

Jedediah and his family

Jedediah Strutt is the man who connected all the sites in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. His hosiery business and early silk mill were in Derby, and Jedediah was the leading partner in the development of Cromford Mill. The Belper and Milford Mills were built by Jedediah and his eldest son and his eldest daughter married into the Evans family at Darley Abbey.

Jedediah remained a plain-living man despite his accumulated wealth, adhering to his Unitarian beliefs. He had three sons and two daughters by his wife, Elizabeth who died in 1774. Jedediah took a great interest in his children's education and development. He married Anne Daniels in 1781 and built a plain mansion as their home, Milford House.

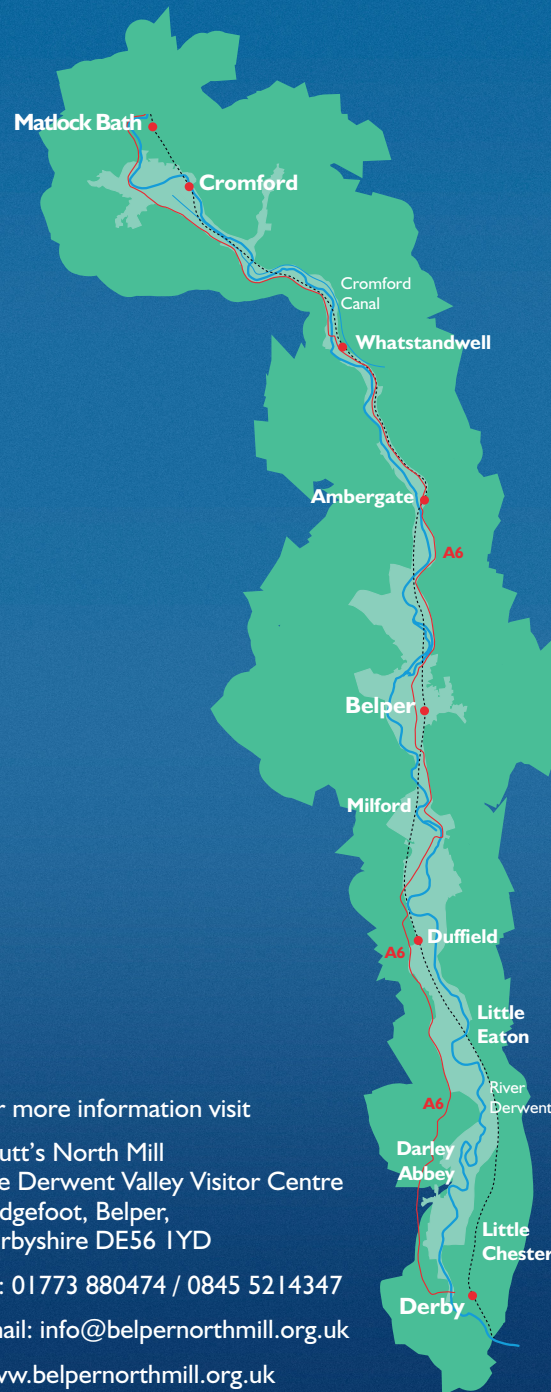
"Here rest in peace J. S. who without fortune, family or friends raised to himself a fortune, family and name in the world; without having wit, had a good share of plain common sense; without much genius, employed the more substantial blessing of a sound understanding; with but little personal pride, despised a mean or base action; with no ostentation for religious tenets and ceremonies, he led a life of honesty and virtue, not knowing what would befall him after death, he died in full confidence that if there be a future state of retribution it would be to reward the virtuous and the good.

This I think my true character."

This was the obituary he had written for himself and was found some time after his death - Jedediah Strutt died 7th May 1797.

AMBER VALLEY

JEDEDIAH STRUTT



For more information visit

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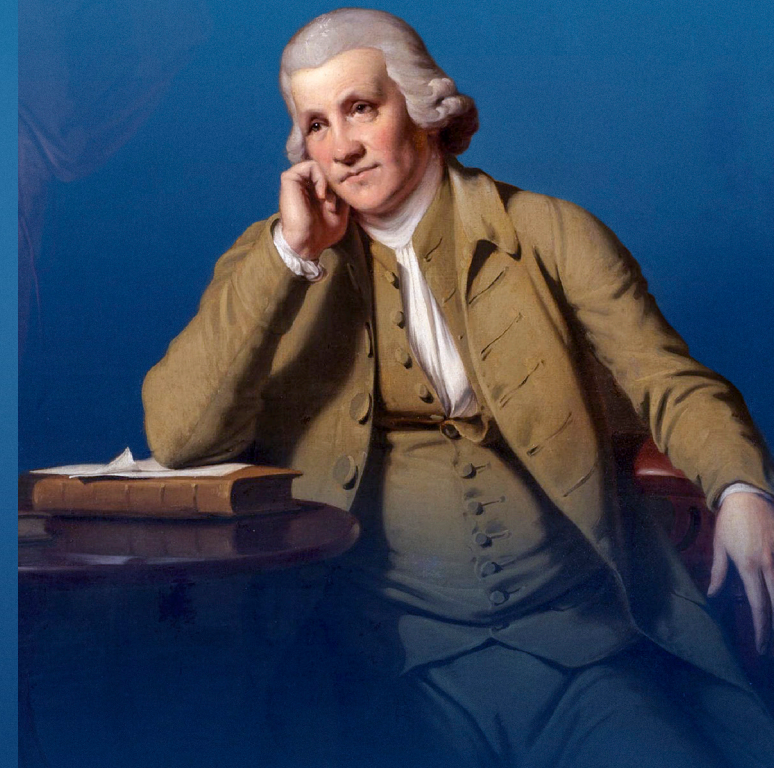
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DERWENT VALLEY
VISITOR CENTRE

