

THE LAND  
ACQUISITIONS OF  
TITUS SALT

by Ian Watson



**The Land Acquisitions**  
**of** *Titus Salt*

**Ian Watson (2011)**



## INTRODUCTION

The basic story of Titus Salt building up his textile empire in Bradford, and then, at the point when he might have been expected to retire, deciding to start a whole new project, developing a gigantic mill and model village, is well known.

What does not seem to have been covered within the general literature on Salt and his mill, is the story of his property purchases in this area. In particular, there is little reference to his, quite substantial acquisitions in Baildon; which, as I will show, were not only on a larger scale than his purchases in Shipley, but in one instance pre-dated them.

Also, few of the authors who have covered the story of Saltaire mention Dixon Mill Lane. Neither Balgarnie nor Cudworth refer to it at all, and those authors who do mention it, do so only in passing. There is also an assumption, by some authors, that the old lane, seen in the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map, was upgraded and widened and became Victoria Rd.

The evidence presented below disproves that assumption. It details the chronological developments relating to Dixon Mill Lane and Victoria Rd, and the bridging of the River Aire. This occurred between the survey for the first edition Ordnance Survey map, published in 1852 and the next series, surveyed in the 1880s, by which time the building of Saltaire had been completed.

This report concentrates on previously unpublished information on the development of the village and tries to avoid repeating those well-known aspects of its history.

Most of the information regarding Titus Salt's purchases in Shipley and Baildon comes from the collection of deed copies held in the Registry of Deeds at the West Yorkshire Archive Service Office based at the West Yorkshire History Centre in Wakefield.

The Registry is the place where property owners could have details of their freehold property and mortgage transactions recorded and covers the years between 1704 and 1970.

One of the problems with these deed copies is that it is very unusual for the early ones to have any maps or plans attached, as do some of the later ones. This means that, in some cases, the precise boundaries of the purchases are not always easy to determine.

The description of the properties transferred in the deeds tend to be lists of field names, so I have tried to relate the information in the deeds to the details shown on the tithe maps of Shipley and Baildon, which date from the mid-1840s. However, some of the boundaries of the acquisitions that I identify may not be a hundred percent accurate, as it is not always possible to make a perfect match between the two sets of documents.

A second source of information comes from the collection of Shipley and Baildon papers that can be found within the West Riding Quarter Session records, also held at Wakefield.

These Quarter Sessions courts were the main system of county administration before the introduction of County Councils in 1888.

Among the many issues considered by these courts were the applications to approve the transfers of public rights of way from old roads to new ones. The information contained in these records has proved particularly informative.

The papers relating to Baildon [the QT series] are part of the Quarter Session papers for the Liberty of Cawood, Wistow and Otley.

As the parish of Otley, of which Baildon was a part, was a 'Peculiar' of the Archbishopric of York, their Quarter Session records were administered separately from rest of the West Riding until 1864, when the 'Liberty' was brought within the West Riding. As a result, on their arrival at Wakefield, these records were recorded separately. They are now searchable via the West Yorkshire Archive Service web-site (<http://www.wyjs.org.uk>).

The files relating to Shipley [the QS1 series] can only be accessed on-site at the Wakefield office.

Many of the plans used as source material for this study have been in storage for over a 150 years. As such, they are often creased and dirty. Consequently, the illustrations used below reflect the non-pristine condition of these plans.

The plans reference to the Quarter Session papers [the QS and QT series] are reproduced here by the kind permission of the West Yorkshire Joint Archive Service, who own the copyright.

In addition, I would like to thank the following people and organisations: The archivist and volunteers of the Midland Railway Study Centre, Derby, and Julie Woodward and the management of Shipley College for permission to copy and reproduce documents held with the Saltaire Archive Collection.

Ian Watson  
2011

## THE SHIPLEY PURCHASES

The full extent of Titus Salt's land purchases in Shipley is highlighted with this aerial view.



