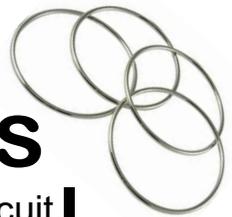




The **Methodist** Church



# Circuit Links

News from around our Buxton Circuit. |

Summer 2018

## All change....

When I moved into the manse at Buxton, one of the things I inherited was a quarterly preaching plan for the Buxton Circuit from 1868. As you can imagine the circuit was very different 150 years ago! I guess over the years it has changed many times to become what it is today, changes in number of chapels, some closing whilst others join due to changes in neighbouring circuits. Unlike the Parish system in the Church of England, Methodist Circuits are quite changeable.

Now we as the Buxton Circuit face further, significant changes and we are looking at these along with our neighbouring circuits within the Manchester and Stockport District. To set the scene this is the situation at present;

### **Buxton Circuit – 156 members**

1 minister – Rev Andrew Parker

7 churches – Fairfield (15 members), Buxton Market Place (112), Harpur Hill (9), Flagg (5), Monyash (4), Earl Sterndale (4) and Hollinsclough (7 members).

### **High Peak Circuit – 158 members**

1 minister – Rev Kerry Tankard

5 churches – Dove Holes (16 members), Chapel-en-le-Frith (60 members), Hayfield (26), Disley (24), Low Leighton (32).

### **Whaley Bridge Uniting Partnership - 70 members**

1 minister – Rev Keith Sandow

3 churches – Whaley Bridge Uniting Church (60 members), Fernilee (5), Kettlethulme (5)

A map on the next page shows the geography of the circuits. The changes are coming about because of various factors but two in particular (see over).

(\*Membership figures from Oct 2017)

- (i) In the Whaley Bridge Circuit, the Kettleshulme congregation have taken the brave step and voted to close. The congregation at Fernilee are also looking at a different future for their building, maybe as a community project but what this will look like is uncertain as these are still early days. The decisions of these congregations will mean the circuit cannot continue financially and will need to change.
- (ii) In summer 2019, Rev Kerry Tankard (minister in High Peak) is moving to a new appointment as Chair of the Yorkshire West District and it is very unlikely that he would be replaced. This is because nationally the Methodist church is facing a massive shortage of presbyter ministers (the ministers who wear a dog collar, in Methodist terms Deacons are also called ministers). This year it looks like there will be twice the number of circuits looking for presbyter ministers than the number available. This acute shortage comes on top of many years when circuits have had to go without and make temporary arrangements. So with this massive shortage, only critical appointments will be filled and it would be unlikely that High Peak Circuit fits that criteria and so would be without a minister.

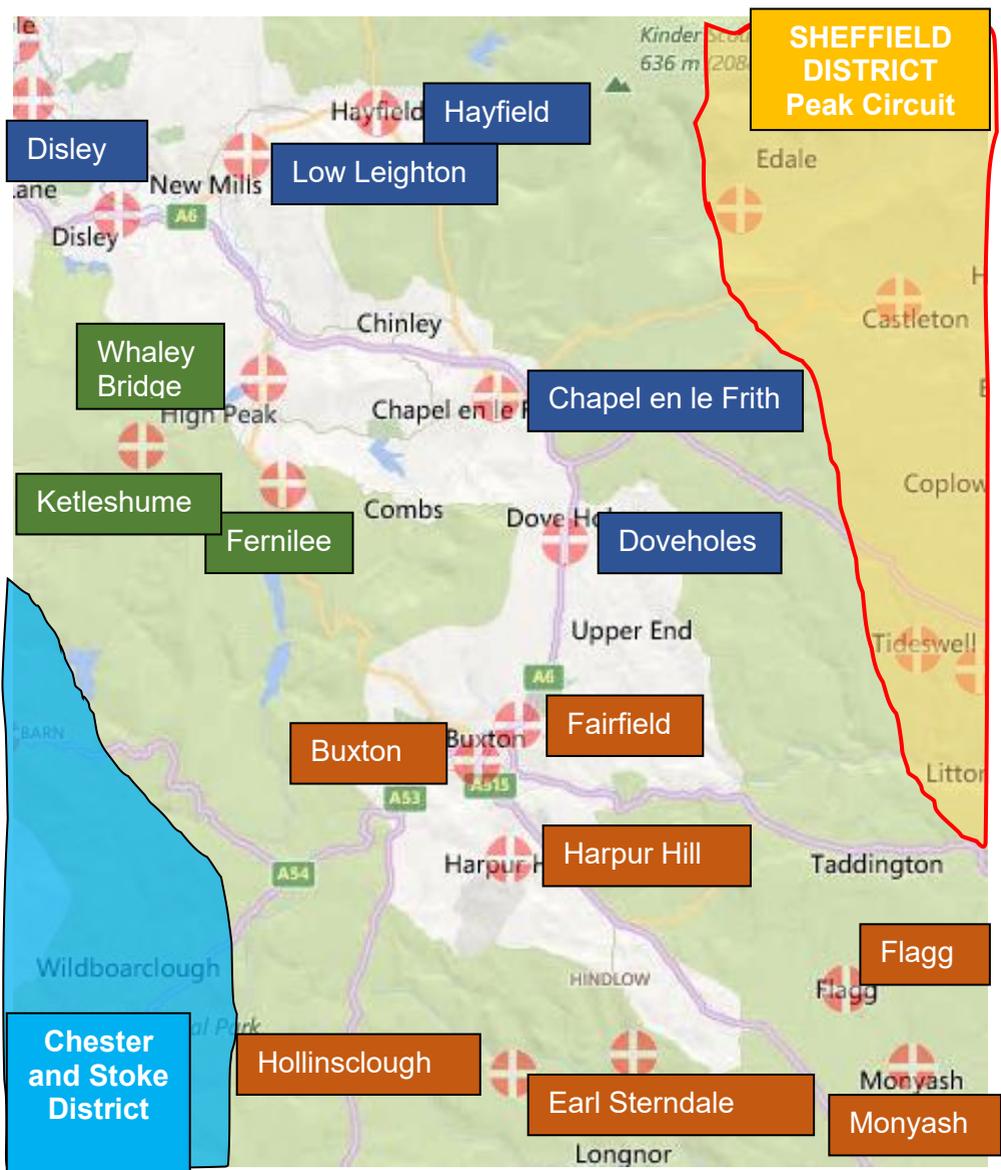
In Buxton I have 4 more years of this appointment, so although there is stability there will come a time for questions about future ministry. It is also fair to say that although at the moment we have 7 viable churches, we do not know how things will look in 4 years time.

