

**BUXTON UNITED REFORMED  
CHURCH HARDWICK SQUARE EAST**



**FEBRUARY 2026**

We began our New Year as a church family with the Thanksgiving Service for the Life of Alison Darby on 19<sup>th</sup> January at Sherwood Forest Crematorium. Alison died on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2025.



Alison had been part of our church family in Buxton since 1996, having moved from the Ramsden Street United Reformed Church in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria where she was for 12 years. Alison moved from working in the shipyard as an engineer in Barrow to work in Buxton at the Health and Safety Laboratory at Harpur Hill. (Did you know that there weren't any female toilets in the shipyard area where Alison worked?) Perhaps from such work experiences she built an inner strength and independence, preferring to depend on her own resources rather than accept help. Over the years with us Alison often

talked about her experiences in the shipyard and the Ramsden Street Church.

Alison always took her role as elder in our church very seriously. She believed that service as an elder was for life as a member of the United Reformed Church. When Peter and I first came to our church in Buxton in 2001, Alison was not only a serving elder and Church Secretary but was also a helper with the Rainbows – the youngest section of the Guides. She also helped with the Summer Children's Holiday club.

During one summer she went with Diana and Roger Horne to spend some time in Jordon and on to Egypt with the Highways Project working with children who were deaf/blind in Alexandria. Roger can



remember Alison having empathy with them.

Over the years Alison was faced with a greater challenge with her failing eye sight leading to severe sight loss. Her need to trust and depend on God and others for assistance in everyday life became a reality.

The saddest moment for us perhaps as a church family was the first weekend in March some 7 years ago when Alison was found by Steve and Debbie Fisher unconscious at home. It was then that Alison was diagnosed with a brain tumour that needed to be operated on. But that was not the only tremendously sad news we had to deal with that weekend. Roger, who was in Uganda with his wife Diana, phoned to say that dear Diana had died near Sipi Falls – a local waterfall beauty

spot. Our formal Sunday service was ditched and we met together in great shock and sadness for drinks, (tea and coffee!) reflections, the comfort of being together and praying.

From that time onwards Alison had to face many challenges in adapting to everyday living including her reliance and trust in people she had never had any dealings with before like her carers, Andy her computer expert and the folk at the Macular Society.

One challenge was the introduction of Charlie, Alison's Guide Dog. He did find being in church difficult at first but gradually understood what we were about and settled down. Following the removal of her brain tumour and after a long period of



recovery Alison did return to work at HSL Harpur Hill for a short period of time taking Charlie with her.

Perhaps most of our memories about Alison are in the last 7 years of her life and how, when she was well enough, was determined to take an active part in her role as an elder, and taking part in our Sunday



services. Possibly the most enjoyable event for her was the once-a-month Waste Not Want Not Saturday coffee and cake morning. She would sit all morning at a table taking part in meaningful conversations with many people she got to know and of course – eating cake!

When we had mid-week Fellowship Meetings Alison was very happy to share the hospitality of her home with us all.

Interestingly many of the photos I took of Alison were of her enjoying meals with her friends! Quite a number of meals were at our home and she seemed to tuck into the food with gusto. For us, we told her where on the plate her food was – like green salad 12 - 3 o'clock, macaroni cheese from 3-7 o'clock and tomatoes 7 – 9. And yes, she really did like her desert courses too!

Throughout many times of frustration and challenges I never heard Alison complaining or being resentful to God. I think that one of the many things we as a church learnt was to be patient, to listen and



wait for Alison to express her thoughts. This became increasingly more difficult for her during the last few years.

For Alison her life in Christian circles extended to Churches Together in Buxton and attending important prayer meetings for Ukraine and Buxton with other Christians either on line or attending in person.

I think we can give thanks for the people who helped her within and outside our church fellowship. Friends at the Macular Society, Guide Dogs, her carers and Andy who helped Alison with advanced computer skills resources that enhanced her everyday living. For the baker who stopped on his way to work at 5 am on the A515 near her home after seeing Alison in significant trouble and calling an ambulance to take her as an emergency to hospital. For the very perceptive dog next door who would not stop barking in the middle of the night, until its owner got up to explore what was happening only to find Alison in her back garden with hypothermia and loss of consciousness. For Debbie Delight, from our own church, who so many times tried to find out where Alison had been taken to hospital. This was very difficult because Debbie was not a family member. Lastly but by no means least Roger Horne who over many years became her church taxi transporter amongst other things. We thank God for them all.

The last time a small group of us saw Alison was when Roger, Phil and Debbie met at our home on a Wednesday to write in the Christmas cards for Waste Not Want Not. Roger had called to collect Alison to join us but she seemed disoriented and not ready to come. One and a half hours later when we had finished writing and were having a drink with cake, there was a knock on our door. Peter opened it to find Alison with a taxi driver. She remembered exactly where to direct the driver to; to come to our home so she too joined us for a drink and cake before Roger took her back home. On the Friday, Alison was to return to hospital for the last time, before the Lord took her forever.

