

CLITHEROE TOWN WELLS CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN



HEALD WELL



STOCK WELL



ST. MARY'S WELL

‘To secure a meaningful and lasting future for all three of Clitheroe’s Ancient former Public Town Wells’

Review of Upgrading the Listed Status of Stock Well, Heald Well & St. Mary’s Well from Grade II to II*

Historic England advise that successfully upgrading a Grade II listed building to Grade II* involves demonstrating that a building has more than local interest and has a higher level of significance than previously accepted. The following overview seek to support this campaign’s request for upgrading all three Clitheroe Town Wells to 2*. Further documents to supports all aspects of this requests can be provided on request.

Supporting Research:

Historic Research

Additional documentary research undertaken by the Clitheroe Town Wells Conservation Campaign since its formation in 2018 supporting the greater significance of Clitheroe’s three extant former Public Town Wells.

Unique, and previously undocumented, Social and Historical Significance of these three sites as presented in Clitheroe Library Assistant, Andy Bowes, recently self-published Book ‘Reflections on the Water’ Sept. 2024 (‘ROTW’).

New etymological research undertaken by Andy Bowes as part of ‘ROTF’ firmly places these sites in the middle – late English period and prior to the Norman Conquest. In the case of Heald Well this spelling and definition middle/late English definition has now been accepted by the English Place-Name Society in their forthcoming Lancashire volume.

Existing Research & Documentation

The information presented in the Grade II listings for all three sites **and** Lancashire County Archaeological Services’ (LCAS) Monument Full Report for each site are - based on the more recent and extensive research carried out by Andy Bowes in ‘ROTW’ and assembled by CTWCC – now due for revisiting and revision.

The Listing for St Mary's Well, 'Stocks' (sic) Well and 'Heild' Well was first listed on 19th May 1950. The Listing for **Heald** Well (as this will now be referred to, based on the EP-NS' recognition) was revised on 30th March 1977. The 'sponsor' of the original and revised Listings is not known. This information would be useful to this Campaign to present as comprehensive record of this site as possible and could be significant in securing a meaningful and lasting future for all three.

Architectural Significance:

It is accepted that there is little 'architectural' significance in these three late Tudor vernacular structures. However - based on the increased knowledge we now have on all three sites – all are of enormous Social & Historic significance. This is not recognised in their Present Listing or Monument Record status.

Expert Opinion Support

Personal

The Secretary of CTWCC is a retired Conservation Architect He was former member of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC) - serving on its Board and acting as a Regional Assessment Team Leader earlier this century; Winner of the King of Prussia's Gold Medal for Architecture awarded by the National Churches Trust and the Ecclesiastical Architects & Surveyors Association. Team Leader for Clitheroe Civic Society's Conservation and Reinterpretation of Clitheroe Castle's Houses of Parliament Pinnacle, on behalf of the owners - Ribble Valley Borough Council; Team Leader for Clitheroe Civic Society's successful bid to Heritage Lottery securing £200k Urgent Repair Grant for Scheduled Monument Bellmanpark Limekilns. Based is his opinion the recent research referred on Clitheroe's three unique wells confirms they are of such significance that warrants a review of their existing Listing Records and consideration for upgrading to II* Listed and Scheduled Monument status. **Work in Progress**

Civic Voice

Via an individual membership of Civic Voice, there advice and assistance is being sought on this issue. **Work in Progress**

Historic England (formerly English Heritage)

EH (HE's fore-runner) were contacted for advice and support in the early stages of this campaign. CTWCC was advised that as the sites/structures are 'only' listed as Grade II this was, with regret, outside their remit. This is one reason, but not the only one, why an upgrade to II* is sought.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

Pre-Covid requests for advice and support from SPAB for this campaign were not positively responded to as they did not consider these well to be 'buildings. This despite them having Grade

II* Listed Building. SPAB will be approached once again for support and advice given the additional Social & Historical evidence we have now acquired. **Work in Progress**

Lancashire County Archaeological Services

CTWCC has sought previous advice and assistance but given the existing Grade II Listed status have been unable to assist though they have been the source of some advice and guidance. One of the first priorities of any active Conservation Works to the three wells will be Archaeological investigations. They will be an integral part of a phased programme of works at all three sites and these could give physical support to the etymological evidence of all having Anglo Saxon origins.

