



Welcome to the fourth Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site E-newsletter January 2007

Since the third issue of this e-newsletter, the Derwent Valley Mills have celebrated the fifth anniversary of their inscription on to the UNESCO World Heritage List. This achievement was celebrated in December with a series of public meetings. These proved to be very valuable – it was instructive to take a moment from the hectic work programme and assess how far the Derwent Valley Mills have progressed since December 2001. These meetings showed the progress has been truly extensive.

As you'll see below, the second World Heritage Site Discovery Days weekend has now taken place, attracting even larger crowds of people. According to the survey carried out during that weekend, everyone greatly enjoyed their experiences and welcomed the extension to two days rather than one. The Discovery days are now firmly established in the World Heritage Calendar – so please do make a note to keep the 2007 weekend free – October 20 and 21 this time!

I hope you will find the updates below of interest.

Adrian Farmer

Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

Crowds turn out to discover World Heritage

FOR the second year running, thousands of people flocked to the World Heritage Site Discovery Days on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 October. Free heritage tours of the mill sites and historic industrial communities were this year supplemented by wildlife and poetry tours as well as a number of unique art installations and workshops, and a host of other activities.

Undoubtedly, the most popular attraction was the horse-drawn narrow-boat, which only graces the Cromford Canal on the World Heritage Site Discovery Days. Hundreds of visitors followed the boat as it travelled up and down the canal between Cromford Wharf and Leawood Pumphouse, which was in steam. Three working shire horses took turns to pull the boat. At the wharf, there was a chance to see traditional narrowboat painting techniques, rope making, street organ playing and on the Sunday, an arts workshop creating 'woven' model boats made from nearby plantlife.

At Belper's North Mill, the 'human knitting machine' saw visitors of all ages joining a knitting circle, using their hands to do the work, and a Hallowe'en Party for families was well supported on the Saturday. Also on Saturday evening, a Belper quiz was held in The Lion Hotel, and a concert of Derbyshire songs and stories took place in the Unitarian Chapel. On both evenings the River Gardens bandstand was transformed into a giant magic lantern, featuring images of old Belper, other World Heritage Sites and drawings created in children's workshops.

At Masson Mills a steam engine welcomed visitors to the northern gateway to the Site, and there was a reduced entry fee to see inside the working textile museum. A bobbins game in the museum and Uncle Michael the Clown in the shopping centre entertained younger visitors.

At Derby's Silk Mill there were demonstrations by weavers and spinners, and a chance to learn about Victorian decoupage. On the Saturday a vintage bus took people from the Silk Mill up the valley, calling in at Milford, Belper, Cromford and Matlock Bath.

Tours of Joseph Wright's Derby, and of the Wright paintings in the Museum and Art Gallery, proved popular, and there was a good turnout for the final opening in 2006 of Heage Windmill, where flour was produced especially for the occasion.

As well as the mill and village tours, at Cromford there were guided tours of St Mary's Church, Willersley Castle grounds and Slinger Woods, as well as a celebration of the work of author Alison Uttley on the Sunday.

Along the 15-mile route of the World Heritage Site, Tan Draig OBE and Todd Andrew were performing 'Together', an art piece showing how people stick together when they're visiting heritage sites - they walked the full length of the Derwent from Ladybower Reservoir to the River Trent over three days, attached to each other by two elasticated chords.

Adrian Farmer, Co-ordinator of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site said: "The 2006 Discovery Days have been a great success, helped in part by some wonderful weather. A huge number of people, most of them volunteers, have worked really hard to make this weekend a memorable one and they all deserve a big thank-you for their efforts. I hope that people will have gone away knowing a little more about the Derwent Valley Mills, and some of the passion and interest generated by those volunteers will have rubbed off on them. The World Heritage Site has an important role to play in the past and future of Derbyshire, and the better local people know and understand it, the better they will care for it."

For a second year, crowds exceeded all expectations and the wide range of activities and mild weather ensured that it was a weekend to remember. A third Discovery Days series of events is already in the early stages of preparation for October 2007.

Silk Mill redevelopment

WORK has now begun on a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for redeveloping the Silk Mill – Derby's Museum of Industry and History. This is part of a larger £10.9 million Capital Plan for all of Derby City Museums, and would see the Silk Mill covering many more aspects of the City's history than it does at present. At the same time it would retain a core of important industrial displays and expand its role interpreting the pioneering textile factory of the Lombe brothers.

So far, background research has been carried out, pulling in all available documentary, pictorial and map sources to give as full as possible view of how the site has changed over 300 years.

Derby City Council is currently recruiting for a number of consultants to help prepare the necessary reports to take the project before the HLF. These consultancies will produce plans covering Conservation Management on the site, Audience Development, Exhibition Design, a Finance Strategy, a Feasibility Study and overall Project Management.

The application to the HLF is expected to be made in December 2007, and if successful would lead to a full Stage 2 application. This would result in the full refurbishment project being given the go ahead with completion anticipated in 2012.

