

## HOW TO FIND US

## DISCOVER BELPER

Welcome to Belper, a key community within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. It was here that Jedediah Strutt and his sons began their cotton mill business in 1776, and by building and buying homes and facilities for their workers created one of the world's first industrial communities.

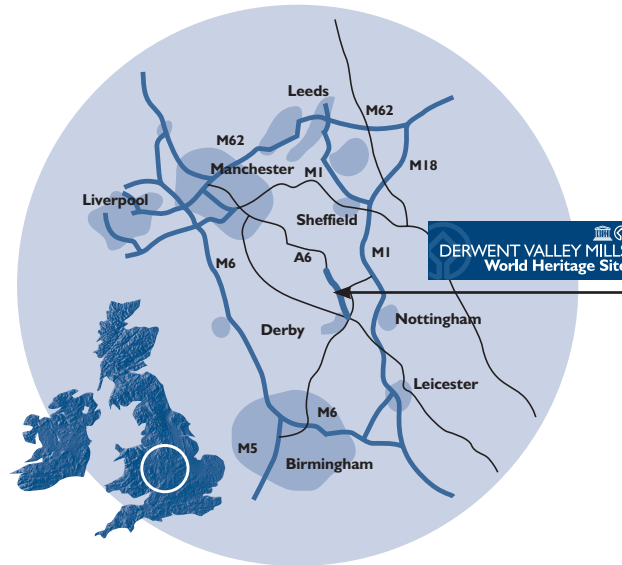
To encourage families to move into Belper and work in their mills, the Strutts built housing for their workers, close to the mills. Nearly all these houses have survived and are still much sought after today. Close by is the mile-long stone-lined railway cutting which has cut through the town since 1838.

The Strutt family were benefactors to Belper and Milford for two centuries, providing for the workers' needs and there are still many buildings to be seen in the town which were built for the people by the Strutts.

Another great gift to the town was the River Gardens, created and given by George Herbert Strutt in 1906. This water garden by the Derwent still hosts band concerts on alternate Sunday afternoons in the summer.

The importance of the Belper mills and their historic industrial neighbours at Cromford, Darley Abbey and Derby was reflected by the World Heritage Site status given to the Derwent Valley Mills in December 2001. Belper is also within the National Heritage Corridor™.

This leaflet offers a short walk looking at some of the most significant buildings near to the Strutt mills. The starting point is the Derwent Valley Visitor Centre reception, inside Strutt's North Mill. During your walk you will see the interpretation board on the railway bridge in Long Row, which will tell you more about this industrial community, and show you how it has changed in the past two centuries.



## HERITAGE WALK I BELPER



This leaflet has been sponsored by:



Amber Valley  
Borough Council



Local Heritage initiative

LHI is a partnership between  
the Heritage Lottery Fund,  
Nationwide Building Society  
and The Countryside Agency

For more information on Belper visit [www.derwentvalleymills.org](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org)

Printed with thanks to Cllr Chris Jackson's  
Community Fund donation

Front cover (clockwise from top left): Disused pump on Short Row; The Belper Mills a century ago; Nail shop on Joseph Street; Long Row before 1914.

©2006 Belper Historical Society  
Published by the Belper Historical Society. Text by M Smedley.  
Designed and printed by Origination.

  
**DERWENT VALLEY MILLS**  
**World Heritage Site**



# BELPER WALK

Jedediah Strutt built water-powered cotton spinning mills in Belper from 1776. The **North Mill** of 1781 was re-built in 1804 after fire destroyed the original mill. William Strutt designed this, using innovatory construction methods, as a fireproof building; it was an important development in the building of multi storey structures. This mill is one of the most significant elements of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

The Horseshoe Weir and sluice gates were built in 1797 to replace an earlier weir and gain better control of the River Derwent to power the mills. It is one of the finest in the UK. Take the path by the weir, which runs alongside the river to **The River Gardens**. This is where willow was grown to make baskets for transportation of good at the mills. George Herbert Strutt agreed to a landing stage being built here. This idea developed into the River Gardens. Band concerts are held here and boats may be taken out on the river.

