

Oxnam Parish Page



JULY 2018

Oxnam Parish Church of Scotland
Registered Charity Number SCO10593
www.oxnamkirk.co.uk

From the Locum Minister

Dear Friends,

I have just returned from a few days in London, visiting family and a few friends. As so many of you know, it is so valuable to spend time with people you hold dear. The only time slot we could find for the whole family to be together was on Saturday morning, the day I was traveling up, but we did manage breakfast together in one of the gardens where, albeit short, good quality-time was spent with them all.

Since the last Parish Page came out, I have been to a pre-retirement course, organised by the Church in Cumbernauld. I had already been to one of these a few years before I did officially retire, but this time I was one of four newly retired ministers called back to tell all about this experience of retirement! They wanted someone single, a widow, a ministerial couple and a minister and his wife. The others all bewailed the fact that as a minister you never really get retirement, because there are so few ministers and you don't want to let your friends and your colleagues down and, in any case, ministers are called by God, so they are not going to say No! One said that he had hoped to have time to do more photography, another that he hadn't been in the garden for ages and the minister's wife said she thought she would be seeing more of her husband after retiral, but it was just the same as before. Well, I stood up and told them I was loving it - retirement! But then I am a different kind of beast from the norm. For a start I don't have anyone at home telling me I can or can't do this or that! Then, as a Locum, you don't carry the can. In addition, because I have a foot in two Presbyteries, Jedburgh, because of my attachment to Oxnam and Melrose and Peebles, because I live in Melrose, I have a wide touch-base and can keep in contact with many old friends. Clearly, I work in Jedburgh Presbytery, but I am also involved in Melrose and Peebles Presbytery in a number of ways. I find it interesting to hear the different focus that comes from the two Presbyteries. For example, Jedburgh Presbytery was commended at the General Assembly for having done a survey amongst Kirk

Sessions on why any church building should be kept open. There wasn't an opportunity for the Presbytery to take this further, so Oxnam is safe! Meanwhile Melrose and Peebles have been grasping the nettle facing the Church of Scotland over the next few years and Kirk Sessions are asked to reflect on the state of decline of the national Church - there will be 20% less ministers by the year 2023 - and in particular how that affects the Church locally and determine what their vision and mission can be. The status quo is, sadly, not an option. However, grasping the nettle, as we are doing in Oxnam, means that instead of facing disaster, we could actually be facing exciting times ahead.

For a start, in this, the Year of Young People, Morag and I held a meeting recently with some of our young Mums to latch on to their social networking basis and make better contact with young families, asking them what they would like to happen. We have already had a successful children's craft day, a Messy Church which from now on we are going to call 'Crafty Church', a Cradle Roll Service, our Pantomime, we are about to have another Pet Service and a family walk and picnic at Harestanes. A lot of enthusiasm was evident at the meeting and the group, which we are calling Family Link Group will, I am confident, be a driving force in taking the church into the modern age.

Meanwhile I was involved in a historical event at the General Assembly. On 22nd May, along with 400 other women, I marched up the Mound and into the Assembly Hall for a celebration of 20 years since the General Assembly voted to allow women to be ordained. Fifty years after women had won the vote, here we were, after another fight, the story of which was told to the Assembly by two of the first ordained women. Their long standing ovation was a special moment.

And so looking ahead, the July Communion will be my last service until the beginning of September, for on the 11th July, I will join the band of bionic people with a new knee. Helen Howden and Morag McKeand have been organising supply for the services in between. Our capable Worship Group is at work on a service about the life of

David, the shepherd boy who became king and that will be on August 5th. Before that, on 15th July, Ruberslaw Worship Group will conduct the service then on 29th July do come along to our Pet Service, which this year will be conducted by my successor in Kelso Old and Sprouston, Rev Sandy Young. I am delighted to be introducing you to Sandy. He is a lovely man, an excellent pastor and I am hoping that he might bring along, not just his lovely wife, but also his horse!! On 19th August the service will be conducted by Mrs Winne Robson who is a past Interim Moderator of Oxnam.

With my love and blessings,

Marion

General Data Protection Regulation

As you are no doubt aware, GDPR came into force in May. The Kirk's Privacy Policy is on the noticeboard in the vestry if you would like to read it, or, alternatively, if you wish to receive a hard copy please just speak to your elder. Due to the new regulation we will not be publishing full obituaries.

Oxnam Community Resilience Volunteers

The exercise with Border Search & Rescue will take place on 26th August. Details will be sent out in due course.

Steve Delebecque

From the Session Clerk

As I write this the sun is shining and it is another glorious summer's day - it is hard to imagine that the snow made it almost impossible to get to Oxnam Kirk on a couple of Sundays during the winter!

