

## **BELPER HISTORICAL SOCIETY - YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

This is the tenth Annual Report of Belper Historical Society (BHS) as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the year 2023-24. Founded in 1957, the Society sought charity status as a CIO in 2014 with an aspiration to be better placed to make its resources available to more people by increasing its membership and raising income to fund its work and maintain its archive material in a central and accessible building.

#### **Structure, Governance and Management**

In accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the Society, the Committee consists of:

- (a) Not less than four and up to five trustees who are the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one or two other members of the Society and
- (b) six to nine other members of the Society who are all elected by the membership annually at the Annual General Meeting.

Documents for the 2023 AGM (Annual Report, Financial Statement and Trustee Balance Sheet) were supplied to members by e-mail.

The committee members appointed were as follows:

Chair and Ex-Officio Trustee – Ian Jackson

Secretary and Ex-Officio Trustee – Jane Whitaker

Treasurer and Ex-Officio Trustee – Neil Hallsworth

Elected Trustees – Mary Featherby

Other Committee Members duly elected – Andrea White and Sue Peach.

The reduced number of committee members, now 6, has created a problem in achieving the societies rules, regarding the minimum number of 6 committee members (including 2 trustees) to form a quorum, hence the updating of society rules proposed on the agenda.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

The main aims of the Society continued to be:

- Cultivate an interest in the history of Belper and its neighbourhood.
- Maintain the BHS Collection (artefacts, paintings, documents, photographs, maps and Library books and paper archives).
- Encourage practical historical research into Belper's past.
- Providing lectures, publications, displays and exhibitions and making such resources available for study by the general public.

To support these aims, meetings are held monthly where talks or walks of local and historical interest are given by members and visiting speakers. The lecture programme continues to be the main activity of the Society, sustained largely through an annual membership subscription to offset programme and room hire costs. In addition, the BHS were represented at a number of local events, artifacts shared with other parties, digital images shared, the BHS library opened and the BHS website maintained and updated.

## Programme

There has been a varied programme of talks and walks throughout 2023-4, with something on offer every month.

		Speaker/ Leader	Members + (Visitors)
Sep. 23	The Belper West Mill Tower	Barbara Bowman	
Oct. 23	Jedediah Strutt's early life	Rosemary Annable	4
Nov. 23	Industrial Ambergate	Steve Hill	3
Dec. 23	Belper Manor and Roman Settlement	Denise Grace	46 + (3)
Jan. 24	Policing in 19 <sup>th</sup> century Derbyshire	Robert Mee	51 + (4)
Feb. 24	The Chevin Tower	Ian Castledine	54 + (15)
Mar. 24	The sheep looked after themselves – religion and radicals in the early 1800s	Simon Wood	50 + (2)
Apr. 24	Belper Voices	Chris Charlton + Authors	45 + (2)
May 24	(replacement) Photos from the BHS archives	Adrian Farmer	22 + (4)
Jun. 24	(outdoor demonstration) Nail making	Richard Hazell	38 + (5)
Jul. 24	(walk) Walking the deer park boundary	Adrian Farmer	20 + (3)
Aug. 24	(walk) Everything but cotton – the industrialisation of Ambergate	Steve Hill	13
Sep. 24	Water: the Power that Changed the World (Belper)	Ian Jackson	43 + (9)
Oct. 24	The Evans family – their local, national and international influence	Katherine Everitt	34 + (9)

Due to the poor sound quality in the hall, and background interference from other groups, meetings have moved to Room 107. Whilst there is an improvement at times the sound can be a problem and with membership numbers growing the fire safety room limit of 60 people may become a problem in 2025.

