EAST MILFORD WALK

Using the crossing by the Strutt Arms, walk to the river bridge. The buildings to your left are all that remain of the old Millford Mill complex. The footprint of the mills is no longer traceable, but the cut or goyt, two wheel pits and generator housing survive south of the bridge, close to the Soi Kitchens restaurant. Water power is still harnessed for energy supply. Facing you at the end of the bridge is a group of properties developed between 1791 & 1850 after the enclosure of the common land.

The former Ebenezer Chapel on the right, was converted in 1859 from The Durham Ox public house, built in 1846 by Henry Brassington. The neighbouring King William pub was built around 1830 on land purchased by the Belper auctioneer, surveyor and architect John Hutton. Further north, the Recreation Ground occupies an area worked as a quarry until at least 1906.

Holy Trinity Parish Church was built between 1846 and 1848 in an early English style by H. Moffat. Its unusual north-south alignment is due to the constraints of the site, donated by Strutt family members. It stands at the south end of Hopping Hill, part of the former turnpike road named from the Old English word ‘hop’ meaning a hanging (or side) valley and ‘ing’ meaning a clearing. The long rows of housing here were developed on the former common land between 1792-6 by Jedediah Strutt to house his workers. Thirty years later, purchase of land from the Duke of Devonshire enabled the Company to construct the present main road - allowing their carts to avoid the hill - and build the properties known as Dukes Buildings.

Cross the main road and pass through a small opening in the wall for a path leading down to the river, and giving spectacular views of the weir. An information board gives more detail about the weir before continuing along the riverside.

At the top of the hill, directly over the Chevin railway tunnel, at the end of the lane, the Ebenezer Chapel (1842) has been in commercial use since the 1940s although recently converted to residential use. The Baptist Chapel (1849), nearby on Chevin Road, is still used for worship – its baptismal tank survives in the basement.

Further north, past the entrance to Hopping Hole quarry, the Bank Buildings, built in 1911 to replace a row of 1790s workers housing. Families were rehoused three at a time while the properties were rebuilt by the Strutt Estate. The houses have gardens across the road, on the river bank. A short way past the end of the row is the north entrance to Milford Tunnel. Turn back southwards, and on your left is Milford School.

Reconstruction in use since at least the 1820s. As the building is built into the slope, there is a lower storey at the rear, from where a gate leads to the Mill site.

Down the steps is Chevin Alley (1792), a row of houses with an irregular façade reflecting the sharp slope down to the road. The courses of stonework are horizontal at the front, but at the back follow the slope of the ground! The extension at No. 1 once housed a Post Office. The next-door building, on the main road, housed the Mill Canteen.

Return to the main road and climb the steps by the New Inn (1792) before turning right onto Hopping Hill. Take the jitty between the two long rows, and turning right at the top proceed up Shaw Lane. A short way along on your right are East and West Terrace (1818-20). To make optimum use of a difficult site, this back-to-back housing was built in blocks of five; each block having two east-facing double-fronted two-storey houses, and three single-fronted three-storey houses facing west across the valley.

Steps at the end of the Terrace lead down past allotment gardens and the Church back to the War Memorial and Roll of Honour. Retrace your steps to follow the other walks.

WEST MILFORD WALK

The Strutt Arms (1901), opposite the information board was built on the site of a farmhouse, the home of the Harvey family.

Walk south to Mount Pleasant, one of Milford’s oldest houses. Its gable is dated 1672, but it may be even older. Neighbouring Milford House (1792) was built by Jedediah Strutt who lived there until his death in 1797. It was a Strutt family home for over a century.

Retrace your steps into Chevin Road. The building at the bottom of Sunny Hill, now occupied by the Social Club, was originally the New Inn, and later the Beehive, before being converted into Milford’s Institute and Reading Room by George Herbert Strutt in 1902.

A short way up the hill on the right is the Royal Oak, which with the adjoining houses was built by the Bate family on a plot allotted to their father when the common land was enclosed in 1791-2. The licence was held until the 1950s.