The search for a minister for the linked charge of Oxnam and Kelso Country Churches continued throughout 2017 with the nomination committee exploring all avenues open to it with no success. There was a growing feeling in both parishes that it would continue to prove very difficult to attract candidates for a 0.75 ministry taking into account the distances involved. After a joint session meeting with Kelso Country Churches in December, the decision was reached to ask the Presbytery of Jedburgh to sever the linkage of Oxnam Kirk with Kelso Country Churches to enable both sides to look at other options.

In April Presbytery requested that Oxnam Kirk Congregation take a vote on the breaking of the linkage with KCC and this was done before the Stated Annual Meeting on Sunday 15th April. Following questions and discussion all the congregation present voted for the motion with one abstention. Following this the motion was passed by Presbytery at their meeting on Wednesday 2nd May 2018 and has now gone to the Presbytery Planning Task Group at 121 George Street for their approval. If this is given, Oxnam Kirk will return to Guardianship and then be able to seek linkage with churches closer to us.

Luckily for us Marion is happy to continue as Oxnam's Locum Minister. The Kirk Session and congregation are so grateful for her dedication, hard work and enthusiasm in both the Kirk and the Oxnam community. She will be going in for a knee operation on 11th July so unfortunately for us will be out of action until September. As I write this we are busy finding others to take our summer services. Luckily the Worship Group were already planning to lead the service on 5th August – we'll now just have to do it without Marion there to advise!

Reverend Robin McHaffie stood down as our Interim Moderator in December and the Kirk Session would like to thank him for all his help and guidance over 2016/17. We welcomed Helen Howden as our new moderator in January. You may know her as she was HR Manager of Mainetti in Jedburgh for many years and is an Elder in Ruberslaw Parish.

At the packed Christmas Eve service it was a delight to have so many children dressing up and performing their own song. Well done to them and their mums! This year the Christmas Morning and End of Year Services both included a simple celebration of Holy Communion which was much appreciated by those who attended.

In January the Northumberland Theatre Group once again entertained an enthusiastic audience. It was wonderful to see the Kirk so full of people having such an enjoyable, fun afternoon. Many thanks to Moira Land for all she did to make this now annual event such a success and also to all who helped Moira, including Francis Armstrong who fed the cast and others! Moira has already booked the Northumberland Theatre Group to return in January 2019.

Valerie Hunter continues to lead Sunday School on the occasions when children join us on a Sunday morning. It was lovely to see so many of them there on Easter Sunday morning enjoying her Easter Egg Hunt. On 22nd May a special Cradle Roll service was held and we welcomed back a number of children who had been baptised in Oxnam Kirk along with their families. Moira Land had decorated the kirk with balloons and Marion's delightful service was enjoyed by adults and children alike. During the service Val presented the children with a little gift.

Moira Land continues to be our very active Presbytery Elder. Last year she took the initiative of making a short video film of life in and around Oxnam Kirk as part of a Church of Scotland competition. Although she did not win the organisers felt there was much to enjoy in the video and have uploaded it to the main Church of Scotland website. Very well done to her! With her encouragement we have

continued to record the life of Oxnam Kirk. Look out for this video later in the year.

Enjoy the summer.

Morag McKeand

A Treasure

There are people behind the scenes working for Oxnam Kirk and keeping it on the correct lines. One special person is Fiona Geddes, our treasurer. For 27 years Fiona has looked after Oxnam Kirk finances. She has kept all the books up to date, advised on all finance matters from direct debits to printing tickets. What a treasure! In the 27 years the church finances have risen from less than £1,000 to over £ 34,000, and she always does everything with a smile. Thank you from Oxnam Kirk.

An Elder

I live around Oxnam Kirk and I wish to announce in your magazine that I live above ground and not in burrows like rabbits. It has come to my attention in the last month that 3 people thought I lived underground! So now everyone in Oxnam Kirk will know – above ground. I also love to visit Val's house and she is so kind and lets me eat all her different plants. Also at Langlee Park there is a wildflower meadow which visitors are welcome to visit.



Hare

From our Interim Moderator ...

“Peace be with you” was the phrase used at the start and end of all the proceedings at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland this year. I was lucky enough to be a commissioner and attended each day. The new Moderator is Rev. Susan Brown who is the Minister at Dornoch Cathedral. She told us that the congregation there always enjoyed singing a paraphrase of Psalm 139 which starts “Thou art before me Lord, thou art behind, and thou above me hast stretched out thy hand; such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too high to grasp, too great to understand”. In Dornoch this hymn is often sung to the beautiful tune “Highland Cathedral” and so you can understand why it might be a favourite.

