

Timeline for Saltaire Mill

The Sir Titus Salt Years

1853 to 1876

November 1850¹ – Titus Salt visits the Bradford chambers of architects Messrs Lockwood and Mawson. Plans were put in place to build the mill, but no contracts were issued. Titus was “*in great haste to have the work done speedily, so that it was let to various contractors, under a schedule of fixed prices, and not by tender, thus different sets of workmen were simultaneously engaged at various points, and gradually “The Palace of Industry” rose to view.*

Titus chose the firm, Messrs Fairbairn of Manchester for the construction of the complicated machinery. November 1851² – the mill’s foundation stone was laid.

Newspaper images © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

9 April 1853² –

MAN DROWNED.—The body of a man was on Saturday found drowned in the dam of Mr. Walker, corn miller, of Baildon. He had 6s. 6d. in his pockets. The body was recognised as that of David Sinclair, a stonemason, recently employed at the Saltaire works. He had been missing for six weeks. Nothing was known as to the cause of such an end, although there were circulated various rumours, which did not appear to be supported by any substantial testimony. At an inquest held at the Bay Horse, Baildon, a verdict of ‘Found Drowned’ was returned. The relatives and friends of the deceased are unknown. The body was interred at Baildon church, on Sunday, and the funeral attracted a large concourse of persons.

1 June 1853³ – First fatality in the building of the mill

FATAL ACCIDENT AT SALTAIRE.—We mentioned in our last that a mason, employed at the works at Saltaire, had, on the night of Wednesday, fallen from a scaffold and died on the spot. The unfortunate man was John Taylor, aged 31, living at Baildon Green. He was employed in guiding a rope to raise a wheelbarrow six storeys high, when the rope broke and he fell to the ground, a depth of six storeys. He was taken up dead. At an inquest held at the house of Mr. G. Thwaites, of the Fox and Hounds Inn, Shipley, a verdict of “Accidental death” was returned.

(John Taylor worked for Messrs S M & J Moulson – a firm of masons)

2 June 1853³ –

SALTAIRE: REARING SUPPER.—The works at Saltaire, which have heretofore been fully described in our paper, are rapidly progressing; and the spacious mill and warehouse have reached that point in their construction, at which, according to the custom prevalent in these parts, the workmen claim the ancient privilege of a “rearing supper.” The appeal was made on Wednesday in last week, and immediately responded to. Arrangements on a most liberal and extensive scale were at once made; and on the following evening the feast was spread, and about 700 parties participated in it. Of course there was no house in Shipley large enough to entertain such a numerous party, and therefore several publicans were instructed to provide for as many guests as they could accommodate. The company sat down in about the following proportions:—at Mr. S. Atkinson’s, Sun Inn, 220; at Mr. E. Thwaites’s, Fox and Hounds, 169; at Mr. John Spencer’s, Odd-fellows’ Hall, 175; at Mr. John Haley’s, the Bull, 78; and at Mr. James Glover’s, the Ring of Bells, 52. The provision was everywhere excellent and abundant, and the greatest satisfaction was manifested at the character of the entertainment, and gratitude to the excellent gentleman by whose kindness and liberality the feast was provided. The entertainment, notwithstanding the large number who were congregated on this occasion, went off without the slightest alloy. At half-past eight o’clock, the architects, the inspectors, and the different contractors dined together at the Sun Inn. Henry F. Lockwood, Esq., F.S.A., presided, and Mr. Wm. Mawson occupied the vice-chair. Amongst the company present were Mr. G. Hogg and Mr. W. Chesterton, clerks of the works; Messrs. Fearnley and Wainwright, Messrs. M. & J. Moulson, and Messrs. Hogg & Bedford, contractors for mason work; Mr. A. Neill, Messrs. W. & J. Beanland, and Messrs. W. and J. Ives, contractors for joiner work; Messrs. J. and J. Cliffe, iron founders; Messrs. Hills & Co., slaters; and Messrs. E. Swire and Co., excavators. Messrs. J. Keighley and Co. and Mr. C. Rhodes, as contractors, were also represented. The usual loyal toasts were given from the chair. The health of the generous and enterprising employer, Mr. Salt, was also given and responded to in an appropriate manner. A very pleasant evening was passed. The appearance of the village previous to the supper was most interesting: the streets were thronged with cleanly, well-dressed workmen, strong and health-looking, most of them young men, presenting a most enlivening and gratifying appearance. Of course all the men are not working at Saltaire, but they are all directly connected with the contractors engaged in executing the works.

(A rearing supper was a celebratory meal given to workers on completion of (the roof of) a building.)

1 September 1853³ -

We have authority to state that any parties visiting Bradford at this time, who may be desirous of going over the great works at Saltaire, may obtain tickets of admission on application to the Mayor, Mr. Hailstone, Mr. S. L. Tee, or the architects, Mr. H. F. Lockwood, or Mr. W. Mawson.

20 September 1853³ -

OPENING FESTIVITIES.

A large portion of this great edifice having been so far completed as to allow of the commencement of work, it was resolved by the proprietor, to celebrate the event by a Grand Industrial Festival. The day fixed upon was Tuesday, being Mr. Salt's fiftieth birthday, and as his eldest son, Mr. W. H. Salt, had recently come of age, the celebration, as we stated last week, partook of a three-fold character.

We understand that invitations were exclusively confined to the Lord Lieutenant, the members of Parliament for the West Riding and for the neighbouring boroughs, the Bradford bench of West Riding and borough magistrates, the mayors of the adjacent towns, the Mayor and Corporation of Bradford, the Vicar of Bradford and other clergymen and ministers, the directors of the Midland railway, and to the business connexion and private friends of Mr. Salt.

THE LUNCHEON

Was served in the Combining-shed, which is 210 by 112 feet. The eastern side was occupied by the long table of the chairman and the principal guests. The other tables traversed the hall from east to west. The seven centre tables were upon a dais, and at these 644 ladies and gentlemen were seated. On each side of this dais were 11 tables, for Mr. Salt's workpeople, male and female; seating 2,420. At the chairman's table were 75 guests. With the police, the military band, &c. who counted 60 more,—there was a total of 3,204 diners. The roofs are supported on light cast-iron columns, all of which were spirally wreathed with evergreens. All the walls were also decorated with pink and white draperies, flags, evergreens, and flowers. On side boards running down the room, there was a beautiful variety of greenhouse plants. In front of the chairman on a stand was a plaister cast of the Alpaca. Several special trains from Bradford conveyed the numerous work-people and guests to the works. The church bells ringing and firing salutes, with discharge of ordnance, welcomed the fete.