

A Celebration of the Life of

# **Alison Mary Fletcher**

12 February 1945 – 15 February 2025

13 March 2025, Vale Royal Crematorium

Celebrant: Hannah McKerchar



Humanist  
Ceremonies™  
by Humanists UK

Alison was born in Tottington on 12 February 1945, in the closing months of the Second World War. She was the middle child of Edith and Victor Ashworth, with a number of years separating her from her big sister Anne, and her younger brother Roger. During Alison's childhood, Victor's work took the family up to Dundee, back down to north London, and over to the east coast in Humberside, before the family ended up in Milverton, Somerset, where Alison completed her schooling at the girls' grammar school.

Intelligent and driven, Alison trained as a special needs teacher, qualifying in the mid 60s, and by the time she met Steve in 1968 she was already a Deputy Head, living in Kennington. Alison loved her work, and took it very seriously; she valued each and every child she worked with, and had a way of bringing the most out of them all.

Alison and Steve only got together thanks to Steve and his mates' enterprising spirit. They were all living in a lads' hostel, and were hoping for some female company. So they put cards through the doors of all the nearby flats where they thought girls lived, inviting them round for a drink! Alison did not respond to this invitation, but her flatmate Angie did, and it wasn't long before they were introduced.

Steve said how comfortable it was from the moment they met; there were no barriers, Alison was so easy to talk to, so kind and caring, and pretty good-looking too! They started going out on 30 November 1968, enjoying evenings with friends, or going out for meals. They both went back to their respective families for Christmas, and reunited on New Year's Eve, when Alison, as Steve put it, was 'out of her mind on whisky'!

Alison and Steve married on 24 October 1970 (the start of the half term holidays). They tied the knot in Burnham-on-Sea, where Edith was then living, Victor having already died. After having a celebratory meal in a hotel, they jumped into Steve's Ford Prefect and drove down to Lands End for their honeymoon. Alison moved in to Steve's place initially, then a few months later they bought their own flat in Penge.

By 1973 Alison was pregnant with their first child, and Steve's work necessitated a relocation to the north, Yorkshire initially, then Cheshire, where they settled and put down roots. They had welcomed James to the world in 1973, and he was soon joined by Adam, then Emily, then Hannah. And Alison was in her element, devoting herself to being the best mum she could possibly be, and of course the best Granny in turn, to Tilly, Lyra, Robert, Tommy, Oliver, Elsa, Arthur, Chloe and Charlie. Alison showed that devotion in big ways and small: always walking to school with the children every day (even in the rain!); making faces out of the food on their plates to make mealtimes more fun; putting up with every whimsical request for a new animal to join the household (though she did draw the line at Emily getting a snake...).

The best people to tell us what Alison was like as a mum and a granny are her children and grandchildren themselves, so can I ask Hannah to come up first, to share some memories from her, and her brothers and sister.

*Hannah [the celebrant] has already given an introduction to Mum's life and her devotion to her children and grandchildren. Her love for us all was extended to our partners and our friends, who were welcomed into the family like her own.*

*We remember how kind, thoughtful and generous she was, and how she showed her love in so many ways. We were so lucky growing up with amazing family holidays, being taken to see musicals, and having a house and garden full of pets – all things that Mum loved.*

*She was caring and considerate, always thinking of others and putting them first. She was a good friend to many of you and would spend hours, often on very long telephone calls, listening, talking and helping to put the world to rights.*

*She loved her nine grandchildren unconditionally. They all spent time with Mum and Dad before they started school, even Robert who was in the UK for several months with his family in 2016. They all loved spending time with her and they have wonderful memories of playing in the garden, sledging when it snowed, baking cakes and playing with our huge selection of toys and games. Chloe is grateful that she inspired her to read books. She would also take them to the park, the zoo or to play mini-golf.*

*More recently Mum would pick them up from school and would often tell them stories about us when we were children. Elsa remembers her being kind, funny and caring – and always giving praise. Also borrowing her purple sparkly hat (which Elsa thought suited her).*

*She loved animals. As well as her own pets (mainly rescued through Emily's veterinary network) she would gladly look after our dogs, cats, guinea pigs, stick insects etc. whenever we asked. Charlie is convinced that Granny is still somewhere on earth and she will come back as an animal – his money is on her coming back as a ladybird.*

*She could be stubborn. She stood her ground for things that she believed in and she liked things to be done her way. James recalls, when he and his family were living with Mum and Dad (in between houses), he disposed of some of Adam's books (with Adam's permission), and Mum didn't speak to him for three days.*

*Mum loved a musical – Cats, Phantom, Hair and others. Going to these and many other visits to theatres were part of our childhood and shaped us. She was an adventurer. We all remember with affection our family holidays, especially those spent driving through Europe to France, Spain or Italy. And all the preparation she did to keep us occupied on the journeys.*

*She wanted her children to go on adventures, encouraging them to follow their dreams but also wanting to be with them every step that she could because she loved us all so deeply. This meant that those around her felt safe and protected, which is a priceless gift that she gave to all of the people that she loved and who loved her.*

*For example several years ago, when James, Emily and I first went to Australia to see Adam, she dropped us at Manchester Airport, waited to see the plane leave and then made Dad drive to Heathrow so she could also see our connecting flight depart.*