### Future Programme

Nov. 24	The Buildings of Holbrook	Michael Lobb
Dec. 24	The Strutts, Cotton Textiles and Enslavement	Susanne Seymour
Jan. 25	Historic Buildings Myth Busting	Dr James Wright
Feb. 25	Frank Beresford, Belper Artist	Robert Reid
Mar. 25	John Flamsteed - First Astronomer Royal	Dr Michael Lancaster
Apr. 25	The Fibres Spun in our Valley	Kim Kerry
May 25	Ecclesbourne Valley Railway	Eric Boulton
Jun. 25	The Dark Side of Milford (walk)	Jane Whitaker
Jul. 25	South Wingfield Railway Station (visit)	DHBT <b>TBC</b>
Aug. 25	Christchurch, Belper (visit)	Sue Peach
Sep. 25	The Strutt Building Campaign c1890 – 1930	George Henshaw <b>TBC</b>
Oct. 25	Anthony Woodville: Sophisticate or Schemer?	Danielle Burton
Nov. 25	The Cromford Canal in Old Photographs	Hugh Potter
Dec. 25	Transported: The Story of a Belper Convict	Viv Scott

### Events attended

The Belper Historical Society attended a series of local events promoting the society with displays and a new pop-up banner (including a link to the membermojo link) and selling books (new and used).

- Our Belper Mills AGM November 2023
- Belper Goes Green 2024 June 2024
- Alfreton History Day June 2024
- Belper Market Place Research Group book launch September 2024

It is hoped more 'shared history' events will be organised in the area, following the successful Alfretton History Day.

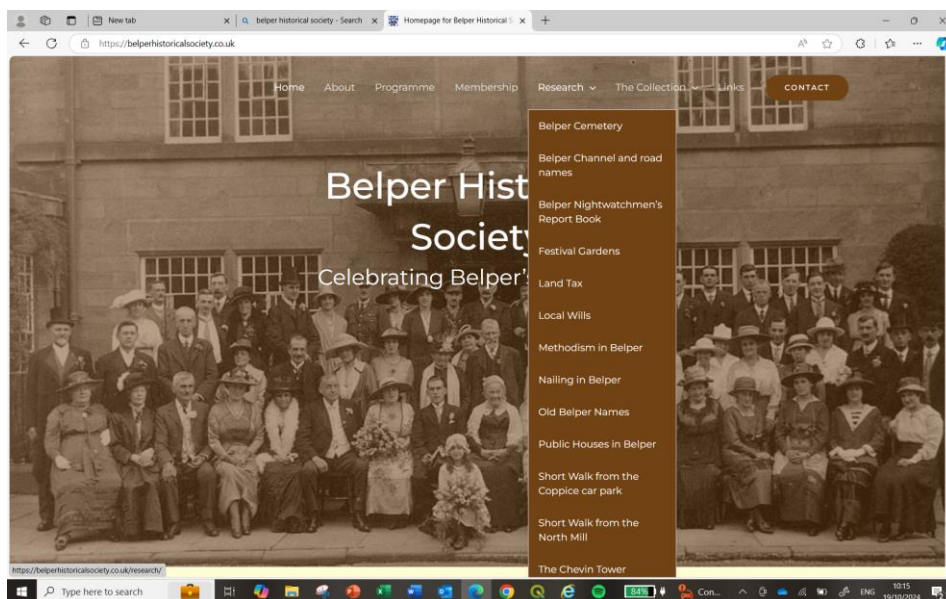
## Website

The website had an update on overall design at the start of this year - colour and fonts in particular - whereby the pages have become easier to read and score highly on accessibility scales.

Most popular pages on the website are The Home page, Programme page, Photograph page and Research pages. The History of Public Houses in Belper always scores highly in searches! Our users are predominantly from the UK but with a good following in Europe, USA, Canada and Australia.

There tends to be a steady interest in the Research section although there are never any queries regarding the Wills page and indeed only one person has clicked on there in the past couple of months. Perhaps we need to think about uploading some wills to the site to encourage interest (rather than the current format of an index of wills held by the society).

The Contact form on the website is well used and along with Facebook is probably the most direct way of contacting the society.



## Social Media

The Historic Belper Facebook Page continues to attract a lot of attention, with photographs being added every day and reaching up to 130,738 people per month. The page has 7,812 dedicated followers. The page generates about 12 to 15 enquiries per month, as well as many comments on images which help us to better understand the images and the stories they support.

