

BELPER HISTORICAL SOCIETY - YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

Belper Historical Society (BHS) was founded in 1957, 68 years ago, and became a charity (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) 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.

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 2024 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, Sue Peach, Sheilagh Harnan and Steve Hill.

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 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 2024-5, with something on offer every month.

Unusually, we have had three late changes to programmes due to ill health of speakers/leaders, but meetings have gone ahead with BHS committee members providing alternative talks/walks.

		Speaker/ Leader	Members + (Visitors)
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)
Nov. 24	Opening the Floodgates + Belper videos <i>change to programme</i>	Ian Jackson	28 + (1)
Dec. 24	The Strutts, Cotton Textiles and Enslavement	Susanne Seymour	35 + (4)
Jan. 25	Historic Buildings Myth Busting	Dr James Wright	45 + (7)
Feb. 25	The contest of sophistry with truth <i>change to programme</i>	Jane Whitaker	37 + (4)
Mar. 25	John Flamsteed - First Astronomer Royal	Dr Michael Lancaster	39 + (12)
Apr. 25	The Fibres Spun in our Valley	Kim Kerry	33 + (1)
May 25	Ecclesbourne Valley Railway	Eric Boulton	33 + (3)
Jun. 25	Milford Waterways (visit) <i>change to programme</i>	Ian Jackson	27 + (0)
Jul. 25	South Wingfield Railway Station (visit)	DHBT	22 + (0)
Aug. 25	Christchurch, Belper (visit)	Sue Peach	37 + (0)
Sep. 25	The Strutt Building Campaign c1890 – 1930	George Henshaw	44 + (6)
Oct. 25	Anthony Woodville: Sophisticate or Schemer?	Danielle Burton	28 + (1)

Concerns were raised about sound quality in Room 107 at the Strutt Centre, so speaker system was purchased and speakers asked to wear a microphone. The concerns relating to the fire safety room limit of 60 people remain as membership numbers grow but we have identified two possible alternative meeting locations in Belper if this does become a problem in 2026.

Future Programme

Nov. 25	The Cromford Canal in Old Photographs	Hugh Potter
Dec. 25	Transported: The Story of a Belper Convict	Viv Scott
Jan. 26	The Strutt's and the Pentrich Revolution	Sylvia Mason
Feb. 26	To be confirmed	Adrian Farmer
Mar. 26	Frank Beresford, Artist of Royalty, History, Landscapes – and my Grannies	Robert Reid
Apr. 26	75 years of Belper Town Football Club	Mike Smith
May 26	Finding the Historic in the Folkloric	Chris Lewis-Jones
Jun. 26	The Buildings of Holbrook	Michael Lobb
Jul. 26	Strutt Around North Mill (walk)	BNM volunteers
Aug. 26	The Dark Side of Milford (walk)	Jane Whitaker
Sep. 26	William Strutt FRS: A tradesman of some eminence	Ian Jackson
Oct. 26	To be confirmed	
Nov. 26	Accidents at the Strutt Mills	Trevor Lightfoot
Dec. 26	To be confirmed	

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).

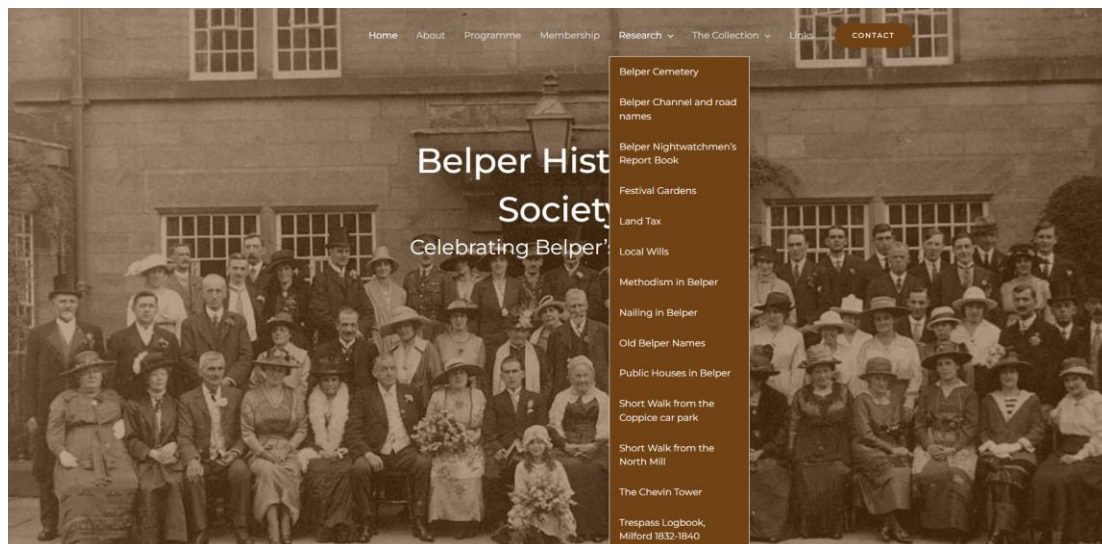
- Derbyshire History Fair – Strutt Centre June 2025
- Planning for BELPER250

2026 will be a busy year for the society, participating in the towns BELPER250 celebrations that hopefully will include more BHS members in a wide variety of activities and events.

Website

The website continues to attract visitors, especially to the programme page, research pages and homepage.

