

ST CLETHER HOLY WELL AND CHAPEL

My Secret Place in Cornwall by Janet Downes LRPS

Privately owned but open to the public at all times. Access via a footpath.

OS Explorer 109 - map reference SX 206844

St Clether Holy Well and Chapel is a special place of peace and tranquility. Motorists whizzing along the A395 connecting the A30 at Kennards House (west of Launceston) to the A39 in north Cornwall, no doubt do not notice the inconspicuous left turn at Laneast Downs signed St Clether. They miss a gem.

Take the turning and follow the narrow lanes for about 2.5 miles to reach the hamlet of St Clether - the church is just up the hill, look for the signpost in the hedge and park in front of the church. The church itself is worth exploring. Although restored over the years there are Norman features and no doubt there was a Celtic building well before Norman times. In February the churchyard is a delight with snowdrops. At any time of the year the view across the Inny Valley to the eastern edge of Bodmin Moor is wonderful.



St Clether Church

Go through the churchyard and pass through the little gate - there is a sign to the Holy Well Chapel. The Chapel is about a quarter of a mile walk along the valley, lofty crags on the right and the river below on the left. This is no manicured valley, the river makes it's erratic way through scrub and ferns. It is after all the edge of the Moor. Wear decent footwear!

The Chapel comes into view, protected from animals by a fence and newish gate. The well itself is to the right of the Chapel.

Take time to explore. Your eyes will need a few minutes to adjust to the dim light in the Chapel - no electric here.

Although the Chapel is tiny there are interesting things to see inside but I will leave those for the visitor to discover.

The Chapel website has much useful information stcletherhollywellchapel.com and details it's history much better than I can.

Suffice to say that whenever I visit, I never fail to feel a sense of both place and history - people have lived in and visited this valley for centuries. If you continue along the public footpath running just below the Chapel enclosure you will find part of a stone cross where the last field meets the road. Another indication perhaps of the importance of this area in earlier times.

Take a picnic - there is a seat outside the Chapel. Sit awhile and just take in the quiet and the view. When I visited I was there for a good two hours and saw no-one.

I would recommend a wide angle lens for outside shots as there is little distance from the enclosure fence to the Chapel. The interior is dark so a tripod is helpful for slow shutter speeds.



St Clether Holy Well Chapel



St Clether Holy Well



St Clether Chapel