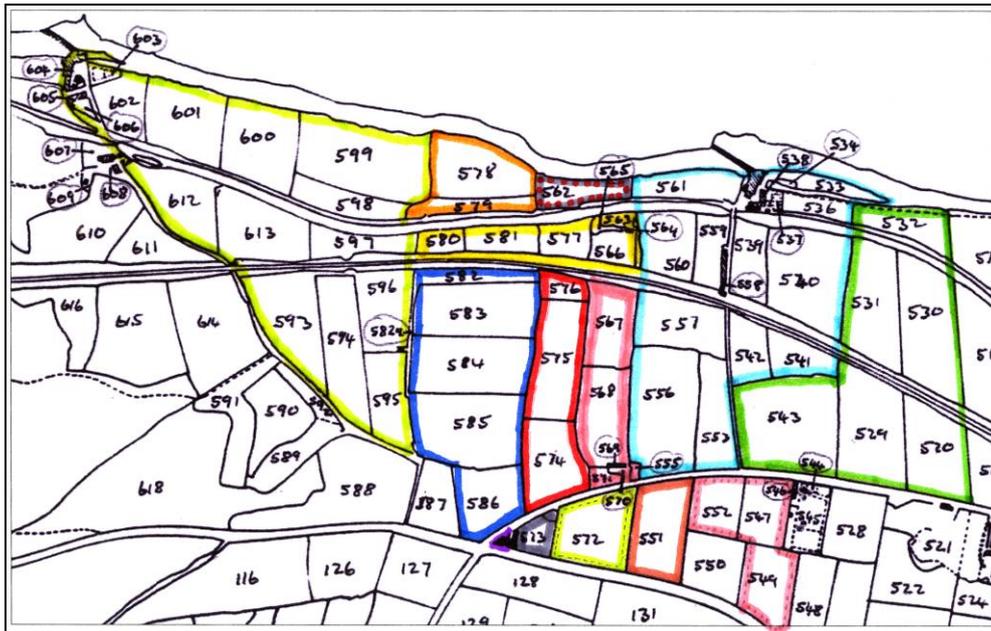
**Salt's Shipley Acquisitions**  
(taken from Google Map)

The area within the purple border, which extends from Hirst Mill and Hirst Lane in the west, to part way down Saltaire Road in the east, shows the whole of Titus Salt's acquisitions in Shipley. The northern boundary is the River Aire, while the southern boundary is Bingley Road.

This can be compared to the area occupied by the mill and village, which is shown in orange. Here, then, is evidence that Salt bought well over twice as much land as he needed for the village.

The orange border also marks the boundary of the Saltaire World Heritage site, on the Shipley side of the river. Though Roberts/Saltaire Park, across the river in Baildon, is also included within the SWH boundary.

The yellow oblong marks the one piece of quarry land, situated behind the Alms Houses at the top of Victoria Road, that was bought by his sons after Titus Salt's death .



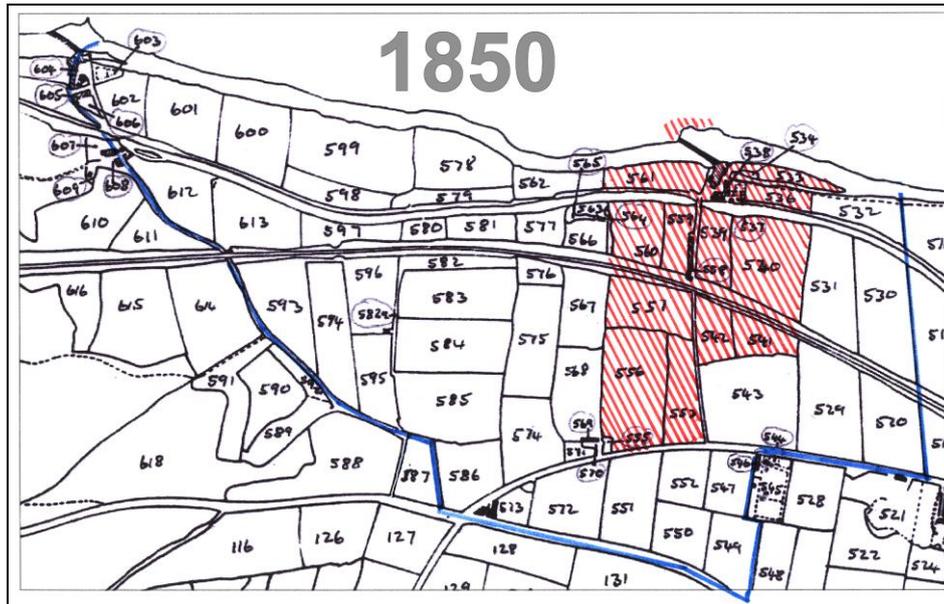
### The original owners

The above plan identifies all the individual blocks of land that Titus Salt bought in Shipley. The land now occupied by the mill and village was originally owned by 8 different land owners.

