

Application for restoration of the Eagle Parade Cistern

On behalf of The Buxton Well Dressing Committee I would like to submit the following to explain something of the history of the Cistern and what it still means to Buxton and visitors to the town.

The Cistern was completed in 1840 as a gift to the people of Higher Buxton by the 6th Duke of Devonshire. The water was piped from a reservoir at Cold Springs Farm on Long Hill, Buxton. Before 1840 water had to be carried from St. Ann's Well or from The River Wye - a very labour intensive daily process. It was because of this that the people of Buxton decided to show their gratitude by holding the first Well Dressing, an old custom that existed in several local villages.

Even though by 1864 it was reported that water was now piped to every house, the custom continued as it had become a popular holiday in the town and surrounding villages.

To this day the annual Well Dressing Festival brings many thousands of visitors to Buxton with subsequent economic benefit to businesses in the area.

The Cistern soon became obsolete as a water source. It is Grade 2 Listed and was first listed on 10th December 1973. The railings were still in place in the 1930's but were likely to have been removed during WW2.

Over years the fabric of the cistern has slowly deteriorated with urn on top being removed over 20 years ago for safety reasons. Today the Cistern is in very poor condition with all the signs of the date and Cavendish Snake on the front having disappeared. If the restoration doesn't take place the danger is that the Cistern will have to be removed with the loss of an important part of Buxton's history.

The links between Buxton and its water are a very important part of the town's narrative. The restoration of the Cistern will enable this part of Buxton's story to be remembered and celebrated. So much of Buxton's story is concentrated on the Lower Buxton Area. The restoration and subsequent publicity would be a welcome focus on Higher Buxton.

Buxton Well Dressing Festival is a wholly voluntary organisation and a charity. Our team of dressers are very keen to maintain the tradition of Well Dressing in Buxton and give up many hours in July each year to this end. The Cistern on the Market Place is the reason that the tradition started in Buxton and is dressed every July. We hold a Blessing Service at the Well and it attracts many visitors to the Market Place.

The Buxton Well Dressing Committee and Buxton Civic Association started the process of getting the Cistern restored over 15 years ago. We are keen to ensure that the Cistern

is restored and maintained as an important part of Buxton's heritage and part of the towns future cultural life.



The Cistern in its early years.

The cistern about 25 years ago



The Cistern as it looks today

The Cistern dressed in 2025