

### NEWSLETTER 1 - SEPTEMBER 2019

**Hello everyone,**

We are delighted to welcome you to the first edition of the Strutts newsletter and hope you will enjoy reading it. We plan to publish twice a year, with issues produced in September and March.

The aim is to keep you up-to-date with what's going on at Strutts - changes, events and any developments. We see it very much as a community newsletter and invite you to send contributions, comments, suggestions and any ideas for future issues. They will be most welcome!

Our first issue includes a history of the project, as many people may not be aware of how Strutts came to be a community centre, or that it is run by volunteers. Whilst this means there is much to report, we hope you find the articles interesting and enjoyable!

Lots of people ask what goes on at Strutts and the answer is - a great deal! To give you an idea, we have included a list of the regular groups that were using the centre before the summer holidays. Contact details for these groups are on the 'What's On' section on our website. Please visit [www.strutts.org.uk](http://www.strutts.org.uk)

Other organisations also book on a one-off basis. There is always plenty of information on the 'What's On' listing on the Strutts website. It is a very busy community centre and demonstrates the need for such facilities in Belper.

So, if you run a group, club or organisation and would like to write an article about it for inclusion in the next issue of the newsletter, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Finally – please don't forget – volunteers are **always** needed so, if you would like to get involved – please do get in touch. A warm Strutts welcome awaits you!!!

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter. Please let us have any comments, thoughts or contributions for the next issue, planned for March 2020, by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

***Pat McLeod and Sue Salaün (Editors)***





## **News from the Chair**

It gives me great pleasure to make a contribution to this first newsletter, and my thanks to the BSS team who have put it together.

This is our 10<sup>th</sup> year in operation and we never imagined how successful Strutts would be. Belper is a more vibrant community as a result of our efforts – thanks to all our volunteers and users who have made it possible.

You can see from the 'What's On Listing', the number and variety of groups using the centre and we are becoming victims of our own success. We often struggle to cover the extended opening hours and I would welcome new volunteers to join our team. If you would like to know more, please email us at [reception@strutts.org.uk](mailto:reception@strutts.org.uk).

Much has happened over the last couple of years, a lot of it unseen – essential repairs to the roof, pointing and gutters and the replacement of the gas main last year. We are looking forward in the next few years to the redecoration and refurbishment of both the communal areas and some of the classrooms, hopefully more visible improvements.

To ensure Strutts is accessible to all, we were delighted when the lift was installed nearly two years ago, enabling everyone to reach the larger rooms upstairs. We have also created accessible toilets by the lift on both floors. Future plans include a video door entry from the playground to provide easier access for wheelchair users.

In terms of the building, I would like to thank Belper Strutts Society for their fundraising activities and subsequent purchase of new competition standard table tennis tables, folding tables and more comfortable stacking chairs.

Last year we took the decision to licence rooms for exclusive use to provide some financial stability to the project and to increase the daytime usage. We were pleased to welcome DCC Adult Education, Deaf-inately Women and Juliet Cooper's Restorative Pilates Studio to Strutts. We have also given licences to the Derbyshire Archaeological Society Library (see article) and Belper Historical Society for storage facilities.

In the coming year we are improving the safety and security of the site – extending the CCTV, improving external lighting and fire safety features. In response to user requests, we are looking to improve wi-fi coverage throughout the building.

We are also keen to create an accessible cinema as a need has been identified locally and there is much support for this. We plan to form a steering group soon to make this happen. If you are interested in being involved, please get in touch with me.

Together we can make a positive difference for the community of Belper.

***Nick McLeod***

***Chair, Guardians of Strutts***



## **History of Strutts**

### ***As a school.....***

The school was built 1907–09, commissioned by George Herbert Strutt - a direct descendant of Jedediah Strutt, the famous industrialist who developed the cotton industry in Belper. He was given the go-ahead to provide a school for the town in March 1907 and chose a site for it opposite the town's workhouse, Babington House.

By the spring of 1909 the work was complete, and the school was officially opened on May 7th by the Duke of Devonshire. The building was presented by George Herbert Strutt to the County Council for use as a Higher Grade Elementary School and Pupil Teacher Centre.