In addition to these purchases, Salt bought land on both the east and west side of the future village from a further 6 individuals. Making a total of 14 separate purchases between 1850 and 1874.

All of the fields shown in the plan, with the exception of the land between Saltaire Road and Bingley Road, consisted of conventional farmland at the time of the purchases, and contained a range of arable, pasture and grass-meadow.

The fields between Saltaire Road and Bingley Road, though, had been created out of rough moorland by the Shipley Enclosure Act (1815-1825). This land contained good quality sandstone, which was suitable for quarrying. It is almost certain that, having obtained permission for quarrying from the Lord of the Manor, stone from this site, and quarries in other parts of Shipley and the surrounding area were used in the construction of the mill and village.



### First Shipleigh Purchase 1850

According to the information in the deed of sale, the first purchase in Shipleigh appears to have been in late December 1850 when Titus Salt bought around 22 acres of land from William Crompton Stansfield of Esholt Hall, for £12,000. There appears to have been no public notice of this land being placed on sale, so it may have taken place through a private contact.

This land ran between the Shipleigh to Bramley Turnpike Road, later Saltaire Road, and the river. This purchase, highlighted in red in the above plan, included most of the fields on either side of an ancient track called Dixon Mill Lane, along with the old corn and fulling mill down by the river. It also included a tiny piece of land on the Baildon side of the river.

There had been a mill at the bottom of Dixon Mill Lane since 1635, when William Dixon had bought or leased the land on the south bank of the Aire, along with the small plot on the north bank in Baildon. This, I presume, would have been a standard requirement when someone needed to build a water-driven mill, as they would have needed control of at least some land on the opposite side of the river in order to build the weir.

Following the purchase, Dixon built a water-powered corn mill and a fulling mill on the site, along with the weir and a goit.

Fulling is one of the final processes in the manufacture of woollen cloth. Fulling stocks consisted of large wooden hammers, which were driven by the power from a water-wheel. They were used beat the woven cloth in order to blend the short woollen fibres together and produce a firm hard-wearing cloth.

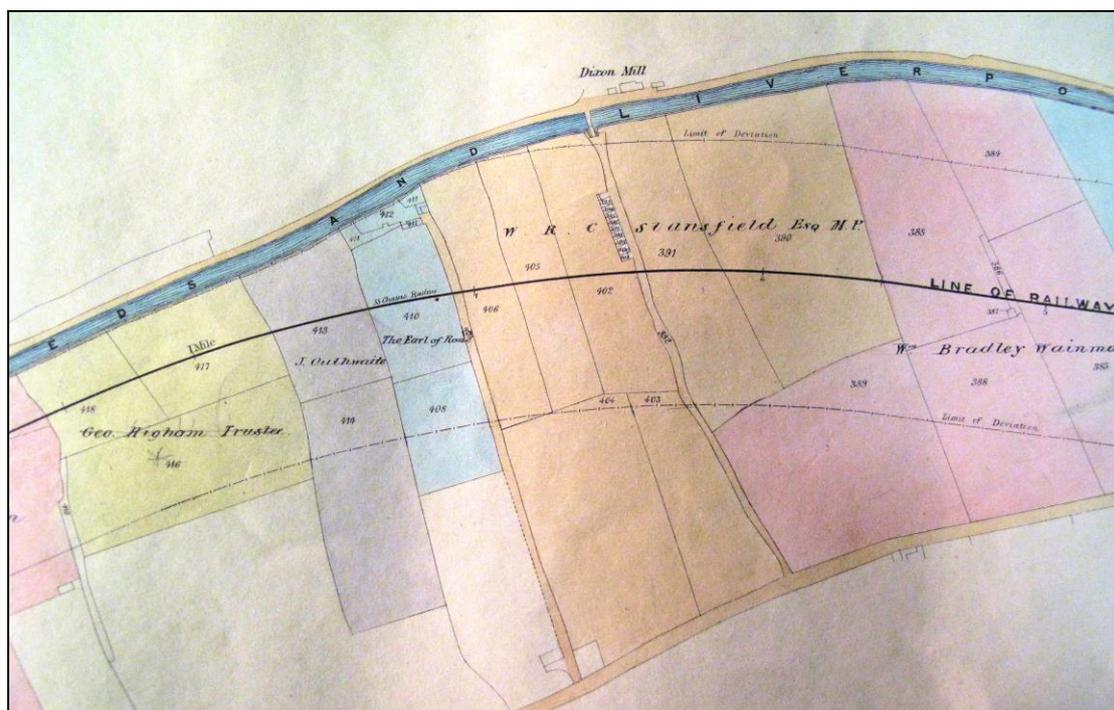
The main part of Dixon's Mill was built over the gap created by the cutting of a goit (a man-made cut) along the length of a gravel bank that lay roughly parallel to the south bank of the river. This goit allowed water to be drawn under the mill to power the water-wheels. It then ran out along the goit.

