship Club

Our meeting on 13th March was saddened by the news of the death of Valerie Smart, one of the prime movers of the Friendship Club.

The topic for the meeting was the Japanese Garden at Cowden, and a beautiful series of photos of the peaceful garden with its serene pools and green lawns and trees made for a reflective and calming afternoon. Val would have loved it. We will remember her with love.

The last meeting of the session will be on Wednesday 27th March.

**Edith Armit**

## World Church

### Eric Liddell, Athlete and Missionary

We have the Eric Liddell Centre in Morningside, and this year there is a series of events in Edinburgh about Eric to coincide with the Centenary of his Gold Medal at the 1924 Olympics in Paris. The medal was all the more precious because he refused



to run in the 100 metre heat which was on a Sunday. Instead, he competed in the 400 metres held on a weekday and won.

In February, I attended an event at the Playfair Library entitled “The Life and Death of Eric Liddell and the Rebirth of Chinese Christianity”. The first speaker reminded us that Eric was born in Tianjin, north China, where his parents were missionaries. However, he had strong links to Edinburgh, where he studied at the University of Edinburgh, represented Scotland in rugby and athletics and lived and taught here. He returned to China in 1925 to serve as a missionary teacher. His first post was at the Anglo-Chinese School in Tianjin where he used his athletic experience to train boys in a number of different sports. He also led the Sunday School at Un-

ion Church where his father was the pastor. On his first furlough back to Scotland he was ordained as a Minister in the Congregational Union of Scotland. In 1941, Eric accepted a position at a rural mission station in Xiaozhang, changing to rural evangelical

work which served the poor.

His brother was a doctor there, but he became ill and had to go on furlough so Eric took over the running of the mission station. He endured many hardships there, but continued to help those who were in need, sustaining Christ’s message with humility.

In 1943 he was interned in the Japanese Weishern Internment Camp along with others from the China Inland Mission and the Chefoo School. Eric became a leader and organiser at the camp and busied himself by helping the elderly, teaching Bible classes at the camp school, arranging games and teaching science to the children, who referred to him as Uncle Eric! He was also noted for his selflessness in the camp and giving away his possessions to those who had little or nothing.

Later that year, my husband David's great aunt, Annie Buchan, a nurse missionary, was also interned in Weishern, where she did valuable work in the camp hospital. She had been matron in Xiaozhang Hospital for fourteen years, but in 1941 the Japanese forced all the missionaries to leave. She was then in two different cities before internment. Annie nursed Eric when he became ill with a brain tumour and was by his bedside when he died in 1945,

### Christianity in China today

Despite stories of Christianity being suppressed in China, it is recognised as one of the five official religions. There are now millions of Christians from urban mega-churches of 6,000 capacity to local groups meeting in small premises. There are many regulations and restrictions on Christians: for example, churches may not be located close to educational establishments, and public celebrations of Christmas are restricted.

Even with its limits, Christianity is clearly thriving, a reminder that Eric Liddell's original missionary work maintained the faith through many years of turmoil in China.

Pamela Jack



Fresh Start's mission is 'to help people make a home for themselves' and demand for the services is huge. Many thanks to everyone who has donated items.

The Fresh Start warehouse closed for six weeks' renovation at the end of 2023. This meant available supplies were low. With demand as great as ever, so is the need for donations.

Lists of items suitable for donation can be found at

[www.freshstartweb.org.uk](http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk)

Goods you donate help to make up starter packs provided to those in need setting up a new home. If you do not currently have items for donation, there are other ways you can help:

- You may consider making a purchase in the Fresh Start virtual shop to form all or part of the packs made available.

[www.freshstartweb.org.uk/shop](http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk/shop)

- You can donate new essential items, which Fresh Start regularly has to purchase for starter packs. If you would like to purchase essential items via Amazon, please use the Fresh Start wish list in this link.

[www.amazon.co.uk/registries/gl/guest-view/214A2A3DIRQDQ](http://www.amazon.co.uk/registries/gl/guest-view/214A2A3DIRQDQ)

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## Repair Cafés

Got something that's broken? Want to try fixing it but not sure how?

Repair Cafés are free community events where you can bring your item and volunteer fixers will guide you through your repair.

Late January, I went along to Repair Café Edinburgh at Marchmont St Giles (thanks to an initial ad by Greenbank Eco-Forum on Facebook). My reasonably young mini-music system, with malfunctioning CD player, was not straightforward.

Paul, my fixer, had done some research in advance and worked his way through the possible causes. The atmosphere was very welcoming and there was a strong will to find solutions, involving the owner as much as possible and perhaps transferring some skills along the way. I was handed a wee screwdriver from time to time! All jobs were signed off on a summary board. On the day I attended:

Jobs tackled	18
Devices fixed	9

which translates into

Waste prevented	28Kg
CO2 emission prevented	284Kg

I saw an old sewing machine and a standard lamp being tackled beside me that afternoon, but items can include broken electrical, electronic and mechanical devices such as toys, small/low-voltage electricals, laptops. Due to limitations of time, spare parts, safety, capacity, people are encouraged to make

contact beforehand to confirm suitability and to reserve a place.

I left the Repair Café that afternoon with a feeling of greater confidence in

tackling any future trouble-shooting my device may require.

