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HANDS, COFFIN AND CHILDRENS WELLS

‘Flowers were inserted in moist clay, and put upon boards, cut in various forms, surrounded with boughs of laurel and white thorn, so as to give the appearance of water...’ Traveller 1794



If you stand at Tissington church and look towards Tissington Hall, you can see the location of Hall, Children’s and Hands Wells. The first and most impressive well you will see is Hall Well, set in a stone apse, built into a stone wall opposite the 17th century Hall, fronted by stone basins through which the water still trickles. Historically it is here that the annual blessing of the Wells starts.

Built into the wall that fronts the Hall is Children’s Well, that comprises a small sunken cylinder of stone that has only recently been used for well dressing. Lastly, where the road forks, stands the carved basin and plinth of Hands Well. Once this well was called Frith’s Well after the owner of the adjacent house, in whose wall it is set and through which a water spout still protrudes.

For over six centuries, wells in Tissington have been dressed and blessed annually, as thanks for gift of pure water during plague and drought. Although in 1758 these well dressings consisted only of garlands of flowers left at the springs, they had, by 1794 become the petal covered boards that we know today. Today, each board depicts a topographical or biblical scene. However, the creation of such detailed patterns can consume over 400 hours of work for each well dressing, as well as 1000’s of flower petals, pieces of corn, leaves, seeds, spurge and even coffee beans.



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Left to Right: Hall, Children’s and Hands Wells

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