A surviving plan of the complex (see page 11) shows that the mill complex consisted of relatively small buildings, and, as such, would only have employed a limited number of workers.

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a corn mill, a fulling mill and a woollen mill operating here. The whole complex was run through the power of three water-wheels; one running the corn-milling stones; one running four fulling stocks and one running the carding and scribbling, a processes involving the disentangling of the woollen fibres, prior to spinning.

As the deed of purchase shows, however, at the time that Salt bought it, only the corn mill and the fulling mill were operating.

The corn mill was being operated at that time by John and Joseph Knowles, and the fulling mill by James Davidson.



**Dixon's Mill and the cottages**

Just four years prior to Salt's 1850 purchase, the new railway line from Shipley to Colne had been cut through Dixon Mill Lane.

The plan above shows how the land on which the future mill and village would be constructed looked in the mid-1840s.

The construction of the railway would have required some alteration to the lane as it approached the intersection with the line. It would seem that the levelling of the bed for the rail track as it passed this section had created a shallow embankment on the southern side of the line, and this would have needed to have been breached to allow the old road to descend to the track level. A level crossing was constructed at the intersection with the lane, and a cottage was built on the north side of the track for the crossing-keeper. In 1851, the crossing was manned by Joseph Goldsborough.

Immediately to the north of the crossing-keeper's cottage was a long row of cottages running parallel to the lane. It is likely that they were built sometime after 1837, following Crompton Stansfield's purchase of the land on the west side of Dixon Mill Lane. Prior to this time the land had been owned by a wealthy Bramhope man, Christopher Driver. By 1837, it had passed into the hands of a John Morley of Dishforth, and it was Morley who sold it to Crompton Stansfield.

Salt's deed of purchase says that there were eight cottages in the row, though the census, taken in March 1851, shows that there were 11 families living in the houses. The heads of the households included a clothier, three wool combers, a cloth miller and a cloth fuller, all of whom, presumably, would have worked in the nearby mill.

There was also a maltster, who might have worked in any of the many beer-houses in Shipley, two stone-quarrymen, who would probably have worked in the quarries off 'Saltaire Rd' and two coal miners, who may have worked in the pits of nearby Moorhead and Northcliffe.

One of the cottages was occupied by a William Craven, who had nine children, which, along with his wife, meant that there were 11 people in that one small cottage.