Going forward alongside this are plans to redevelop Cathedral Green. These include a new pedestrian and cyclist bridge across the River Derwent. It is hoped that landscaping on Cathedral Green can be used to enhance the historic features of the site, such as the mill fleam, so that it becomes easier to understand the mill's island past. This work is due to begin in the summer.

The Derwent Valley Mills Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme – What's in a name?

ENGLISH Heritage's East Midlands Region has invited bids for the forthcoming financial year for a conservation area grant scheme in essence following a similar format to previous schemes for building repair and area enhancement. In line with government policy, there will be a greater focus on how the scheme fits with regional priorities, though the broad objectives and mechanism for delivery is expected to be very similar to its predecessors.

As identified in the DVMWHS Economic Development Plan, for the World Heritage Site to reach its potential as a vehicle for regeneration based on its tourism appeal, it is critical that the component parts of the historic built fabric are presented to a high standard if it is to meet the expectations of its visitors. The opportunity to once again give financial assistance for repair and restoration of millworkers' housing is welcomed, together with the additional structures and building of cultural value to the Site, identified in a study undertaken by Mel Morris Conservation.

In Cromford, the Arkwright Society has submitted proposals for listed building consent for alterations and change of use, to return Cromford Railway Station to publicly beneficial use.

The critical importance of the railway to the economic future of the Valley has been identified together with the need to more effectively promote and interpret 'the Arkwright Cluster' at the northern end of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Dating from 1874, the station previously found fame in the illustrations of Cromford children's author Alison Uttley and more recently on a single by the rock band Oasis. It has now been identified as a future portal via which visitors may access the World Heritage Site in the north.

The grade II listed, west platform building is currently not in use and is included on the County's Buildings at Risk Register, being also in urgent need of repair and reinstatement of its lost architectural features.

A detailed feasibility study has been undertaken for the phased re-use of the building and establishment of a World Heritage Site 'portal', by the Arkwright Society. The project vision is for the creation of a visitor information and orientation service point to serve the World Heritage Site. The estimated cost of the works is in excess of £260,000, towards which the Railway Heritage Trust has agreed to become a project partner, making a grant offer of £120,000.

Elsewhere in the valley, work continues on projects receiving assistance from the old HERS (Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme). In Belper, one of the larger projects, the former Rydes the butchers shop at the corner of Bridge St and Piggy Hill, interior works have taken over from the concentrated effort previously given to the exterior, though only a small amount of work now needs to be tackled following the installation of two new shopfronts to see the completion of the exterior.

Meanwhile, research into the most appropriate window type to the stone-mullioned openings at the George & Dragon public house, is on-going, as is detailed work on producing an authentic reinstatement for the unusual pivoted, rather than sliding, sash windows at the Belper Cottage Project, by Belper Central Methodist Chapel, in Chapel Street.

Putting on the Ritz thanks to Townscape Heritage Initiative

FOLLOWING two years of development and a seven-month restoration project, the Ritz Cinema reopened on Friday 3 November 2006 after being closed for fifteen years, with the help of a grant from the Belper and Milford Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

After co-owners Amanda Mundin and Neil Roberts received a grant award of £140,000 from the Belper & Milford THI in March 2006, local firm Best Building Ltd started work immediately on the cinema situated on the site of the original Ritz in The Public Hall, King Street.

The cinema now offers a real draw to a previously underused area of Belper's town centre, bringing economic benefits for local businesses and improving the leisure offer for people living within and close to the World Heritage Site. Two small screen cinemas have been converted into a single big screen air-conditioned auditorium with surround sound, and all seating has plenty of legroom with opportunities for luxury alternatives including sofas for two. With a fully licensed bar, the Ritz is a prime example of restoration and repair funding being used to boost the value of the World Heritage Site on multiple levels – economic, leisure and conservation – and provide a top-quality service which may otherwise have not been possible on such a scale.

The Public Hall at the top of King Street, which houses The Ritz, has also had a face-lift with the aid of a £90,000 grant from the Belper and Milford THI.

The hall was built in 1882 for the people of Belper and has served as a dance hall, juvenile court, library, and from the 1930s as a cinema. As part of the exterior refurbishment, the roof and cast iron guttering have been replaced, the stonework cleaned and windows repaired. The Hall of Frames picture framers and the building's central doors have been restored. The shop front for The Ritz has been given a modern façade in keeping with the heritage of the building as a whole.

The refurbishment to the interior of The Ritz has included knocking through from the old hairdressers to create access to the auditorium, exposing balusters from the original hall, which haven't been seen for more than thirty years and the creation of a single auditorium in what used to be the balcony. Neil said: "The Public Hall and cinema have undergone so many alterations in the past that as we have done the work, things have been revealed to us in layers, like finding the original balcony was still intact or the Art Deco arched ceiling hidden above 1970s ceiling tiles."