In the hall at Strutts you can see the bust of George Herbert Strutt. This was presented to him in 1910 in appreciation of him providing the land and paying for the building of the school, after about 1,500 people from around Belper had donated money towards it.

Later, the school became a Grammar School – the Herbert Strutt School. In 1973, following a shake-up in education, it became a Middle School, then in 1986 it became Herbert Strutt Primary School. It remained a primary school until its closure in February 2007, when children moved to a new school at the Parks off Bargate Road, taking the Herbert Strutt name with them.

### ***What happened next.....***

When it was not needed as a school, the original 1909 Strutt conveyance said what should happen:

*"...the said hereitaments and premises hereby conveyed shall be held IN TRUST for and be conveyed and assured to the Belper Urban District Council or its successors in fee simple for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of the township of Belper aforesaid in such manner as the said Urban District Council or its successors shall from time to time determine...."*

In December 2006, at the first open meeting of the Belper Civic Forum, the future of this building came out on top of the list of people's concerns. The vast majority wished the building to be converted to community use. Most wished for it be a library and adult community education centre.

Other suggested uses were community meeting rooms, conference centre, performing arts venue, business start-up centre, an archive for Belper artefacts and photographs and partial conversion to apartments to help pay for community use.

Amber Valley Borough Council succeeded Belper Urban District Council. It took over 2 years to persuade Derbyshire County Council and Amber Valley Borough Council to hand over the site to our charity, the Guardians of Strutts, for use as a Community Centre. Derbyshire County Council had estimated that the school would require £1.4M for essential repairs and many expected us to fail.



### ***Strutts Community Centre...***

Today (Summer 2019), the building is a thriving community centre run by the Guardians of Strutts Charity and supported by the Belper Strutts Society. We opened as a Community Centre on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009 with no funds, but a few committed users, including Derwent Brass (see article), who were already in residence, a playgroup called the Dandelion Clock, Belper Model Railway Group and Kim Hunt Dog Training. Our only income was the room hire fees.

Loyal volunteers did everything from cleaning to essential safety repairs. We didn't switch on the heating until the first frosts in November. The number of users steadily increased over the first couple of years until we not only covered the running costs but were able to pay for some repairs to the building.

This year will be our tenth anniversary and the Centre now has a wide range of activities taking place every day. Since those early days we have successfully turned a redundant building into a major asset for the benefit of the people of Belper. This is a fantastic achievement by a group of local people who started out with nothing but the passion to make a difference for the benefit of their community.

### **Nick McLeod - Chair, Guardians of Strutts**

#### **Derbyshire Archaeological Society Library**

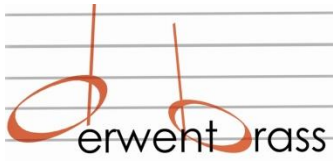
On 26th June Derbyshire Archaeological Society was very pleased to officially open the Society Library which has been relocated from Derby to the lovely surroundings of the Library at Strutts Centre. Although it has been open to members since January, the event publicly marked this new chapter in the Society's history.

An introductory speech from Anne Allcock, the current Hon. Librarian, was followed by a very interesting talk on the history of the DAS library given by Mr Ray Marjoram, the previous Hon. Librarian for some 50 years. After sharing his extensive knowledge with us, Ray then deftly cut the ribbon! Refreshments afterwards rounded off a successful evening.

The library holds a very interesting collection of books on Archaeology, Local History, Industrial Archaeology and Architecture, all relating to Derbyshire. Books can only be borrowed by members of the Society but if these subjects interest you and you want to know more about the DAS and its activities, then further details can be found on the website.  
[www.derbyshireas.org.uk](http://www.derbyshireas.org.uk)

#### **Anne Allcock - Derbyshire Archaeological Society**





..... *A message from one of our first customers!*

Derwent Brass is a major success story in the Midland's rich heritage of brass banding.

Formed in 1992 in Derby, it quickly established itself as a most popular concert attraction and promptly climbed the ranks of the brass band league to the dizzy heights of the Championship Section (the Premier League in football terms) where it remains to this day.