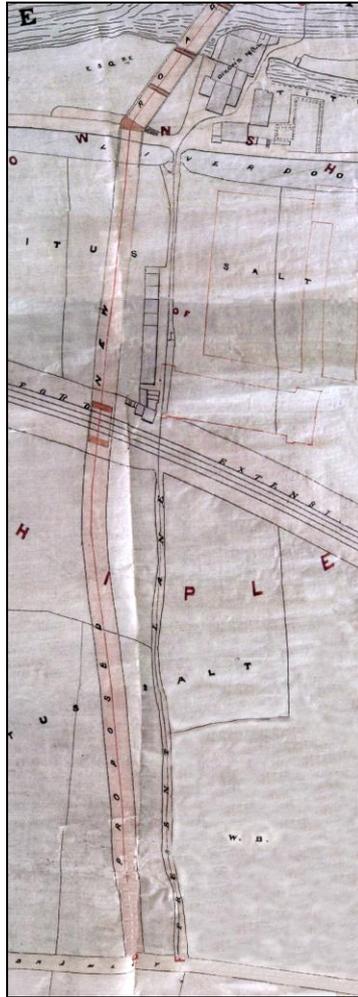
**Dixon's Mill yard -The path to the stepping stones**

Beyond the cottages, a swing-bridge carried the old lane over the Leeds and Liverpool canal. (The base of this bridge can still be seen on the south bank of the canal, just to the east of the present canal bridge)

Dixon Mill Lane, being, presumably, part of an ancient cross-valley route between Shipley, Baildon and Eldwick, was a public bridle way and public right of way. Once over the canal the public pathway led through Dixon's Mill yard, and then towards the river bank, where a set of stepping stones allowed traveller to cross the river. (The public right-of-way is shown on the above plan by the black line)

Once on the Baildon side, the traveller would then have had to wade through a shallow ford, before fully gaining the northern bank.

The most famous user of these stepping-stones was the Airedale Poet, John Nicholson, who drowned at this spot in April 1843, while crossing the river, on his way to Eldwick.



**The second Dixon Mill Lane**

A short time after Titus Salt had completed the purchase of this land he started the construction of a new road, that ran, more or less parallel to the old Dixon Mill Lane.

In order to complete this new road, which initially became the second Dixon Mill Lane, Salt also built a set of bridges over the railway, the canal and the river. Prior to this he obtained permission from the Quarter Session Magistrates to close the public right of way on the old lane and stepping stones and transfer the rights to his new lane and bridges.

(The above plan, incidentally, gives a slightly misleading impression of these roads, due to the fact that the original plan was folded and crumpled, and proved impossible to smooth out when taking the photograph of it).

Salt must have recognised the necessity of constructing a new road and building bridges over both the canal and the railway, in order to facilitate the expected heavy traffic following the opening of the mill, and avoid the obvious problems of using the level crossing and a swing-bridge,

However, the cast-iron bridge over the railway line required the approval of two railway companies before it could be built:

*“We the Leeds and Bradford Railway Company being the owners and We the Midland Railway Company being the occupiers of land over and near which the Extension of the Leeds and Bradford Railway from Shipley to Colne passes, being part of the lands described in the plan hereunto annexed, through and over which part of a certain highway lying between the Shipley and Bramley Turnpike Road and the River Aire is intended to be diverted and turned, in consideration of Titus Salt of Crownest in the township of Hipperholme cum Brighouse in the Parish of Halifax in the West Riding of the County of York Esquire, his heirs or assignees, making and for ever hereafter maintaining such new Highway and the bridge by means of which the same is to cross the said railway, Do hereby consent to the making and continuing such new highway through and over the said Lands and Railway*

*Given under our respective common seals this twenty eighth day of April One thousand eight hundred and fifty-two”.* (QS1/191/10)

The construction of the new road would have involved the demolition of the cottages lining the old lane, and the relocation of their tenants. It is not known what happened to the majority of these people.

Census records show that by 1861 one of the hand wool-combers, Mr Else and his family, had moved to Briggate in Windhill; while Mr Goldsborough, the level-crossing keeper, had become a gardener, working at Holling Hall, at the top of Moorhead Lane. The corn miller, Mr Pickard, who had been living in Dixon Mill yard, was in the same occupation in 1861, though now living in Providence Rd, at nearby Dockfield.

In order for the new road to go over the railway, at the height required to allow rail traffic to pass safely under the bridge, an embankment had to be constructed to raise the road. This embankment appears to start just north of Caroline Street and increases in height as the road approaches the railway, while at the same time allowing the road to drop very gently, at the rate of seven feet between Caroline Street to the start of the bridge.