Some pages are hidden because they can only be accessed by QR code, as they provide information for images that were in the Belper Shops & Traders exhibition. This was held in no28 in September 2024. The images will be on display again, using the QR codes, in Belper library in February 2026.



The inquiry button on the Belper Historical Society website generated 80 queries between September 2024 and August 2025, mainly seeking historical information.

Social Media

The Historic Belper Facebook page continued to attract significant interest until 31 December 2024, when an enforced break was needed for personal reasons.

There are plans to relaunch the site for the Belper 250 anniversary from January 2026 onwards.

Membership

Membership numbers stood at 120 at the end of the financial year - an increase of 13% over the previous year, continuing the steady increase seen in recent years. Membermojo continues to show that it can deliver an integrated and user-friendly membership system, and has recently been upgraded to include the facility for online subscription payments via the Stripe payments system.

As a reflection of the robust financial position of the Society, it has been decided that the annual subscription for 2026 will remain unchanged at £15.

Archives/Artifacts

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

We have had a review of the iron work, much of which arrived following the North Mill museum closure, by Richard Hazell of Hazell Forged.

We have contacted the new auctioneers in Belper, Edwin's, who could be a potential outlet for artifacts in store not relating to Belper.

An alternative storage location for the artifacts, linked to the BHS library stock, was considered during 2025 but will not be progressed, for practical and economic reasons.

Donations

Financial

- We have gratefully received a donation from the family of the late Brian Tunnard.

We have received 3 donations of documents and artifacts during 2025

- Moores – ESCC printing blocks, paintings and plans of Belper and Milford Mills from a former ESCC engineer (NOTE: Milford plans shared with the House Builder)
- Bennett – Photograph albums of Stevensons Dyers and Rifle Trophies (Belper)
- 1940s and 50s colour glass slides

Loans

Eight Strutt family portraits were transferred to the Strutt Centre in April 2024 but they have not been displayed and are now back in the BHS store (Goods Road). The portraits will hopefully go on a temporary display as part of the BELPER250 celebrations in Belper Library.

Our large (1,180mm x 1,440mm) Jedediah Strutt portrait painting has been loaned to the Belper North Mill Trust (from July 2025) to be used as part of the Belper Library display, accompanying the Derby Rib machine, formerly in the North Mill Museum.



Photographs

Whilst the scanning of photographs has not progressed since the last transfer of 1,230 photographs and digital images to the Derbyshire Record Office (D8434 Boxes, 11, 12, 21, 22 and 23) the society has had 609 glass negatives/slides scanned by Oxford Duplication.

- BHS25001 to BHS25260 – BHS glass slides
- BHS25261 to BHS25534 – BHS glass negatives
- BHS25535 to BHS25609 – 2025 donation 1940's-1950's slides

Work continues on the identification and collation the digital images.

Library and Books

We have had a poor attendance to BHS library openings during 2025 so a review of the future of the BHS library openings will be carried out before 2026.

Sales of donated books and new books continue to provide useful income to the society, see the financial statement. This includes the new *belperhistoricalsociety* 'shop' on ebay. The society has also helped with the sales of Belper Voices 1 & 2 for the Derwent Valley Mills Educational Trust (18 books sold).

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:

- Review of the library – books held and library access
- Utilise an online database, e.g. Dropbox, for BHS documents and digital materials for managed shared access.
- BELPER250
 - Some themed talks and walks for our 2026 monthly meetings
 - Preserving Belper's Industrial Heritage – Monthly Farmers Market stall
 - Displays in Belper Library

Continuing from last year

- 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.
- 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 and Mary McLean Farmer for their contributions).

6.11.25

Belper Historical Society
CIO Charity No: 1158020

YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST 2025

Statement of Financial Activities
(Including Income and Expenditure Account)

Income	2025	2024	Expenditure	2025	2024
Interest/Dividends	£2,687.77	£1,877.84	Archive Storage	£2,254.20	£2,268.95
Members Subscriptions	£2,096.25	£2,252.24	Digitisation Project	£1,840.20	n/a
Visitors/Donations	£530.00	£225.00	Speakers Fees	£434.00	£280.00
Raffles (donated items)	£222.00	£299.00	Purchases	£374.60	£226.86
Donated Items Sales	£195.51	£106.60	Meeting Room Hire	£368.40	£351.00
New Books Sales	£146.00	£291.00	Library Room Hire	£278.36	£329.90
			Admin Costs	£240.11	£225.41
			Bank Charges	£101.23	£78.85
TOTAL	£5,877.53	£5,051.68	TOTAL	£5,891.10	£3,760.97
Excess of Income Over Expenditure	-£13.57	£1,290.71			

BALANCE SHEET at 31 August 2025

Current Assets		
Cash in hand		£0.00
At HSBC Current A/c		£4,934.69
At Cambridge & Counties Bank		£48,706.20
At Mansfield Building Society		£11,268.48
Total		£64,909.37
Current Liabilities		
Unbilled expenditure at 31/8		£1,740.30
Uncashed cheques at 31/8		£0.00
Total		£1,740.30
Tangible Assets		
"Belper in Wartime - The Great War" book	(Stock at Cost 311x3.86)	£1,200.46
Total		£1,200.46
Net Current Assets		£64,369.53
Unrestricted General Fund at 31/8/2025		
		£64,909.37
Unrestricted General Fund at 31/8/2024		
		£63,254.52