One of the highlights of the General Assembly for me was the singing. Almost 700 people attend and it would appear that all the hymns and psalms chosen were “weel kent” and popular. Certainly we took to heart one of the readings during the week which was Psalm 150 which finishes “let everything that has breath, praise the Lord! O praise the Lord.”

One of the themes for the Moderator this year is to be “walk with..” and we are encouraged to get out and about and walk together, either for our own physical and mental health or to help others in our community who may suffer from loneliness and isolation. In our rural communities we often think we know our neighbours but this year I urge you to think about the people around you and ask if they need company.

At the end of each day’s business we sang “May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place; may the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace”. This was sung to the tune “ae fond kiss”. Try it, you will find the words and tune fit beautifully together. I wish you all peace and happiness over the summer months.

***Helen Howden
Interim Moderator***

Presbytery

The Jedburgh Presbytery meets most months on a Wednesday evening to discuss important church matters and the future and allocation of posts and churches.

For the past two years Oxnam has been linked with Kelso Country Churches trying to find a 3/4 ministerial post. They have not been successful finding a candidate and, after much discussion on both sides, and also together, it was decided to break the linkage. Kelso Country Churches are now free to call 3/4 minister on their own. Oxnam Kirk will now have to consider their way forward.

The Church Of Scotland has a huge reduction in ministers coming forward to be trained and this is presenting problems in filling posts. At present, we have only 5 ministers (3 in Hawick and 2 in Kelso), this leaves us with 6 vacancies. There is talk that our allocation may be reduced from 11 posts to 6.5 posts .

The only upside is that 34 elders in Jedburgh Presbytery have completed their course in “Leading Worship”. They are now able to go to lead worship in the churches in Jedburgh Presbytery. Oxnam will be able to ask any of these trained elders.

“Year of the Young People”

Presbytery is encouraging churches and congregations to “engage with young people “8 to 25 year olds to give them a platform to talk about their needs and wants . Oxnam is having some events to encourage the Young People .

Moir

Oxnam Valley Voices

Oxnam Valley Voices go from strength to strength under the critical but encouraging eye of Marion Dodd. Their ever increasing repertoire of songs allows them to perform for almost any occasion. At the beginning of June they gave a concert in Oxnam Kirk in aid of Oxnam Kirk and Oxnam Village Hall funds. There were poems recited, solos sung and a musical interlude by Martin the choir's concert piano accompanist. This event was highly successful with £414.00 being raised to be divided between the two organisations. Delicious refreshments were served and all thanks goes to those who helped to make this evening so successful.

The choir will have a break for a short time during the summer and return with renewed vigour to learn new music and prepare for any concerts they may be asked to do in the coming year.

OVV is a community choir and also has a social side such as learning how to curl, specially arranged walks and sometimes visits to the theatre. They always welcome new members. Anyone who enjoys singing is always welcome to come and join the choir which meets in Oxnam Village Hall every Wednesday evening at 7pm.

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*The Oxnam Valley Voices entertained us once again with an excellent mix of traditional Scottish songs and rousing modern songs. Keep a place in your diary for the next performance. I enjoyed it all so much.*

**Gill Yourston**



## Pantomime

*Oxnam Kirk was delighted Northumberland Theatre Company returned again this January to fill the church with laughter.*

*This year it was the “The Princess and the Goblin” and Oxnam Kirk was full of beautiful princesses all dressed up in their finery and handsome goblins, some with green faces. What fun was had by all. The church was abuzz. The minister was dressed up as a goblin and gave out the ice cream. Francis made the soup and catering - much appreciated by the cast. Rob was there from 10am making sure everything was working well. Fiona collected the tickets and money. Val made excellent shepherd’s pie. Rob and Andrew made sure everything was cleared up at the end. Thank you to all. The story turned out well and the princess married the best man in the end .*

*I think the adult prize would have to go to a handsome local sheep farmer who dressed up as a princess. He did us all proud!*

*The first to text me with his name will be allowed a free ticket to the NEXT Pantomime on Sunday 20th January 2019 at 3.pm*

*It was a good start to the Year of The Young People to fill the church with youngsters. Oxnam Kirk was smiling.*

**Moira**



## **Walking Group**

*The walks led by Adam on the 2nd Sunday of the month are still enjoyed, especially the June one to Chew Green, even although it was a bit wet!*

*A Family walk is being planned for Sunday 12th August which will be suitable for younger children and buggies. There will be a choice of distances - short, medium or long. More details nearer the time.*



## **Oxnam Village Hall AGM**

*If you are a resident of the Oxnam Community Council area you are entitled to attend and vote at the AGM of Oxnam Village Hall which will be held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30 p.m. in the hall.*

*Anyone within the Oxnam Community Council area can stand for a position on the committee and we are always keen to have new members. Should you wish your name to be put forward please let me know prior to 13<sup>th</sup> July so that it can be included on the Agenda.*