**The rear of the lower Victoria Road shops**

The extent of this ramp can best be seen by looking from Albert Terrace along the rear of the Victoria Rd shops, and noting the differing heights of the basements (see illustration above). The natural fall of the hill can be seen in the slope of the back lane.

The road on the north side of the railway bridge is supported on a much shorter ramp, designed to carry the road down at a steeper angle to bring it down to the level of the mill yard within a short distance. The canal was then crossed by another new bridge, 68 feet long. (Evidence of the canal company's approval for the canal bridge, which would have been required, has not, as yet, been located).



**The First Bridge across the river**

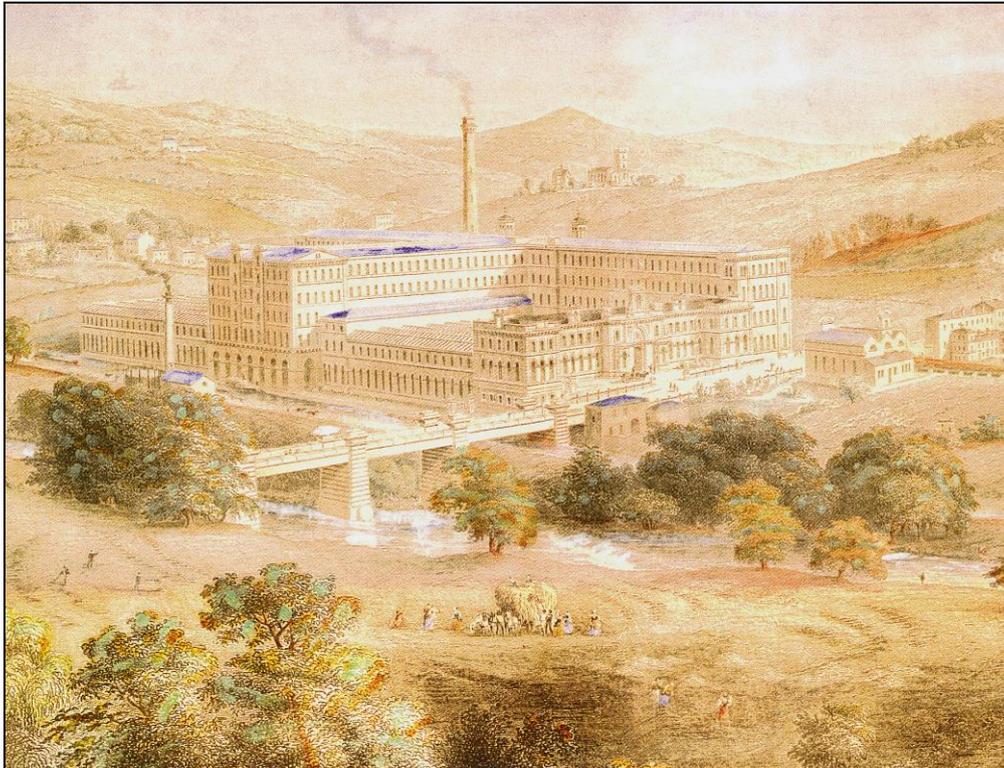
Once across the canal, the new road was carried over the river by a new, 450 ft. long, bridge, which crossed the river at a 30-degree angle to the road.

There appears to be no logical reason for the decision to build the bridge at an angle, as it would have been a much narrower span if the bridge had crossed the river in a straight line, and there is no doubt that by this time Salt owned the land directly opposite.

The bridge was a type of tubular girder bridge. That is, a bridge that was not a fully enclosed box, but where the tubular element was in the sides of the bridge and consisted of narrow hollow sections locked together by a hollow box on top of each side. As can be seen in the illustration below, the box-type top sections of the two sides are a feature of the bridge.

Although there is no evidence to prove it, it is possible that the bridge was designed by William Fairbairn, who had played an important part in the construction of the mill. It is known that Fairbairn had done much of the early research into the structural properties of wrought iron, the material used in the construction of the bridge.

The only known fact about this first bridge is that it was constructed by Messrs. Butler of Stanningley, a firm of bridge builders.



### **First Bridge-print**

The print above is of that first bridge, though the angle of the view gives the appearance that the bridge is straight. We know that it is the first bridge because of its stone piers.