Jedediah Strutt



BELPER NORTH MILL
Local Interest Leaflet
Number 1



Family and Early Days

Jedediah Strutt was born on July 25th 1726 at Blackwell near Alfreton. His father, William was a farmer and maltster and his mother Martha (nee Statham) came from near Belper. Jedediah was the middle son, his elder brother Joseph became a merchant in London and his younger brother William became involved with Jedediah's hosiery business in Derby.

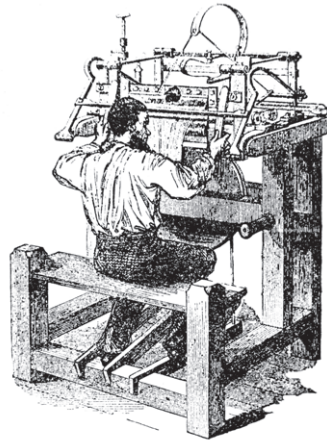
Aged 14, Jedediah was apprenticed to a wheelwright, Ralph Massey, at Findern, near Derby for 7 years. Findern had the largest non-conformist academy in the country run by Ebenezer Latham, a doctor, teacher and minister who was an associate of the Woollat family with whom Jedediah lodged during his apprenticeship. Later Jedediah married their eldest daughter, Elizabeth.



Elizabeth's brother William went into the framework knitting trade and was later to go into partnership with Jedediah. With a strong desire for self-improvement and these associations at Findern, the way was set for Jedediah's successful future.

After completing his apprenticeship, Jedediah went as a journeyman to Leicester and from there he kept in touch with Elizabeth by letter. From these letters we discover that Elizabeth was in service in London with Dr. Benson, a non-conformist friend of Dr. Latham. Jedediah returned to Blackwell when a relative left him a small farm. At the age of 29 he married Elizabeth having the means to support a wife.

Framework knitting and The Derby Rib



c. 1876 Hand-operated stocking-frame

enabled the operator to knit 20 times faster than a hand knitter and produce small items of clothing such as hats and stockings. 170 years later Jedediah Strutt invented the Derby Rib attachment to this machine.

In an attempt to improve his income after he married, Jedediah began acting as a "putter out" for the cottage industry of framework knitting. This meant that he would take out the yarn to the framework knitter and collect the finished work to take to the warehouse that employed them.

Jedediah was working closely with his brother-in-law William Woollat who was frustrated by the fact that the knitting machine could not knit a rib and was therefore unable to make successful hose. Although a man had suggested a way this might be done, he did not have the mechanical expertise to achieve it. Jedediah paid the man for his idea, developed it, and successfully obtained a patent in 1759.

Jedediah and William Woollat formed a partnership with Samuel Need who financed and advised them as they set up their hosiery business in Derby and built a silk mill to supply the yarn.

Cotton Mills

Cotton was growing in popularity. It was more comfortable to wear than wool and more hard wearing than silk, but there were problems with spinning cotton thread as it has a shorter staple and more difficult to spin.

Richard Arkwright was trying to develop roller spinning for cotton but his bankers refused to back him and they advised him to show the idea to Strutt and Need. Jedediah Strutt thought it was worthy of investment and with a few alterations would be a success. Strutt and Need formed a partnership with Arkwright and began spinning cotton in Nottingham using a horse gin. Horse power had limitations and Strutt suggested that they find a site with water power, like his silk mill in Derby. The first water-powered cotton spinning mill was built at Cromford in 1771 and proved to be a huge success. It was the building of the silk mills in Derby combined with the building of the cotton mill at Cromford that developed the factory system, this subsequently spread across the globe, changing the working life of people throughout the industrialised world.

As enclosure of common land was taking place Jedediah Strutt bought land in Belper and began building his own mills from 1776 and harnessing the power of the River Derwent. Belper was at that time a small hamlet and Strutt needed a large workforce. He advertised that he would supply good housing to large families willing to work in his mill. Jedediah not only built good housing, which is still popular today but he put an infrastructure in place to support it with allotments, education etc. For five generations the Strutt family continued to act as benefactors to Belper and Milford.