



## Welcome to the second Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site E-newsletter May 2006

Since the first issue of this e-newsletter, the latest World Heritage News has been delivered to homes along the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. This 16-page newsletter reflects the very busy months which followed Christmas, as we worked to complete a three-year funding package provided by the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership. More details of this are available in the newsletter, which can be downloaded from our website at [www.derwentvalleymills.org/07\\_new/newsletter.asp](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org/07_new/newsletter.asp) or under the What's New heading at [www.derwentvalleymills.org](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org).

The newsletter was produced in March, and since then work has continued within the site. I hope you will find the updates below of interest.

### **Adrian Farmer**

Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

### **Bid for economic development post**

WORK on the economic development of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site is progressing.

An Economic Development Plan was presented to the Derwent Valley Mills Partnership at the end of 2005. Since then, work has been carried out on a bid to the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership for funding a three-year post to take forward the Plan's proposals.

At present, the Plan has gone out to consultation, to determine which aspects should be supported, and which of these should be given priority. The partnership's own suggestions are as follows:

- **ECONOMIC:** Business incubation and support (particularly creative businesses), the development of skills and ITC and the infrastructure to support that.
- **SPATIAL TOURISM:** Development of the key mill sites at Derby Silk Mill, Belper North and East Mills and Cromford Mill.
- **STRATEGIC TOURISM:** Brand development.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Railway improvements.

### **Preparing for Discovery Days**

WORK is now beginning on preparations for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site's second Discovery Day. Last October over 40 events took place along the 15-mile length of the Site, attracting about 1,000 people and providing unique opportunities for enjoying and understanding the historic value of the mills and related communities.

In 2006, it has been agreed that events be spread over two days, in order that people have a greater chance to see all that the Site has to offer. The Discovery Days will be on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October. The weekend has already been given a major boost from Rolls Royce PLC, who agreed to give £1,000 towards arts-related workshops which will run at a number of venues along the valley. Several suggestions for activities have already been made, but it is not too late to suggest others or offer to help out on the day.

The next meeting of people involved or interested in the event will be at Strutt's North Mill, Belper at 7pm on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Anyone interested in the weekend can attend – just turn

up or contact the World Heritage Site Co-ordinator Adrian Farmer via e-mail on [adrian.farmer@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.farmer@derbyshire.gov.uk)

## **THI making progress**

THE BELPER and Milford Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a partnership scheme with funding from several organisations. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has committed up to £1 million to the scheme, as part of its UK-wide Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), which aims to conserve and regenerate historic urban areas. The Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership has committed up to £564,000. Derbyshire County Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, Belper Town Council and owners of properties also contribute to the scheme.

The THI is now in its third year and is making significant progress with two key projects recently being approved:

### **COMING SOON ... THE RITZ CINEMA BELPER**

The Ritz Cinema in Belper is to re-open this summer after £250,000 renovation. The Ritz Cinema project is the recipient of a £140,000 grant from the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The rest of the project is being funded by private investment.

Amanda Mundin and Neil Roberts have spent the last two years researching this project and working full time to bring The Ritz back to Belper. After receiving the official grant offer at the end of March, they started work immediately on the cinema situated on the site of the original Ritz in The Public Hall, King Street.

Neil said: "The project would not have gone ahead without the Townscape Heritage Initiative funding and it is great news for Belper. While we've been planning for the cinema we have had such a fantastic response from the public, even instigating a membership scheme at the request of the public. This is one of the great things about running an independent cinema, because we aren't a big corporate body we can listen to what people want; we actively want the public's participation and feedback, after all, this is their cinema."

The Ritz Cinema closed its doors back in 1991, following the worst period in cinema history, with admissions at their lowest during the 1980s. Today the cinema industry thrives and yet there is no permanent cinema in the Amber Valley. Over the past few years in the UK we have seen cinema admissions at their highest for over 30 years.

"Independent cinemas are gaining in number and becoming popular destinations for an evening out," said Amanda. "The film industry is also changing and independent films are gaining a greater audience. Just look at recent films such as Brokeback Mountain, Crash and The Constant Gardener, superb films which are being seen by major audiences. This shift in the film industry from studio to independents also sees a change in exhibition venues – The Ritz will have wide comfortable seats with plenty of leg-room, excellent quality in picture and sound and a great selection of film treats in a 'café bar' environment.

"We really want to see The Ritz help to regenerate the top of King Street and help to make Belper a 'destination town' – we have a great variety of shops, restaurants and bars and now people will have world cinema on their doorstep," said Amanda.

Francesca Machin, THI Project Officer said: "The reestablishment of a cinema in the Public Hall will considerably assist the regeneration of the town centre by providing a use that will enhance it socially, culturally and economically. It will also be bringing back into use a prominent building which is an important part of the character and appearance of the conservation area and World Heritage Site."

The Ritz will be showing a whole variety of cultural, commercial and classic films for a wide ranging audience. If you would like to send your film suggestions to Amanda and Neil they can be contacted through the website [www.ritz-belper.co.uk](http://www.ritz-belper.co.uk) or at 76B King Street, Belper,

Derbyshire DE56 1QA. Membership forms can also be found on the website or look out for leaflets around town.

### **THE PUBLIC HALL, BELPER**

The 1881 Public Hall was Belper's main meeting hall and is now the significant landmark on King Street. The current private owners rescued it from demolition some years ago and have recently been awarded a THI grant of £75,000 to give the building a facelift. The frontage scheme is separate to, but coordinated with the Ritz project, and the two projects will work together to bring about a complete renovation to the front elevation, which will be unveiled later in the year.