(This print differs from the plan submitted to the Quarter Session Magistrates, shown on page 15, in that it only shows four buttresses; one on the north bank of the canal, one on the south bank of the river, one in the middle of the river and one on the north bank of the river; while the plan suggests that there were as many as six, with a double pair on the north bank of the river, and an extra one between the canal bank and the river bank).

Following Salt's application to the county authorities, two West Riding magistrates, Benjamin Thompson and Richard Dyneley Chamberlain came to Shipley in May 1852, to survey the existing arrangements, and to assess the planned changes. They reported back to the Quarter Sessions on the improvements that the new road and bridges would bring compared to the old lane and stepping-stones.

*“ ... and we certify that the said proposed intended new highway or part of a highway is nearer and more commodious to the public ... as it crosses the said River Aire by a wide and permanent bridge, whereas the (existing) highway ... crosses the said River Aire by a ford and stepping-stones, and is often attended with danger and is altogether impracticable*

*in consequence of the flooding of heavy rain during a considerable part of the winter months ... and that the said proposed bridge is of the width of 27 feet.”* (5<sup>th</sup> May 1852: QT3/4/11)

This was followed by:

*“It is ordered that so much of the said mentioned highway (which leads\_ from the town of Shipley .... (over) the ford and stepping stones over The River Aire ... (is to be) diverted and stopped up... And in its place a new highway is to be set out and made”.*

(3<sup>rd</sup> July 1852: QT3/4/11)

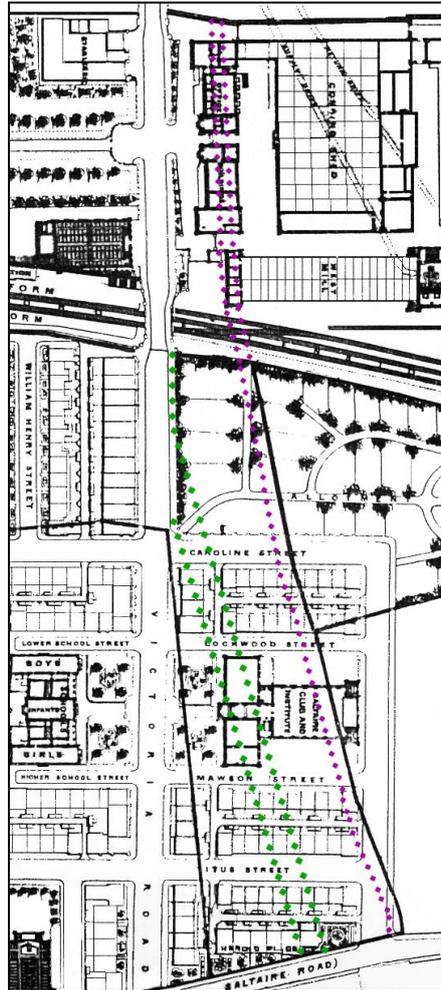
Approval for the stopping up of the old lane and the transfer of the public right of way onto the new road and bridge was sought and given at a sitting of the Quarter Session magistrates at Bradford in June 1852. Although the records show that the road and the bridge were not officially passed for public use until October 1855, it is almost certain that both were in use prior to this time.

The first bridge across the river stood for about 12 years. It was then demolished, and a new bridge was built to replace it.

There is little information concerning the demolition and re-building. One of the few newspaper references to the changes taking place is a newspaper report referring to an incident in May 1868, when a man, named Henry Wood, working on the demolition of the old bridge, was killed. The accident was witnessed by Titus Salt Jr, who happened to be observing the work at the time.

Construction of the new bridge, 327 feet in length, and running straight across the river this time, commenced in 1867. It was completed in 1868. The new bridge was supported by cast-iron columns. The reason for the replacement of the stone buttresses with hollow, cast-iron tubes is not known.

It is more than likely that the top section of the old bridge was used in the new bridge, as old photographs show that the new bridge was also a tubular girder bridge. These old photographs also imply that the caps of the supports were re-used, though they were removed some time before this second bridge was demolished.