A few yards further up on the left, nos. 15-37 form a back-to-back row, built in stages between 1791 and 1824 by entrepreneurs. Its local name, The Barracks, suggests it was built to attract single mill-workers living away from home. Most of the old stone houses on Sunny Hill were built from 1791 and later sold to Anthony Radford Strutt to house his workers.

At the top of the hill, directly over the Chevin railway tunnel, stands Stephensons’ Tower. Built about 1839 by the North Midland Railway Company (Chief Engineers: George and Robert Stephenson), it was used to signal to locomotive drivers that the tunnel, initially single track, was clear to enter and later, after a second track had been laid, to prevent two trains being in the tunnel at once whilst open carriages were still in use. (Please note there is no public access to the Tower, which stands on privately-owned land.)

Returning down the hill, turn left into Well Lane to see a row of 1792 workers cottages built by Jedediah Strutt. The well, by the bend, was hidden for many years, but rediscovered in 2002.

At the end of the lane, the Methodist Chapel (1842) has been in commercial use since the 1940s although recently converted to residential use. The Baptist Chapel (1849), nearby on Chevin Road, is still used for worship – its baptismal tank survives in the basement.

Further north, past the entrance to Hopping Hole quarry, the Bank Buildings, built in 111 to replace a row of 1790s workers housing. Families were rehoused three at a time while the properties were rebuilt by the Strutt Estate. The houses have gardens across the road, on the river bank. A short way past the end of the row is the north entrance to Milford Tunnel. Turn back southwards, and on your left is Milford School.

Reconstruction in use since at least the 1820s. As the building is built into the slope, there is a lower storey at the rear, from where a gate leads to the Mill site.

Down the steps is Chevin Alley (1792), a row of houses with an irregular façade reflecting the sharp slope down to the road. The courses of stonework are horizontal at the front, but at the back follow the slope of the ground! The extension at No. 1 once housed a Post Office. The next-door building, on the main road, housed the Mill Canteen.

Return to the main road and climb the steps by the New Inn (1792) before turning right onto Hopping Hill. Take the jitty between the two long rows, and turning right at the top proceed up Shaw Lane. A short way along on your right are East and West Terrace (1818-20). To make optimum use of a difficult site, this back-to-back housing was built in blocks of five; each block having two east-facing double-fronted two-storey houses, and three single-fronted three-storey houses facing west across the valley.

Steps at the end of the Terrace lead down past allotment gardens and the Church back to the War Memorial and Roll of Honour. Retrace your steps to follow the other walks.
Milford and Makeney

Welcome to Milford and Makeney, two of the key communities within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. It was in Milford that Jedediah Strutt and his sons expanded the cotton spinning business they had started in Belper, and by building and buying homes and facilities for their workers created one of the world’s first industrial communities.

From 1781 when Jedediah Strutt began building in the ancient hamlet of New Mills, life here mainly centred on the textile industry. Even today, most buildings in Milford and the neighbouring hamlet of Makeney are linked with the area’s industrial development, and help tell the story of the workers who lived in the shadow of the mills.

In 2001, the universal significance of the textile mills beside the River Derwent was recognised when the stretch of the valley between Matlock Bath and Derby was designated a World Heritage Site.

This leaflet gives you three options for short walks looking at some of the most significant sites in Milford and Makeney. The starting point for each walk is the interpretation board, at the end of Chevin Road opposite the Strutt Arms on the A6, which will tell you more about this industrial community, and show you how it has changed in the past two centuries.

Mr Strutt’s Cotton Mill, 1787.
From 1781, Jedediah Strutt lived in the house shown below beside his Mill until the building of Milford House. The New Mills and Makeney Forges, sited on either bank of the Derwent were linked at that time by a chain ferry, behind the Strutt Arms Hotel.

Watercolour by Zachariah Boreman. Reproduced by kind permission of The Derbyshire Archaeological Society.