The band continues to decorate the band room with silverware from contests nationwide and is proud to represent Belper and indeed Derbyshire as not only the county's number one ranked brass band, but in the wider context, consistently ranked within the top 70 brass bands in the world. They have also continued to improve their artistic programme both musically and aesthetically, resulting in some of the finest brass band concert performances you can experience in the country

Originally formed in Derby, the band struggled intermittently with a permanent residence to call its home. If you consider the sheer logistics of an entire brass band (complete with a wealth of percussion, uniform, a library of music, chairs, stands, and much more) not having a permanent space in which to rehearse, it is akin to setting up a concert for every single rehearsal .

Ultimately the band became homeless and was operating out of the back of a van. It could have easily become the demise of Derwent Brass.

Around this time in 2005, a brass band well known to Belper - Thornton's Brass (now resurrected as a non-competitive Masson Mills Band) were in the process of folding and kindly invited us to use their space. Derwent Brass grabbed the opportunity to move to Belper and reside in their former band room at the Herbert Strutt Primary School.

Sadly, it wasn't long before the rumours started to circulate that the school was to close, and this was finally confirmed during the summer of 2007. We were once again very busy trying to find an alternative home and the local authorities did grant a temporary extension for the band to stay on the premises.

During Easter 2008 the school was mothballed, and the band asked to leave...

*"I recall vividly the absolute sense of frustration and anxiety that the band was again to become homeless. Following various discussions and meetings, I managed to persuade the school owners to allow the band to stay onsite on a temporary basis, though it meant we had to promptly relocate to the playground classroom over the course of a weekend.*



*That Friday I, together with my partner Madeline and [Band Manager at the time] Rob Stew, burnt the candle deep into the night as we prepared the room to be clean and secure ahead of the band setting up the room and moving all its equipment in over the weekend. A very tiring time for sure, but it was a relief to secure the band some further tenancy."*

*(Neil Riddle – now a "Guardians of Strutts" Trustee and long-term member of Derwent Brass.)*

Following the closure of the school, Neil and Madeline immediately became involved in the "Saving Strutts for Belper" campaign, offering and hosting campaign meetings in the band room. The Belper Strutts Society (BSS) was duly formed (see article on the history of Strutts). Proudly, Neil and Madeline are among the founding members of BSS, and Derwent Brass were the first user group to be granted a licence at the premises that very year – finally, a place to call home!

During this formative period Derwent Brass helped with fundraising for the project, performing at the centenary celebration event in May and later a concert in August. In the Musical Director's report of the 16th AGM of Derwent Brass, Keith Leonard (now Music Director Emeritus) reflected that securing the future of the band room was his ultimate highlight for the year and thanked Neil and Madeline for all their hard work. In 2011 Neil became a trustee of the "Guardians of Strutts" and has since managed some of the significant improvements to the site including the re-landscaping of the centre grounds, physical access to the centre, roof refurbishment and installation of the lift.

Since moving in, many improvements have been made to the room, by Derwent Brass, to maximise its potential as a rehearsal venue. At a basic level, re-plastering, and painting were initially done, followed by the installation of a kitchen sink, ceiling fans, new furniture, drapes and bespoke acoustic panels together with various aesthetic changes.

*"A brass band's rehearsal venue is a very special place. We have a huge sign in our band room: 'Welcome to Derwent Brass. Here we make music and friendship through inspiration, harmony and aspiration to perform at our very best'. I think that says it all for me. With the constant use of this space we have been able to concentrate our time on what matters most; the running of the organisation both as a band and as a registered charity, and ultimately producing first class brass music.*

*I doubt highly we would have reached the standard we are today without the continuity of rehearsal we now enjoy, which has resulted in some spectacular events, contest results and artistic collaborations. Only the other week did we perform to a capacity audience in Derby Theatre and will no doubt have fantastic support from the people of Belper for our forthcoming Remembrance and Christmas concerts later in the year at St. Peter's. We are of course indebted to Neil, Madeline and everyone involved at Strutts who have allowed us to make this happen. We enjoy a very special relationship with the Trustees and look forward to developing this, and the facilities wherever possible, in the future. Thank you.*



*If you want to see our rehearsal space and experience the band in full rehearsal mode first-hand, you are more than welcome to visit - we meet every Thursday (8-10pm) in the playground building.*