Across from the Matlock Road entrance to the River Gardens is **"The Old Nick"** Belper's former police station, built in 1847. For two years it served as the headquarters of the Derbyshire Constabulary when it was first formed in 1857. Three police houses were built alongside in 1877. Cross at the lights towards these houses and turn right.

On the right, across the road from Long Row is **Christ Church** and vicarage, built in 1850. Turn left up **Long Row**. The first Long Row schoolroom was built about 1818; it was later rebuilt and enlarged. Some houses were demolished to accommodate the larger school building.

Long Row is a second phase of millworkers' housing built about 1790 by the Strutt family. The rows of houses on the left and at the bottom right have a continuous roofline with an extra storey; built of gritstone and interlock around the staircase. The brick houses on the right ascend in stepped pairs. All these houses have ample gardens.



1 Long Row

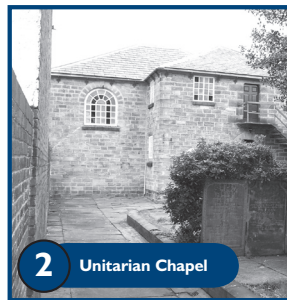
On the right by the railway bridge is a walled area, known as the dirt hole. Here people emptied their ashes to be collected by the ash cart. The North Midland Railway came through Belper between 1838 and 1840 as part of the Derby to Leeds line. There are 11 bridges in the one-mile that it runs through Belper. Four or five houses in each row had to be demolished for the cutting to go through.

Turn right into **Green Lane**. On your left there are four short rows of cottages, these were the first phase of Strutt housing, about 1780. Mill Street has since been extended and the houses on the right lost their gardens.

You are now entering **The Clusters**. Cluster buildings are blocks of four houses, semi-detached and back-to-back, each with a pigsty. The cluster rows were the third phase of workers' housing, built about 1818-1820 and named in 1896 after Jedediah's three sons. Turn right into **William Street**, then at the first lamp post on the left, turn left and pass through the channel or alley into **George Street**. The more modern George Street houses were built from 1840 onwards and there has been some infilling since then. Cross the road and through another channel into **Joseph Street**. The house on the right is a fine example of a cluster house.

Turn up Joseph Street and on the left is a **Nail Shop**, built in the early 19th Century. Most of the millworkers were women and children. Various workshops were built within the housing complex to provide employment for men.

At the top of Joseph Street, cross the road into **Field Row**. On the left is the **Unitarian Chapel**, built in 1788 and extended on both sides early in the 19th Century. The chapel is three times its original size. It is a good example of nonconformist architecture. There is a fine external, cantilevered staircase, which gives the only access to the upper gallery. Several members of the Strutt family remains are contained in a catacomb below the Chapel.



2 Unitarian Chapel

Back to Green Lane, walk back down Joseph Street. At the bottom, walk through the small entry in front of you, and continue down **Crown Terrace** until you are on **Bridge**

**Street**. Turn right, towards the mills. The **George and Dragon** on the opposite side of the road was a coaching inn and served as an early post office. The old **Savings Bank** is opposite the George and Dragon. William Strutt was a founder of the Savings Bank, in 1818. It moved to these premises in 1851, later becoming a branch of the TSB. The ornate stonework front was added in 1910.



3 The George and Dragon

Cross at the lights and follow the signs for the Derwent Valley Visitor Centre. Strutt mills became part of the English Sewing Cotton Co. in 1897. The big **East Mill** was built in 1912. In the mill yard the engine house and the remaining stump of the mill chimney can be seen, built in 1854 when the mills began using steam power. The stone arch over the road is the **Gangway**, built in 1795 to connect the now-demolished West Mill to the North Mill. In 1810 holes were made where muskets could be fired at any troublemakers. Return to the Derwent Valley Visitor Centre in **Strutt's North Mill**.

