Welcome to

BELPER

part of the DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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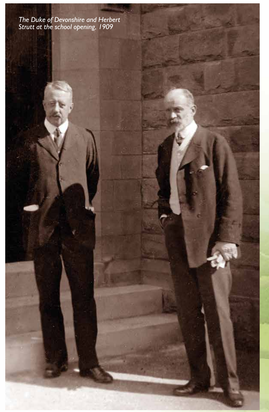
This board is one of a series about features of interest in this internationally important landscape and the people who lived here and shaped it.

The World Heritage Site runs for 15 miles along the Derwent Valley between Matlock Bath and Derby. Look out for more interpretation boards which will help you explore the mill communities.

The map will help you to find the other boards in Belper, as well as supplementary information points (waterwheel plaques) which have information and a weblink to more about Belper's history.



An architectural drawing of how the new school would look, by renowned Belper architects Hunter and Woodhouse



The Duke of Devonshire and Herbert Strutt at the school opening, 1909

HERBERT STRUTT'S GIFT TO THE TOWN

In 1905, Herbert Strutt, who had just sold his family's mills in the town, offered to fully fund a new higher elementary school and pupil teacher centre for Belper, with swimming baths for the scholars. The school (in front of you) was built and officially opened by the ninth Duke of Devonshire in 1909 (seen on the left with Herbert Strutt).

THE WORKHOUSE

Immediately across from the school is the old Belper Workhouse, which became Babington Hospital in the 1930s. It was a Union Workhouse, begun in 1838, which served 35 parishes. Designed by the renowned Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott in the Jacobean style, it provided basic accommodation for the homeless and sick. It is better seen by passing under the arch of the main entrance gatehouse, on the roadside.

Belper Union Workhouse

LOOK OUT

If you walk down to the main workhouse door from the lodge, you'll see on the right a break in the wall, which leads to a garden. This used to be the walled exercise yard for the male workhouse inmates.

WHERE FROM HERE?

On your left, following the main road will take you into the town centre.

Up the steps, you can enter the community centre – visitors are welcome.

WARTIME REFUGEES

In World War Two, about 500 evacuees came to Belper from Westcliff High School for Boys in Essex. That doubled the number of pupils at the school, so Belper children were taught in school during the mornings, and the Westcliff boys in the afternoon. Other buildings across the town were also used. Most of the boys returned to Essex late in 1942, but some stayed to see out the war in Belper. A new Belper Scout Troupe was formed for the Westcliff students.

Westcliff High School Scouts



A cookery lesson at Herbert Strutt School, 1911



Timothy Dalton (circled) and other boys in the playground at the rear of the school c.1960

THE STRUTT SCHOOL STUDENTS

Well-fitted out at Herbert Strutt's expense, the school proved popular and within four years had to be extended to accommodate more pupils. There have been a number of famous students at the school including Blue Peter presenter Simon Groom, actor Alan Bates and former 'James Bond' Timothy Dalton (circled in the group photograph). It eventually became a primary school, then moved across town, taking the Herbert Strutt name with it. The buildings are now the Strutts Community Centre.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BELPER

Click on the QR code or use this link:

www.derwentvalleymills.org/belper

Belper Historical Society
HERITAGE FUND LOTTERY FUNDED