With all this in mind, the District asked the three circuits to discuss the future shape of the circuits and ministry within them.

In mid-July representatives from each circuit (I asked at the Buxton Circuit meeting in spring if anyone wished to volunteer) met at Whaley Bridge to start discussions and from initial analysis it appears that a new larger circuit formed from the three circuits could sustain 2 presbyters and also afford some paid lay support (what that might be remains to be discussed).

There was mixed response, overall, many were positive whilst others had reservations with questions over geography and distances between churches.

The concerns were noted but it was decided there was enough support by the people there to take forward the discussions. The next step is for the 3 Circuit meetings and each Church Council to reflect upon the future and feed that back into the on-going process.



It is worth noting that already there had been joint meetings between Local Preachers in High Peak and Buxton Circuits and the ministers of the 3 circuits meet informally with other local ministers.

Staying as we are is no longer an option so we hope that we can create a future where sharing resources helps us fulfil our calling as God's people.

***'We'll praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come'***

# What's on around our circuit...

## September

Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	10:30 – 12noon	Earl Sterndale Coffee morning
Sun 9 <sup>th</sup>	2:30pm	Flagg harvest
Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am	Harpur Hill harvest festival
Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am	Fairfield harvest festival
Mon 17 <sup>th</sup>	5pm	Harpur Hill harvest supper
Thurs 20 <sup>th</sup>	10:30 – 12noon	Harpur Hill coffee morning
Fri 21 <sup>st</sup>	2pm	Circuit Meeting at Fairfield
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10am	Earl Sterndale harvest
Sun 30 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am	Circuit service at Buxton (see LP news below)

## October

Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:30 – 12noon	Earl Sterndale Coffee morning
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	10:30am	Buxton harvest followed by bring and share lunch
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	2:30pm	Monyash harvest
Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>	7:30pm	Monyash harvest auction
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 – 3pm	Fairfield Methodist 'Soup, Sweaters and Suprises'
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup>	2:30pm	Hollinsclough harvest
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>	7:45pm	Hollinsclough harvest auction
Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup>	10:30 – 12noon	Harpur Hill coffee morning

## LOCAL PREACHER NEWS

### Mary and Malcolm Heyward

It is with great joy we will be having a circuit service on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 10:30am for the admission of Mary and Malcolm as fully accredited Local Preachers within the Buxton Circuit. Mary and Malcolm are already well known across our circuit having been leading services and preaching whilst doing their studies. They themselves say they work better as a team so it is usually an added bonus that with Mary and Malcolm, if you get one you'll get the other as well!

### Janet Evans

The keen eyed amongst you will have noticed whilst reading the quarterly preaching plan that on the dates next to the local preachers there is a significant date next to Janet Evans. She has been an accredited Local Preacher for 30 years! We will be marking this milestone with a presentation on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September when Rev Andrew Lunn will be preaching at Buxton. Janet became a Local Preacher whilst Rev Peter Brant was minister in Buxton, so it will have added significance that he will also be present in the service.