## Membership

Membership numbers stood at 106 at the end of the financial year - an increase of 30% over 2022/23. During the year the Society moved its membership database from an Excel spreadsheet to an online system known as membermojo.

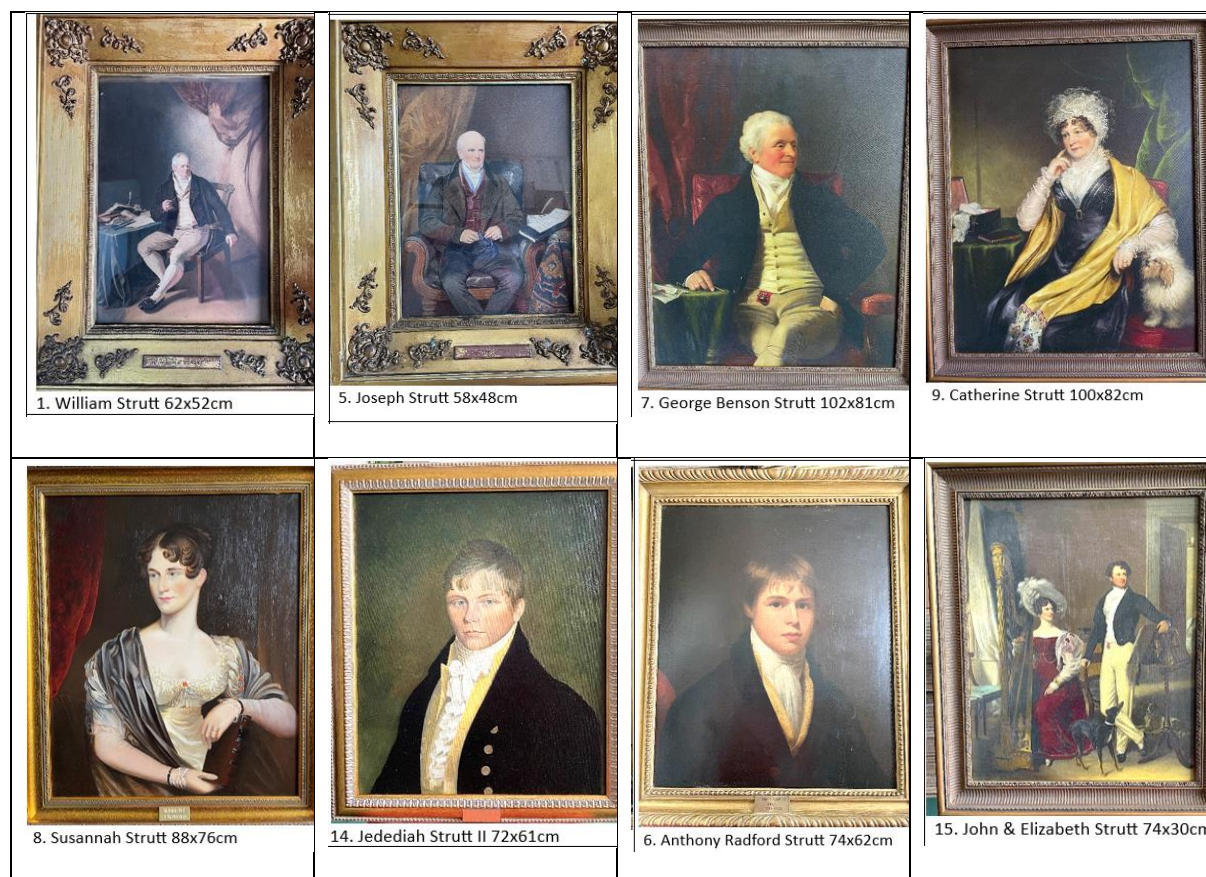
The previous spreadsheet had to be edited and updated manually, as did mailing lists, attendance registers, Gift Aid declarations, etc. Membermojo has shown that it can deliver an integrated and user-friendly alternative, and has helped ensure that our membership database is always up-to-date and accurate. It has also shown to be a very useful system for items such as email management and the preparation of Gift Aid claims to HMRC.

