



Ann Widdecombe

Date 24 July 2026

Fr Abbot and the Monastic Community of Buckfast continue to hold Ann Widdecombe, her family and loved ones in our prayers during this difficult time.

We are working closely with the family regarding funeral arrangements and will provide further information in due course, when appropriate. We respectfully ask that the family's privacy is honoured as they make these arrangements.

Fr Abbot and the Monastic Community are grateful for the many messages of sympathy and support that have been received.

ENDS

For all press enquiries please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

About Buckfast Abbey

Located at the centre of a picturesque valley on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, Buckfast Abbey is home to a community of Roman Catholic Benedictine Monks, who live their lives of prayer, work and study according to the ancient rule of St Benedict.

The heart of our site is the Abbey Church and Monastery – the place in which the Monastic Community lives and prays at various times throughout the day. Our site is historic – the original Abbey being founded in 1018 AD, by King Cnut.

Today, our site is a flourishing complex of buildings which the monks have continually developed to aid them in realising their vision for Buckfast - to be a national centre of witness to God, and the Roman Catholic faith.

To that end, the community places a great value upon hospitality, and welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

Our site also includes beautiful gardens, a restaurant, cafes, retail outlet, a conference centre, and a broad range of guest accommodation.

Fuller site detail:

Buckfast Abbey is the only English Benedictine monastery to be re-founded upon its original pre-reformation site.

After the dissolution of the monasteries under King Henry VIII in 1538, the Abbey Church fell into ruin. It was rebuilt stone by stone upon its medieval foundations by a group of French monks.

The Abbey Church is a haven of peace and tranquillity. It features a dramatic Lantern ceiling, various art treasures and the striking Blessed Sacrament Chapel depicting Christ in coloured glass, designed and manufactured by a Buckfast monk in the 1960's.

The Abbey Church is a place of worship and visitors are welcome to participate in the daily celebration of Mass, sung by the Monastic community to ancient Gregorian chants. The community is joined on Sundays by the Abbey Choir – the only professional Roman Catholic Choir in the South West, which sings the 11:00 Solemn Mass, and 15:00 Vespers and Benediction. Some services are also live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube, for those who are not able to be present.

As well as being home to the community of monks, Buckfast Abbey is a popular tourist attraction in the South West. Visitors may enjoy the calm atmosphere of our gardens; the stunning architecture and artwork of our Abbey Church; enjoy recitals of choral and organ music by internationally renowned choirs and organists; as well as the delicious lunches and cream teas offered in our Grange Restaurant. For barista style coffee and delicious snacks visit the Abbot's Way Café.

Our shop offers an extensive range of items produced by monasteries all over the world, from gifts, cards and books, to food and drink including products made by the monks of Buckfast.

Visitors also have the option of staying in our attractive and comfortable on-site Hotel – Northgate House, or in one of our other self-catering accommodation facilities. The hotel is the location of an Italian themed Restaurant, San Benedetto's.

Our recently refurbished Schiller Hall (part of St Cuthbert's Conference Centre) is an incredible space to participate in events and meetings.

Buckfast Abbey is also known for its fortified tonic wine, which is still made in the Abbey's grounds, and based on a traditional French recipe.