The significance of the Public Hall lies not only in its original role as Belper's main public building and its association with the Strutt family, but also in its very prominent location: on the town's main shopping street and adjacent to the Memorial Gardens. The Green Lane site across the road is currently under development, which will enhance the importance of the Public Hall, sited diagonally across from it.

Francesca Machin, THI Project Officer said: "A restored Public Hall will contribute to the regeneration of the top of King Street and the Market Place, both key sites in the THI Action Plan. These areas have not benefited as much from recent improvements in retail performance as the lower end of King Street and Bridge Street, so the restoration of this key building is both historically and economically important."

### **Arts strategy leaflet planned**

IN KEEPING with the tradition of creativity and innovation in the Derwent Valley, the WHS Partnership adopted an Arts Strategy to encourage artworks which draw inspiration from the site, its history, landscape, and people.

The strategy, developed by Paul Swales and David Alston encourages a high quality, wide-ranging arts programme, encompassing the performing arts, as well as writing, the visual arts and crafts, and newer forms of artist expression such as video, digital work and art installations, all specially created to enhance the distinctive quality of the WHS.

The Arts Council is now providing money for an advocacy leaflet on how artists can take forward projects in the Derwent Valley Mills WHS.

### **Centenary celebrations begin**

CENTENARY celebrations for the River Gardens in Belper kicked off on Easter Monday, with an exhibition unveiled in Strutt's North Mill at the southern end of the Gardens, and a brass band concert on the bandstand.

Despite changeable weather, many people turned out to watch the band and take part in a workshop run by Fleet Arts to produce wire and paper bugs and insects. Mill volunteers Roy and Sheila Hartle also taught children some of the traditional outdoor games from a century ago.

Future events to celebrate the Gardens' anniversary year include an exhibition by Belper Historical Society on May 27 in the Masonic Rooms, Campbell Street, and concerts, both traditional and modern, each Sunday afternoon from June 4<sup>th</sup> to August 27<sup>th</sup>. On September 10<sup>th</sup>, a day of celebrations will include Edwardian-themed entertainment and stalls.

### **Water tower work completed**

RECONSTRUCTION of the Water Tower at the High Peak Junction was completed at the end of February by Derbyshire County Council. The refurbished railway water tank, which once supplied water to trains on the line, was craned into place after receiving its new coat of

black tar, and the Trail was once again opened to walkers and cyclists. More recently the large leather feeder pipe was refitted after rejuvenation at a local tannery

## **Cromford Canal**

Cromford Canal is a peaceful haven for wildlife and provides visitors with excellent opportunities to enjoy wildlife, especially during the summer months. For many years it has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its length from Cromford Wharf to Ambergate. The section from Whatstandwell south east to Ambergate is also a Local Nature Reserve. It is looked after by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

On a warm spring or summer's day the canal is a wonderful place to see water voles – it is one of the few remaining strongholds for this mammal in Derbyshire. Water voles, immortalised as Ratty in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, were once a common sight on Derbyshire's rivers and streams. Destruction of their natural habitat, flooding and the threat from predators such as American mink, have caused their numbers to drop sharply.

At this time of year you can also see the grass snake, another declining species that makes a regular appearance along the canal. The largest British snake, it can grow to around 1 metre in length. Grass snakes are olive green in colour with short black vertical blotches along the sides, and are best identified by the yellow and black collar behind their heads. They are good swimmers and you may spot them on the canal itself, but you will need time and patience to see one as they disappear from view quickly.

In addition to these more unusual creatures, look for frogs and toads as well as the jewel-like colours of damselflies and dragonflies darting over the water as they hunt. Little grebe will confuse you with their disappearing act, diving under the water and bobbing up again after you thought they had gone for good. Ducks, moorhens and little grebe can be seen with their chicks throughout the summer. .

The water and the canal towpath support a wealth of flowering plants in the summer, from pond weeds in the canal bankside species such as water mint and meadowsweet which attract many insects.

For more information on Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's work for water voles and its nature reserves throughout the county, ring 01773 881188 or visit [www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

## **Wyver Lane Nature Reserve**

WITHIN easy reach of the bustling streets of Belper, in the shadow of the Strutts' historic mill complex, lies Wyver Lane Nature Reserve. It is one of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's most important wetland nature reserves, adjacent to the River Derwent, just to the north of Belper, and is one of the few remaining areas of wet grassland in the mid-Derwent Valley. Wetland areas are becoming increasingly precious as more of them are being drained or neglected. A summer evening visit is a good time to enjoy the bird life.

From April onwards, summer visitors replace over-wintering ducks – as insects take to the wing, swallows start to reel through the air, swooping low over the surface of the water as they hunt. Later in the summer, ducks such as teal arrive and from July to October a large lapwing flock of more than 100 descends on the reserve.

In addition to these summer visitors, Wyver Lane supports a variety of birds resident all year round, including Canada geese, mallard, tufted duck and little grebe.

To ensure that the site remains a safe haven for the birds, there is no access to visitors. Fishermen use a track to get across to the river, but there is no public right of way.

However, there are excellent views of the reserve from the lane itself, and from the Trust's hide. You will need a permit to use the hide, which can be purchased from the Trust's office in Belper's East Mill.