## Archives/Artifacts

Following the relocation of artifacts into the safe and clean, Room 101 at Belper Storage, the project of artifact disposal was paused until a full stocktake, versus the original MODES database, is completed, hopefully during 2025.

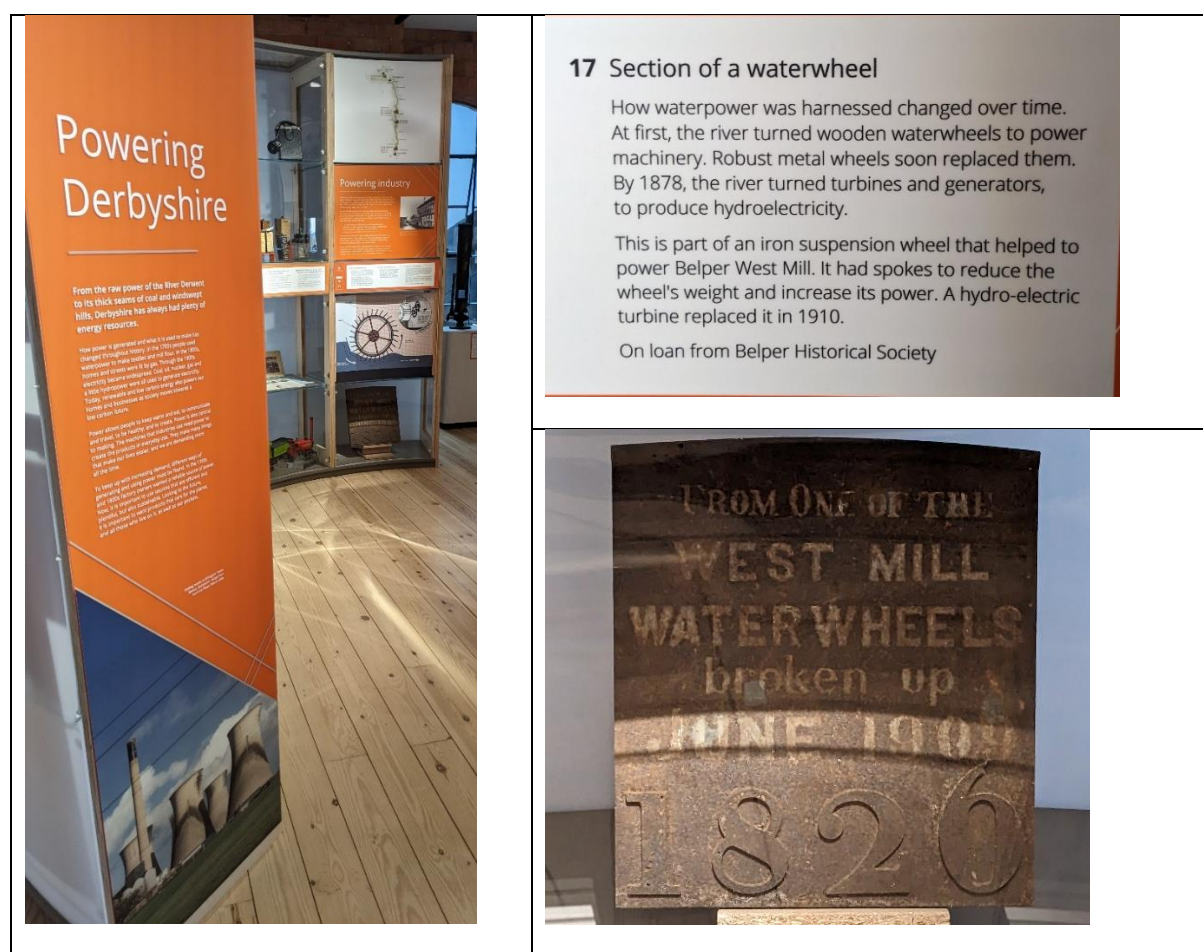
## Loans

Eight Strutt family portraits were transferred to the Strutt Centre in April 2024 to be displayed in one of the communal downstairs rooms. The project has not been progressed any further at this time and the BHS are awaiting confirmation the Strutt's Community Centre want to progress the project.