For the last service in January, Roger Horne based the theme on the work of the Christian organisation - **Scripture Union In Peru.**

This made me recall an event that happened to me when I was a young person in the 1950's.



I lived on the very busy Rochester Way – the A 2 in Kent. Across the road near where I lived was a traffic light crossing with a police box. One day as I was crossing, walking towards the police box, a police man stopped me and asked what was the Bible reading for the day.

Why did he choose to ask me?

It was because I was wearing a Scripture Union Badge. It had a lamp on it representing the words of Psalm 119 v 105 *“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.”*



My reply to the policeman was that I read my Bible in the evenings so I could not tell him what the reading was for today but told him yesterday's reading instead!

*For those of you who are unaware, Scripture Union provided daily Bible reading notes which I used to follow.*

On starting each day's reading, SU encouraged you to repeat the words of Psalm 119 v 18

*“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.”*

Finally, a news item from the seaside.

*I wonder if you have ever bought fish and chips from one of the famous shops in Whitby, North Yorkshire. We have, but if you do you need to be careful eating them outside because the seagulls are very partial to them too!*

The Whitby Fish and Chips Co.



Joshua Askew recorded an event on 20 January 2026 of thousands of chips washed up on a Sussex beach over the weekend.

The unusual sight came after several shipping containers containing "food and packaging" came ashore nearby earlier that week.

But the chip wreck in Eastbourne - which one resident said "*Made the beach look like the golden sands of the Caribbean*" - was part of a series of recent shipping incidents.

The two ships which lost cargo in January were caught up in strong winds caused by Storm Goretti.

*I don't recommend anyone salvaging the chips to cook later!*

Eileen Blane





## Please pray:-

For the Saturday Coffee Mornings on  
7<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March

For volunteers at **Waste Not Want Not** and  
for everyone who needs help this winter.

For our Elder's and Leaders and others as they plan, prepare and lead  
our worship each Sunday.

For Debbie Delight's mum's long-term care.

For Yolanda Blane having completed a course of radiotherapy in  
January this year.

For Alison Darby's family especially her sister Anne.



Image by [Pat Photographies](#) from [Pixabay](#)

For the

### Thanksgiving Service

for the Life of Alison Darby,

to be led by Rev. Steve Fisher, our  
previous minister,

in our church on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February  
at 2 pm.

**Geoffrey Clarke, the Moderator, has been asked to visit us  
at 7pm on Tuesday 31st March.**

As we are likely to be very small in number, an informal Bible study session coupled with communion has been suggested.

It would also be good if we could chat informally with him so we can get to know him and vice versa.

**This date has not been confirmed yet,** but please leave the date open for the visit.

I cannot remember the last time we had a “royal” visit - This is likely to be the only time a Moderator will visit us in ten years!

*Roger Horne*

***Buxton URC Sunday services***

1 <sup>st</sup> February	10.30 am	Peter Crawford
8 <sup>th</sup> February	10.30 am	Songs of Praise - Cath Sterndale and Ian Lloyd
15 <sup>th</sup> February	10.30 am	Link to All Saints Marple
22 <sup>nd</sup> February	10.30 am	Thinking Day - Roger Horne
1 <sup>st</sup> March	10.30 am	Mark Houghton – Communion
8 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30 am	Mark Houghton
15 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30 am	BBC Songs of Praise

## ***Dates to Remember***

Saturday Coffee Mornings on 7<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March

Elders and Leaders Meeting:- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February at 2 pm in church

## **Contributions for the magazine**

Thank you everyone who has contributed to this magazine.

*We really do appreciate your contributions so please keep them coming.*

Contributions please for the next magazine to

**Eileen and Peter Blane by 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.**

*To ensure your magazine is as informative as possible please keep us up-to-date with news and events.*



We are producing only a limited number of printed magazines.

An electronic version is available to read on the church's website: [www.buxtonurc.org.uk](http://www.buxtonurc.org.uk)

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***Waste Not Want Not  
At Buxton United Reformed  
Church.***

*Please join with us for  
free coffee, cake and company*

**On Saturdays**

**7<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March**

*Between 10am and 12midday in the church*



## Buxton United Reformed Church

**Website:** [www.buxtonurc.org.uk](http://www.buxtonurc.org.uk)

Minister for the North and West Derbyshire Resource Area  
(which includes Buxton URC): **Rev. Caroline Andrews**

*We warmly welcome everyone who wishes to join us for  
Sunday worship*

Details of services, including times, can be found inside this magazine  
and on our website.

*We offer a sincere, loving welcome to all in Christian  
Worship.*

### **Activities for young people**

- **Rainbows:** for girls aged 5-7      Tues. 5 - 6pm  
Leader: Stephanie Sterndale    (Tel. 07967205209)
- **Brownies:** for girls aged 7-10      Tues. 6 - 7:30pm  
Leader: Cath Sterndale      (Tel. 07973670595)
- **Guides:** for girls aged 10 to 14    Tues. 6pm  
Leader: Stephanie Sterndale    (Tel. 07967205209)