*I'd strongly advise however, dropping us an email in advance [to [chris@derwentbrass.co.uk](mailto:chris@derwentbrass.co.uk)] just to make sure we are definitely there and that there is sufficient room for you!"*

**Chris Leonard - Band Manager**



For more about Derwent Brass, including their forthcoming engagements, visit  
**[www.derwentbrass.com](http://www.derwentbrass.com)**

### **BSS Membership Cards**

If you're a Life Member or an Annual (Full 2019) Member of BSS (Belper Strutts Society), you should have received a brand new membership card! Please let the BSS Membership Secretary know at [bssocnews@gmail.com](mailto:bssocnews@gmail.com), if you think you should have received one and haven't yet done so.

If you'd like to support Strutts and become a member, you can find a membership application form on the website or please call in at Strutts reception to collect one. There's a discount on entry fee to BSS events for BSS Members and a free cup of tea or coffee (when available) - as well as newsletters twice a year to try to keep all members up to date with what's happening at Strutts. (You're reading the very first one!)



BSS, as the fund-raising wing of the Strutts Community Project, puts on a number of events in its own right and also supports local events, like the Belper Arts Trail.

The Strutts Project is always looking for **volunteers** to help with anything and everything, as Strutts is run entirely by volunteers.

If you, or anyone you know, could help in any way for just a few hours, with anything from events to publicity, maintenance work to catering, IT to gardening, applying for grants, to working on Reception, from opening and closing the building to book-keeping – then **PLEASE** let us know!

Contact us by email; [reception@strutts.org.uk](mailto:reception@strutts.org.uk) or call **01773 599993**

### **DEFIBRILLATOR**

The Trustees have now purchased a 'Lifeline Auto' Defibrillator and Cabinet, which is positioned on the wall in the Main Entrance outside Reception.

A huge 'Thankyou' goes to all customers who donated to the fundraiser, through collections and crowdfunding on the internet.

***Cynthia Maddock - Guardian/Trustee***

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup>  
September 2019**

**Main Hall  
Strutts Community  
Centre**

**7pm**

#### **Ten Year Anniversary Special Event**

A special event is planned to celebrate ten years of the Strutts Project and the new life it has brought to the building in the creation of a busy and vibrant community centre.

The Trustees are to host a concert to celebrate their ten years since taking on the responsibility as guardians of the Strutt building.

There will be a bar and light refreshments and Volunteers, partners, BSS members and all the people who have helped to make this project a success, especially in the early years, will be cordially invited.

Entertainment will be provided by various groups who regularly use the building and we look forward to their contribution which will make this an enjoyable evening.

If you are a current Volunteer (or have volunteered in the past), or a current BSS member, please let Cynthia Maddock know if you are able to join us by **10<sup>th</sup> September**, on 01773 599993 or e-mail ([reception@strutts.org.uk](mailto:reception@strutts.org.uk)).





<p><b>Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019</b></p> <p><b>Strutts Community Centre (10am – 3pm)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Annual BSS Autumn Market</u></b> Stall-holders will be selling retro, fine art, ceramics, vintage items, knitted goods, health and beauty products and much, much more! This is a good opportunity to buy your Christmas presents! Hot and cold refreshments will be provided by BSS volunteers. (Volunteers still needed please!!)</p>
<p><b>Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019</b></p> <p><b>Main Hall Strutts Community Centre</b></p> <p><b>Doors open 7.00pm for 7.30 pm start</b></p>	<p><b><u>BSS Race Night – Saturday October 19th 2019</u></b> As part of the celebrations to mark the Strutts Project’s first ten years, we’re organising a fun race night event to which all current Volunteers are invited.</p> <p>There will be a free supper for all current Volunteers and their partners, to say a big ‘thank you’ for their time and effort.</p> <p>Please let us know if you intend to come, <b>by 16th September</b>, by telephone (01773 599993), e-mail (<a href="mailto:reception@strutts.org.uk">reception@strutts.org.uk</a>), or in person at Reception.</p> <p>It should be a very enjoyable get-together and we look forward to seeing you there!</p>

### **‘WHAT’S ON’ LISTING**

Although a great deal happens at Strutts, we’re not directly responsible for everything, as Strutts simply rents the premises to members of the community for their use. As we’re often asked what happens here, we thought we’d include the latest ‘What’s On’ Listing currently on the Strutts website (from 13<sup>th</sup> May to 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019), to give an idea of all the different activities available to the community.