Amanda added: "It's been a wonderful project and we have had so many letters of support and people joining our membership scheme. Everyone is excited about being able to see a wide variety of good quality films on their doorstep!"

More details on the project are available from www.ritz-belper.co.uk

Amber Valley Borough Council's THI Project Officer, Francesca Machin said: "The restoration of the Public Hall and the reopening of the Ritz Cinema is a significant achievement for the THI, and we hope that its completion will support the regeneration of the town. Not only is this prominent historic building restored, but it has been brought back into use in a way that has fulfilled social, cultural and economic objectives."

The 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 contributed £466,646 to the scheme. Derbyshire County Council, Amber Valley Borough Council and Belper Town Council also contribute funds to the scheme.

The Initiative, which is co-ordinated by Amber Valley Borough Council, aims to regenerate key commercial sites within Belper's Market Place and King Street as well as the former mill workers' housing at Hopping Hill in Milford and the Clusters in Belper.

Projects currently completed or on site include the Shop Front project, the restoration of Fresh Ground Café Bar, reroofing of Colledge's Furniture shop, repaving to the Butts, and public consultation for the Belper Market Place Masterplan and Hopping Hill Terrace Conservation Plan.

The Initiative offers grants to the owners of buildings to help them carry out building repairs, reinstate architectural detail and bring vacant floor space back into use. For more information about the Initiative contact Francesca Machin on 01773 841576.

World Heritage Status strengthens commitment to economic development

ONE outcome of the Economic Development Plan presented to the Derwent Valley Mills Partnership a year ago was an agreement that an officer was needed to take the plan forward and work up projects to benefit the economic development of the World Heritage Site.

That aspiration has come one step closer to fruition now that the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership has agreed to fund the post. The position is about to be publicised, and it is hoped an officer will be in place for the start of the next financial year (2007/8).

Hidden heritage within the World Heritage Site

ONE of the key findings in the DVMWHS Economic Development Plan was a need to interpret Belper as a whole. Like the North Mill, the industrial community is a vast 'exhibit' which needs to be explained and enjoyed by visitors and local people.

In line with this, Strutt's North Mill is again holding a series of six monthly Sunday walks to help people discover the town's hidden heritage – historic detail they may have missed, or buildings with a story they may not know. Each walk will be different, so that anyone coming on all six walks will have a better understanding of the town as a whole.

These walks cost just £2 per person, and take place on the first Sunday of each month from April to September. They begin at 2pm, with the April, June and August walks starting from Strutt's North Mill and the rest starting from Belper Market Place. Ring Strutt's North Mill on 01773 880474 for more details.

Souvenir guidebook planned

AN A5 souvenir guidebook is being planned for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The 44-page booklet will have plenty of colour photographs of the valley, its mills and communities, as well as text helping people plan a day out and letting them know what they can see and do. It is hoped to publish and launch the book at Easter.

Management Plan

WORK continues apace to revise the Management Plan for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, to acknowledge the achievements made since the Derwent Valley Mills were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List five years ago, and set out new challenges for the future. A final draft is expected to be put before the Derwent Valley Mills Partnership, which coordinates the World Heritage Site, at their next meeting on January 31.

Repairs completed

REPAIRS to the cast iron fire escape at the back of the Silk Mill in Derby have now been completed. The work to restore the pre-1910 fire escape was given the go-ahead following a substantial grant from English Heritage and resulted in the riverside path being closed off to the public. Contractors have now finished the work, allowing the reopening of the path which enables visitors to see the foundation arches of the original 1720s building.

New friends group for gardens

INTEREST in Belper's River Garden is at its highest in nearly a century – so it's the perfect time to create a friends group to preserve and promote the town's Jewel in the Crown. That's the message from the group which organised 2006's centenary celebrations, which ended with the transformation of the bandstand into a giant magic lantern for the Discovery Days weekend.

The group has now been transformed into the Friends of the Belper River Gardens, who are looking to:

- Protect the gardens by promoting and encouraging an interest in its historic and social value.
- Provide help and support in the raising of funds for restoration works for the gardens.
- Encourage educational interest, and a local and wider participation in the conservation, preservation and enhancement of the gardens.
- Encourage and support a programme of events to ensure the continued public use of the site.
- Act as a springboard for local groups and individuals wishing to communicate with the authorities over concerns about the Belper River Gardens.

The group has offered its full support to Amber Valley Borough Council in its plans to bid for Lottery money to restore the gardens to their original Edwardian glory.

Leaflets reprinted

KEEP an eye out in the coming weeks for new editions of World Heritage Site leaflets. The latest edition of the Ambergate/Cromford Canal walk leaflet will be available shortly, its seventh printing containing the latest train and bus timetables to help you enjoy a linear walk along the Cromford Canal then get back to your starting point in comfort!

The 2007 Visitor Guide will be available in February, and has up-to-date information for visiting all the attractions in the World Heritage Site.