Future action after titles secured for all three sites.

Academic Support

Advice and support for various aspects of this campaign has been acknowledged by:

- UCLan's School of Architecture and Construction at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Post Grad support is currently looking into this. They are also considering applying for Scheduled Monument Status too. **Work In Progress.**
- Manchester University's Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies. Their Barrister in Property Law advises CTWCC, on 3rd Oct. 2024, that *'.....the Leet Court - and more recent - records appear to do the trick of demonstrating the local authority taking responsibility. Certainly, to a standard that I believe the land registry would be happy with (as demonstrated by them registering one of the three wells already.'*

Local Authority Support

Clitheroe's three former Public Town Wells are located within the Civil Parish of Clitheroe. Clitheroe Town Councillors are actively and supporting this campaign and are in discussions with the District Borough Council – Ribble Valley - as to how a lasting and meaningful future can be secured for all three wells. This hinges, initially on obtaining some form of Registered Title from the Land Registry for Heald and St Mary's Wells. Despite provision of evidence to support valid and probably successful applications to the Land Registry, RVBC still hesitates to do so. **Work in Progress**

In 2019 this campaign was successful in convincing RVBC of the validity of making such an application. They successfully did for Stock Well. CTWCC and the CTW Councillors are now in discussions with RVBC as to the validity, responsibility and Heritage Tourist benefits of doing the same for the two unregistered Wells. **Work in Progress**

CTC and RVBC are regularly updated on the activities of CTWCC and look forward to working in full partnership in joint support of the aims of this campaign.

Public & Stakeholder Support

Great interest and support was shown for the most recent Post-Covid events of this revived Campaign. These include:

To Date:

- Pre-Covid the Change.org Petition <https://www.change.org/p/ribble-valley-borough-council-save-clitheroe-s-ancient-public-town-wells> calling on Ribble Valley Borough Council to consider this Campaign's proposals secured over 2000 supporters in approximately 6 months.
- Guided Tours of the Town Wells, as Part of this year's Heritage Open Days Festival 2024 on 7th Sept;
- The Book Launch of Andy Bowes 'Reflections on the Water' at Moot Hall in Clitheroe 7th Sept.
- An address to the Ribble Valley Partially Sighted Group on 23rd September where only the weather conditions prevented a site visit!
- UCLan Post Grad Building Conservation Surveyors preparing Detailed Condition and Dimensional Surveys and New Heritage Assessments and Statements of Significance for all three sites. The latter to support moves to raise the Listed Building Status of all three sites and/or apply for Schedule Monument Status. **Work in Progress.**

Forthcoming:

- Public Meeting and Presentation at The Moot Hall Clitheroe 'YOUR TOWN WELLS NEED YOU'
- Face to Face meeting of CTWCC representatives with Ribble Valley Community Services Committee Chair and Director of Community Services. To date this has been denied. **Work in Progress.**

CTWCC adopted a formal Constitution in accord with Charity Commissioners Guidelines in Nov 2024. It will continue to develop its Strategies and Outreach to all relevant Authorities, Local Schools. Regional Universities, Amenity & Community Organisations, Online Media and the Press to '*secure the lasting and meaningful future*' for Clitheroe's three oldest sites which supported the development this ancient Parish, from 'Clyderhowe' to Clitheroe, for over a thousand years.

Steve Burke Dip.Arch. (Oxf'd)

Secretary

Clitheroe Town Wells Conservation Campaign

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Clitheroe Town Wells Conservation Campaign

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