All direct contact details for these groups are on the website. Please be aware that the group listing changes each month, and not all bookings are published as some customers do not allow us to do so under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations).

A wide variety of **U3A** classes and groups regularly use our building, including ; Art Appreciation, Shakespeare, Dance, Italian Beginners, Table Tennis, Meditation, Badminton, Tai Chi, Scrabble, Line Dancing, French Conversation, Latin, Creative Crafts, Painting and Drawing, and Philosophy. The U3A Open Meeting is also held here, once a month for members and prospective members.

**Derbyshire County Council** runs a number of Adult Education courses here at Strutts, also, the **WEA** and **Age UK** who run a ‘Strictly No Falling’ course. You can learn lip-reading, French and German or upholstery to give you a flavour of some of the adult education courses. There are also **DCC** Adult Care programmes – Weight Management, ‘Stop Smoking’, and the **DCHS** Xpert Diabetes Programme.

We hope you have enjoyed our first Newsletter and we welcome your comments and contributions for future issues! Please do get in touch with us. Email us at [bssocnews@gmail.com](mailto:bssocnews@gmail.com) or call 01773 599993.

***Best wishes from the Newsletter Team!***  
***Carol Brewer, Pat McLeod, Sue Salaün and Chris Toner***



**Other groups featured on the 'What's On' listing (as at 13 May - 10 June 2019) include;**

<p>Andante Cantabile</p> <p>Belper 50Plus Forum</p> <p>Belper and Duffield Rotary Club</p> <p>Belper Art Group</p> <p>Belper Community Choir</p> <p>Belper District Scout Council</p> <p>Belper Explorers</p> <p>Belper Historical Society</p> <p>Belper Musical Theatre &amp; Belper Junior Musical Theatre</p> <p>Belper Model Railway Group</p> <p>Belper Players</p> <p>Belper Poetry Circle</p> <p>Belper Portrait Group</p> <p>Belper Recorder Group</p> <p>Belper Social Club for the Disabled</p> <p>Belper Steam and Vintage Society</p> <p>Belper Writers Group</p>	<p>Captive Audience Community Theatre</p> <p>Carol Tilley Yoga</p> <p>Chair-Based Exercise Classes</p> <p>Chatterbox</p> <p>Chevin Singers</p> <p>Coffee Companions</p> <p>Creative Writing</p> <p>Critters</p> <p>Councillor Community Meetings</p> <p>CPRE – Campaign for the Protection of Rural England</p> <p>Dalesman Male Voice Choir</p> <p>Dan's Dancing Devils</p> <p>Deaf-initely Women</p> <p>Derby Area Sewing Group</p> <p>Derbyshire Advanced Motorcyclists</p> <p>Derbyshire Carers Association</p> <p>Derbyshire Historic Gardens</p> <p>Derbyshire Tarot</p> <p>Derwent Brass</p> <p>Dog Training with Kim Hunt</p>
<p>East Midlands Chamber</p> <p>Eva Yoga</p> <p>Expressive Dance</p> <p>Folk Friendly</p> <p>Friends of Belper River Gardens</p> <p>Makeney Morris</p> <p>NAS/UWT</p> <p>Oakwood Yoga</p> <p>Peak Pilates</p> <p>Penguin Club</p> <p>Rethink Mental Illness Drop-In &amp; 'Time to Talk'</p> <p>Restorative Pilates</p> <p>St. John Ambulance</p> <p>Slimming World</p> <p>SOS NHS</p> <p>Strutts Stitchers</p> <p>Sword Combat</p>	<p>Jorvik Vikings</p> <p>Krav Maga Derbyshire</p> <p>Karries Pole and Aerial Ltd</p> <p>Unite Community Union</p> <p>Village Games</p> <p>Warriors within Martial Arts</p> <p>Welsh Group</p> <p>Whiffle Pig CIC</p> <p>White Peak Writers</p>
<p>Contact details for the groups listed can be found on the Strutts website. <a href="http://www.strutts.org.uk">www.strutts.org.uk</a></p>	