Belper Mills waterwheel (BHSA233) is on loan to the Derby Museums (May 2024 to May 2027) as part of a new Power Display.



Weather Vane – The West mill weather vane has been loaned (May 2024) to the Belper North Mill for a potential art project.

## Documents

The project to transcribe and digitise documents continues, with the aim of making the digital documents, such as wills, available via the website and once scanned transferred to the Derbyshire Record Office for secure storage.

## Photographs

Digitisation of the photographic archive continues, with two large albums of photographs added to the digital archive. The pace of scanning has slowed, but progress is still being made. We now have access to a new scanner for this work, which ensures higher definition.

We are also reviewing a collection of Noel Smith negatives with a view to scanning the negatives.

## **Library**

The Society's library opened regularly before the meetings for members to borrow books. Several new books have been added to the collection over the year and an updated catalogue is available on the website.

## **Books**

Small numbers of the Society's publications *Historic Belper and Milford in Colour* and *Belper in Wartime* have continued to sell, raising over £270 in the past year. There are less than 15 copies of the former left available for sale.

Belper in Wartime – donated books can now be purchased from the Belper British Legion, helping raise money for the BBL and the BHS.

Belper Voices used BHS photographs in the publication and as a result BHS members may purchase the book at a discounted rate.

## **Plans for Future Periods**

The new committee will develop a plan for the following 12 months but work currently being undertaken by the BHS includes:

- Room 101 – A thorough review of the artifacts compared to the 'modes' database of artifacts that hasn't been reviewed or updated in recent years.
- Continue the digitisation and transcription of documents.
- Continue the digitisation of photographs.
- Review and possible scanning of the Noel Smith negatives.
- Continued development of the website, including making more resources available.
- Prepare, alongside other groups and interested parties, for the Belper 2026 anniversary celebrations.
- Attend relevant events to raise awareness of the BHS and its activities.

## **Ian Jackson**

Chair of the Belper Historical Society,

On behalf of Belper Historical Society Committee (and with thanks to Jane Whitaker, Neil Hallsworth, Adrian Farmer, Heather Eaton and Mary McLean Farmer for their contributions)

27.10.24

**Belper Historical Society**  
**CIO Charity No: 1158020**

**YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2024**

**Statement of Financial Activities**

<b>Income</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Members Subscriptions	£2,252.24	£795.00	Archive Storage	£2,423.93	£2,634.81
Interest/Dividend	£1,877.84	£717.34	Meeting Room Hire	£351.00	£302.40
Raffles (donated items)	£299.00	£273.00	Library Room Hire	£329.90	£273.27
New Books Sales	£291.00	£288.00	Admin Costs	£297.29	£99.98
Visitors Donations	£225.00	£407.70	Speakers Fees	£280.00	£238.60
Donated Books Sales	£106.60	£221.81	Bank Charges	£78.85	£78.94
Local Authority Grant		£401.80	Milford School Event		£401.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,051.68</b>	<b>£3,104.65</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3,760.97</b>	<b>£4,029.80</b>
<b>Excess of Income Over Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,290.71</b>	<b>-£925.15</b>			

**BALANCE SHEET at 31 August 2024**

**Current Assets**

Cash in hand	£20.00
At HSBC Current A/c	£3,443.68
At Cambridge & Counties Bank	£46,367.60
At Mansfield Building Society	£13,423.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>£63,254.52</b>

**Current Liabilities**

Uncashed cheques at 31/8	£0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£0.00</b>

**Tangible Assets**

Belper in WW1 book	(Stock at Cost 250x3.86)	£965.00
Belper & Milford	(Stock at Cost 13x3.77)	£49.01
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,014.01</b>

**Net Current Assets** **£64,268.53**

**Unrestricted General Fund at 31/8/2024** **£63,254.52**  
**Unrestricted General Fund at 31/8/2023** **£62,290.47**