*Nominations will, however, also be accepted on the night. In addition to general committee positions those of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary are also open to nominations in addition to the current incumbents.*

*Current Chair: Bob McKeand, Vice Chair: Matthew Ladds,  
Treasurer: Heather Batsch, Secretary: Sharon Hollywell.*

***Bob McKeand***

### **Library Café**

*The café held in the hall from 11-12 noon every 3 weeks is still well attended and enjoyed by all. A nice way to catch up over tea/coffee scones and cakes. Thank you to everyone who has helped so far this session. The dates for the rest of the year are:*

*4th July no library van that day he is on holiday  
25th July, 15th August, 5th September, 26th September, 17th October,  
7th November, 28th November and 19th December.*

*Anyone interested in helping can contact Francis on 01835 840 669*

### **Baptismal Roll Service**

*It's a long time since we had a Baptismal Roll Service and during the past ten years many names have been added to the framed Roll kept in the church. Invitations were sent out to every family included on the Roll since 2009 and we were delighted to welcome those who made the effort to come along on 20<sup>th</sup> May.*

*Marion adapted the morning service so that the children were involved all the time. It was really lovely to see them taking part. They seemed to enjoy every moment, as did all the adults; in fact it was a real celebration of being baptised and part of the family of the church.*

***Val Hunter***

## ***World Mission News***

### ***‘Caring for Mother Earth Bolivia’***

*Bolivia has a diverse geography with varied climates. Christian Aid’s ‘Caring for Mother Earth Bolivia’ was established due to unprecedented flooding in the low-lying Amazon basin, in order to safeguard communities against the ever-changing weather patterns and supports indigenous communities whose homes and survival are under threat. It was selected as one of the Church of Scotland Guild’s supported projects for 2015-2018. Guild funding has enabled Christian Aid partners to provide solar ovens to four indigenous communities – the Bella Artura and Capaina communities north of La Paz, and the Bermeo and Nueva Betania communities in Beni.*

*Solar ovens were provided to local families to enable them to cook nutritious food even when their firewood is soaking wet. They first provided the solar ovens to four families, expanding to 60 when the pilot programme proved successful. The ovens have helped free up the women from domestic chores and enabled them to play a fuller part in their communities.*

*Initially it was hard for the families – especially the women, who do the majority of cooking – to get used to the ovens. While they are not difficult to operate, people have to adapt to cooking differently and to shorter cooking times.*

*With these ovens you don’t really need to be there while they are cooking, you can just put the food in and leave it for a few hours. As a result these women now have time to participate in more productive activities, either by going with husbands to the field or working in small shops. One of the women has now launched a service for some people in the communities, using the oven to prepare food and selling it for lunch. Another uses the time either to participate in the community or to play sport for herself.*

*Something else that was unexpected was that the women experimented with the ovens, not just using them to cook what was taught them. They tried to see how to better prepare rice, or how to dry fruit,*

*experimenting with different food types and getting used to eating unsmoked food. They are now sharing these discoveries with others and exploring the idea of writing a recipe book.*

*The initial families are now using the ovens every day and while they are a simple technology, their impact has been significant: The ovens enable people to eat well; prevent trees being cut down for wood; allow communities to be resilient and to stay on their land despite the impact of climate change; and free up women to participate more fully in community life and decision making.*

*At the end of the pilot phase in June 2016 a further 56 ovens were given out. This means that every family in the two local communities now has an oven. The remaining two communities will receive ovens in 2018. Plans are underway to expand the project to 180 families with the support from Scotland, as well as seeking further funding from other sources.*

***Morag McKeand***



*Indispensable helpers at the coffee morning*



## MARRIAGES

26<sup>th</sup> May 2018 Clare Younger and Christopher Brown, Jedburgh

## DEATHS

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018 Carry Scott, Oxnam Smithy

### **CAROLYN SCOTT (Carry)**

*With Carry's death on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, Oxnam Kirk and the community suffered a great loss. Carry and her late Husband, Bill, were at the heart of the community and very much part of the life's of everyone in the Oxnam valley. Together they ran the garage, petrol pumps and post office for a long number of years and you could never pop in for petrol or a stamp and be home in 5 minutes as you were always met with a warm friendly welcome and usually asked to stay for a cuppa and a blether.*

*They were both much respected in the community and Carry was loved in the valley and beyond for her kindness and willingness to help all who crossed her path. She was a loyal supporter of local organisations and local events, especially anything connected with the Kirk and, of course, many will remember her for the delicious baking, especially her scones.*

*Carry leaves an immense gap in the Oxnam community which is deeply felt by family and friends.*