*She loved to spend time at Chester Zoo and National Trust locations. Chloe remembers her playing "Granny's Footsteps" with her grandchildren (even though she didn't understand the rules).*

*She loved to celebrate special occasions with big helium balloons and during the year she would find any excuse to get the family together. Birthdays were particularly special for her but she also gave us personalised Easter eggs, advent calendars, Halloween gifts and many more. And she would give us cards and presents for Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day, to let us know we were doing OK.*

*Mum was kind and caring, funny and strong, always interested in what you were doing, keen to help, teach and share knowledge, thoughts and anecdotes. Mum's not gone. She's all around, in our hearts, in our children, in our words and actions. We will miss her terribly but she will always be with us all.*

Robert and Tommy are watching with their parents over in Australia, so can't tell us in person about their granny, but Robert has recorded a very special message for today:

*My name is Robert, and my memories of Granny were that she was such a nice, caring person to me. We had so many amazing memories in the past, starting in 2016, when she took me to CBeebies Land, going on Thomas the Tank Engine, mini golf, giving me a chocolate train every night, even taking me to school and caring for me. In between this time, I loved logging onto Zoom and hearing what her and Grandad were up to, and she was always fascinated with what we were doing over in Australia.*

*Over the years she sent us amazing Christmas, Halloween, Easter and birthday presents that I am grateful for, and still use to this day. I have a lasting memory of when we were younger, running down our hallway as the postman delivered her packed boxes from the UK.*

*Last year it was great to see Granny again, and spend some quality time with her. She has been a real role model to me in my life. I will really miss you Granny, love from Robert.*

And Oliver wants to share the words he wrote, about his Granny.

*My first memory of Granny was when she was looking after me at home with my grandad. I remember them looking after me whilst my mum and dad were in hospital with Elsa. I remember so vividly walking up the big blue tunnel with the cars underneath me, and I remember Granny and Grandad holding my hand. I remember Granny playing with my little car toys. As I got older and was in primary school I remember her and Grandad waiting to pick her up every single Thursday. Every single one. Now that is an absolute commitment to your grandchildren. She did the same*

*when my younger sister started school, and still every single Thursday they were there.*

*She was always there to talk about 'How is school?' or 'How is the football team doing?' Now, I might not have given the most in-depth answer, but it still made me feel good about myself. That is who my Granny was, and still is in our hearts. Even though she may not be here physically, but for me, and I guess all of you out there, she is still here. In our hearts.*

*I remember her for being kind, funny, loving and committed to everyone. That is who my Granny is.*

*Thank you.*

Alison obviously played a huge part in the lives of all her family. But she also had a huge impact on many other children's lives, especially through the tuition she offered to young people who were struggling in mainstream education. Years later she would still bump into now-grown adults who stopped to tell her how her intervention made all the difference to the way their lives turned out. The children at Huxley Primary also benefited, as Alison worked there for a number of years supporting those with special needs.

Alison fitted her work into school hours, so she was still there for her children, and grandchildren. And she put so much effort into planning the family holidays they enjoyed all over Europe, plotting itineraries and finding accommodation long before the days of booking.com. They would always drive – Alison was not a fan of flying – but the journey was part of the adventure, with stops in exciting and varied places, and many a picnic compiled from the breakfast buffet offering at a Campanile! The children's friends were often invited along on these holidays; in fact, Alison always made them welcome, at home or away.

As her children grew up and spread their wings, Alison thought nothing of a day trip to see them at university in Lancaster, York, Sheffield, even Edinburgh. She and Steve would sometimes have a jaunt up to Tebay services, just because she liked them that much. And they both welcomed the people their children fell in love with – Fliss, Annette, Matt and Steve – and always treated them like family.

In later years, Alison enjoyed days out, and going to the seaside at New Brighton, as well as not infrequent visits to the local veterinary hospital. Alison gave a home to a great many waifs and strays over the years, the latest being Archie the dog, and each and every one of them seemed to have some weird and wonderful medical problem. I think the one-legged lovebird is probably the winner! But Alison gave them all the love and care she gave so generously to the people in her life too; it's no wonder you are all missing her so much.

Lastly, we must hear from Alison's beloved husband Steve, who would like to give us some of his thoughts about the woman he shared his life with.

*The two Hannahs have spoken a lot about Alison.*

*Just to reinforce her most obvious qualities, she genuinely cared about people and their feelings. She was a good friend to many of you and always wanted to help anyone, particularly in difficult times.*

*She loved children:*

- her own children*
- her grandchildren*
- the children she taught (in London and Cheshire)*

*She loved dogs, cats and other animals and they always had priority. One recent message said, "All the dogs in heaven have a new best friend".*

*She was capable (she was a deputy head at 22!). Using computers was the exception but otherwise she was very capable and believed in doing things well and doing things her way.*

*When we moved away from London there was a decision point about whether to continue her teaching career. She was pregnant with James at that time so the immediate decision was easy. But subsequently she decided not to continue teaching full time but to give priority to our children. She was a teacher, so you'd expect her to nurture their skills and creativity. But she also instilled the right attitudes, the right behaviours - and the right values. Every day, it's clear to me how her influence and her values appear in our children and grandchildren. This is what she achieved - it is her legacy - and what she did has never been so clear and obvious as over the last few weeks when they and their families have all been brilliant.*

*She was a wonderful person and I'll be eternally grateful for sharing the last 56 years of her life.*

*Thank you, Alison*