### Frequency

Repair Cafés seem to be hosted monthly in Edinburgh. Details of the next local event will be posted here: [therestartproject.org/groups/repair-cafe-edinburgh/](http://therestartproject.org/groups/repair-cafe-edinburgh/)

### Background

Repair Cafés are part of The Restart Project. You will find more info here:

[therestartproject.org/about/](http://therestartproject.org/about/)

Rachel McWilliam



## Greenbank Pre School

Kyra Okoth, teacher/manager, spoke to members of The Guild on Tuesday 6th February. In her presentation she focused on the importance of play in early years.

“All children, wherever they are, play in the same way and need the same experiences

in order for their brains to develop properly.”

Multicultural learning is very important for pre-school children, as is experience of the expressive arts where they are able to engage in contextual art studies, music, dance and drama. Greenbank Pre School is a funded partner of Edinburgh City Council and we have a strong focus on developing our garden spaces.



Art work in the Centenary Hall

Partnership with parents is a priority, e.g. in Forest School, the Annual Big Dig and our Open Afternoons. The children also enjoy participating in church services and occasionally sing to the Guild at coffee on a Tuesday morning.

The questions and conversations generated were great and for some, new information was gleaned.

Pre School is now taking applications for places from August 2024 for children who will have turned three, and names of younger children from their second birthday can be added to the waiting list on the website.

[www.greenbankpreschool.com](http://www.greenbankpreschool.com)

Joan Ritchie  
Chair  
Management Committee

/from p11

- Lastly, financial donations can also be made using the JustGiving link below or on the Fresh Start website under Donate.

[www.justgiving.com/freshstartedinburgh](http://www.justgiving.com/freshstartedinburgh)

If you have any small electrical items, kitchenware or household items in good condition, which you

think may be of use, then please consider donating them to Fresh Start. Contact Eileen MacKinnon, preferably by email, to arrange a convenient time for collection, or drop off items at the church.

Eileen MacKinnon

## Forest Church

## Congregational Register



Ten children made nesting collections at Springtime Forest Church followed by tea and cakes back at the church.



Scouts @ Greenbank

Be prepared for "probably the best..."

**JUMBLE** sale

...in Edinburgh"

**SATURDAY 13th APRIL 2024 : 9.30am - 12 noon**

**GREENBANK CHURCH, BRAIDBURN TERRACE, EH10 6ES**

4th Braid Scout Group is registered as a Charity number SCO15021

**No Cards - CASH only please**

**Adults £2**



## Welcome Teams

### April

- 7 **Christina Morrow**, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Susan Black, Nora Kellock, Margot Gillon
- 14 **Rosemary McCulloch**, Moira Land, Malcolm Reid, Joan Ritchie, Fiona Grant, Martin Struthers, Barbara Middleton
- 21 **John Ritchie**, Susan Inch, Gillian Sweetman, Clare Campbell, Stephen Hadden, Mary Hadden, Catherine Cameron
- 28 **Keith Winton**, Richard Dunbar, Chris Horne, Robin Nimmo, Hazel Macaulay, Moira Small

### May

- 5 **Ian Thom**, Keith Clark, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Isobel Thom, Charles Black, John Kalu

## Flower Rota

*provided by*                      *delivered by*

### April

- 7 Jill Powlett Brown                      Margaret Mack
- 14 Alison Murison                      Fiona Watt
- 21 Janet Walker                      Sarah Crawford
- 28 Sally Anderson                      Katy Ferguson

### May

- 5 Margo Fraser                      Ruth Wilkojc



## The Ministry Team can be contacted directly

Rev Julia Cato (Associate Minister)

e-mail: [jcato@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:jcato@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Administrator: Jackie Wilson-Tagoe

phone: 0131 447 9969

email: [office@greenbankchurch.org](mailto:office@greenbankchurch.org)

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

Website:

[www.greenbankchurch.org](http://www.greenbankchurch.org)

Postal address:

Greenbank Parish Church

Braidburn Terrace,

Edinburgh EH10 6ES

Items for the *Weekly Newsletter* should be sent by Thursdays to:

[greenbankweekly@gmail.com](mailto:greenbankweekly@gmail.com)

Material for the May 2024 issue of *Greenbank Connections* should be delivered to the Editors' Pigeonhole by Sunday 14th April or sent by e-mail by 8pm on **Thursday 18th April** to:

[greenbankconnections@gmail.com](mailto:greenbankconnections@gmail.com)

## Coffee Rota

### April

- 7 Caroline Kehoe                      D70
- 14 Edith Armit                      D12A
- 21 Neil Ross                      D24
- 28 Rachel McWilliam                      D58

### May

- 5 David & Janet Ferguson

D13,26 &28

# Afternoon Spring Celebration Service at Greenbank Sunday 21st April at 3pm



Please join us on **Sunday 21st April at 3pm** for a Spring Celebration Service, led by the Rev. Dr John Stevenson, with organ music, familiar hymns and an opportunity to share Communion. This short service is for everyone; it will be Dementia Friendly. There will be time to chat over a cup of tea or coffee with home baking and live piano music in the Main Hall afterwards.

The Service will be livestreamed via the Greenbank Church website: [www.greenbankchurch.org](http://www.greenbankchurch.org)

Local transport is available: please contact David Allan on 07800 607 266 or email [lifts@greenbankchurch.org](mailto:lifts@greenbankchurch.org)

**All welcome!**

Greenbank Parish Church  
Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES

