

# ANCIENT MONUMENTS SOCIETY

*Founded in 1924 for the Study and Conservation of Ancient Monuments,  
Historic Buildings, and Fine old Craftmanship*

12, EDWARDES SQUARE, LONDON, W.8  
Tel: WEStern 1414

14th February 1969

*Dear Mr. McDowall,*

The Society has for some time been concerned about the state of Becket's Well in your grounds, and I trust that you will not resent this for a scheduled ancient monument like Becket's Well is a matter of concern to all who love beautiful and historic things, even though it is private property. May I inquire whether you would be willing to see repairs to the well carried out? I am fairly confident that if you were prepared to do so a grant towards the cost could be obtained, if you so desire, from public funds. We should be very glad if you so desired to advise both on the repairs needed and on an application for a grant.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ivor Bulmer-Thomas*

E.D. McDowall, Esq.,  
Castle House,  
Otford,  
Sevenoaks, Kent

*President:* The Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF ROSSE, M.B.E., M.A., LL.D., M.R.I.A., F.S.A.,

*Chairman:* WALTER C. ANDREWS,  
O.B.E., M.I.C.E., M.I.Struct.E.

*Director:* L. M. ANGUS-BUTTERWORTH,  
M.A., M.I.Mech.E., F.R.G.S., F.S.A.Scot.

*Asst. Secretary:* HENRY CORNWALL-LEGH

*Hon. Treasurer:* LESLIE P. BECKLEY

*Secretary:* IVOR BULMER-THOMAS, M.A.

25th February 1969.

Ancient Monuments Society,  
Edwards Square,  
LONDON W.8

For the attention of Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas

Dear Mr. Bulmer-Thomas,

I thank you for your letter of the 14th, concerning Becketts Well and there is nothing more I would like than to see this structure reinstated to its original condition.

I took over this property from my father in 1964 (who has since died) and have read all the correspondence which he had with you on this matter. There seems very little I can add, except to say I would be very willing to see repairs carried out and would certainly have no objection to the public having access to the well, provided they called at the house for the key, as the well is now enclosed with a high railing and a locked gate.

I should add, however, that I do not have the financial resources at present to assist in this work, as I am incurring large expenses in renovating Castle House. May I suggest that the Ministry inspects the property and assesses the value of the repairs necessary and when this is known, presumably they would notify me of the amount I would be expected to contribute.

It seems to me that to date we have no idea of the costs and until we have this information, we are all unaware of what to expect. Also, the longer this is left, the more costly it will be, both from the point of view of rising costs and the increased deterioration of the structure, which has worsened considerably over the last few years.

I should mention that I am working in the Midlands during the week and am only at home for the week-end, but would be very pleased to meet you, or anyone else, to discuss the matter further, on a Saturday or Sunday.

Yours sincerely,

A. D. McDOWALL



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12, EDWARDES SQUARE, LONDON, W.8

Tel: WESTern 1414

6th March 1969

*Dear Mr. McDowall,*

Thank you for your letter of 25th February about Becket's Well, which I have just seen on returning from a visit to Austria.

I am very grateful for the manner in which you have received my request and am delighted to learn that you would be very willing to see repairs carried out and would certainly have no objection to the public having access to the well provided they called at the house for the key.

I quite appreciate that in view of the large expenses you are incurring in the renovation of Castle House you do not have the financial resources for the well also. I shall follow up your suggestion and ask if the Ministry would inspect the property and assess the value of the repairs necessary.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ivor Bulmer-Thomas*

A.D. McDowall, Esq.

*President: The Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF ROSSE, M.B.E., M.A., LL.D., M.R.I.A., F.S.A,*

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12, EDWARDES SQUARE, LONDON, W.8

Tel: WEStern 1414

30th September 1965

Dear Mr. McDowall,

Thank you for your welcome letter of 25th about Becket's Well. I am very glad indeed that you would have no objection to the public having access to the well provided they call at the house for the key. I am very glad also to learn that you would have no objection to the Ministry doing such work as they thought fit. I note that it does not seem at all likely that in the foreseeable future there would be any money available from private resources to pay for the repairs. The Ministry almost invariably insists on having some contribution from the owner as a condition of making a grant, but possibly it would be willing to waive this condition if the contribution were provided from other sources. Your letter has, at any rate, given me a basis on which to work and I shall see if I can get a scheme organized.

Yours sincerely,

Ivor Bulmer-Thomas

E.D. McDowall, Esq.

*President:* The Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF ROSSE, M.B.E., M.A., LL.D., M.R.I.A., F.S.A.

*Chairman:* L. M. ANGUS-BUTTERWORTH, M.A.,  
M.I.Mech.E., F.R.G.S., F.S.A., Scot.

*Director:* RAYMOND RICHARDS,  
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*Asst. Secretary:* HENRY CORNWALL-LEGH

*Hon. Treasurer:* LESLIE P. BECKLEY

*Secretary:* IVOR BULMER-THOMAS, M.A.



25th September, 1965.

Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, Esq.,  
Secretary,  
Ancient Monuments Society,  
12, Edwardes Square,  
London, W. 8.

Dear Mr. Bulmer-Thomas,

I am sorry I have been so long in replying to your letter dated 23rd April, but I have taken some time to have discussion with my son who is now living in the house and managing the property as I am retiring from active life.

There is no objection to the public having access to the Well provided they call at the House for the key, the Well now being enclosed with a high railing and a locked gate.

There would also be no objection to the Ministry doing such work as they thought fit but it does not seem at all likely that in the foreseeable future there will be any money available from private resources to pay for the repairs.

Yours sincerely,

E. D. McDowall.