### **Reconstruction of the two Dixon Mill Lanes relative to Victoria Road**

It is important to realise that the new road that Titus Salt constructed to replace the original Dixon Mill Lane was not the Victoria Road that exists today.

Using the plans from the various Salt applications to the Quarter Sessions and an undated plan of the village by Lockwood and Mawson, showing the village superimposed onto the early field layout of the site, it is possible to make a reasonable calculation for the line of the two roads that preceded Victoria Road.

In the plan above, the outline of the original Dixon Mill Lane is shown in purple, while Salt's first road, which became the second Dixon Mill Lane is shown in green.

The top part of the original Dixon Mill Lane is now covered by the first few dozen yards of Exhibition Rd. It then ran across the area now occupied by the end houses of Titus St and Mawson St, the rear of Victoria Hall, and the middle of Lockwood St, finally, it ran under the site of the later Congregational Church Sunday School, now the Caroline St car-park.

The second Dixon Mill Lane started at the end of Harold Place, then cut through the site now covered by Titus St, Mawson St and the middle of Victoria Hall, before straightening up about the end of Caroline St. The remaining part of the present-day Victoria Rd, from the junction with Caroline St, down to the river, is the surviving part of that second Dixon Mill Lane.

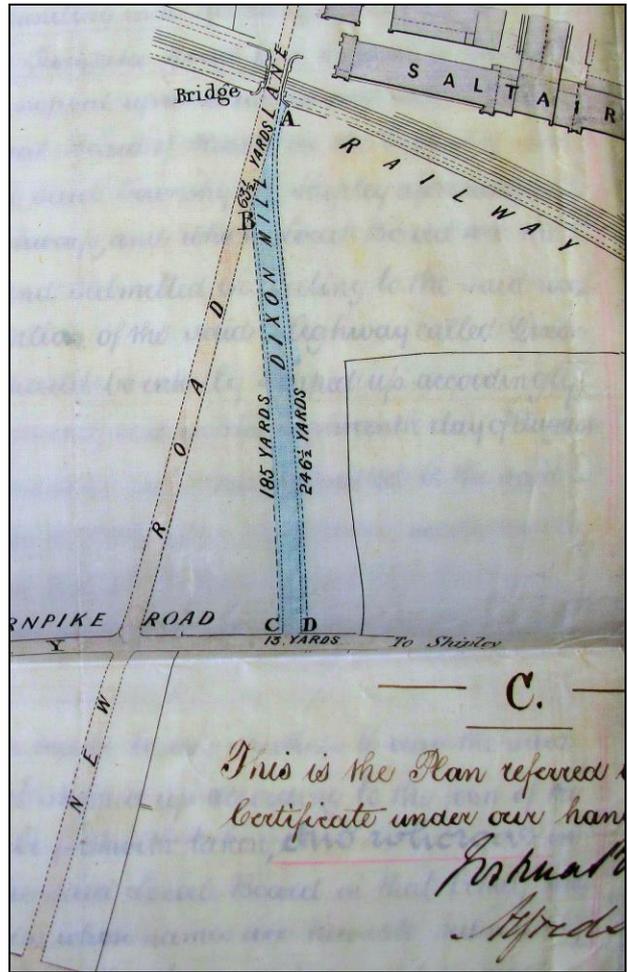
The reason for the unusual line of this first road is not easy to interpret. It is possible that it was laid out simply as a temporary road, in order to allow heavy traffic to have easy access to the site during the construction of the new mill and village. Though why Salt did not have the road go straight up the hill from the start, given that he owned the land as far as the Shipley to Bramley Turnpike, now Saltaire Road, is something of a mystery.

The terrace of shops between the railway line and Caroline St, fronting onto the present Victoria Rd, were built around 1854. At the time of the 1861 census they were described as being in 'Victoria Street', and they would have been the only buildings in the road south of the railway bridge.

It would appear that the second Dixon Mill Lane was only in existence for around ten years. In August 1863, Titus Salt applied to the Shipley Local Board to have the southern portion of this 1853 road, between Caroline St and the turnpike road, closed, as he intended to integrate the northern portion into another new road that he had laid down. Having by this time purchased the land all the way up to the Bradford-Bingley Road.

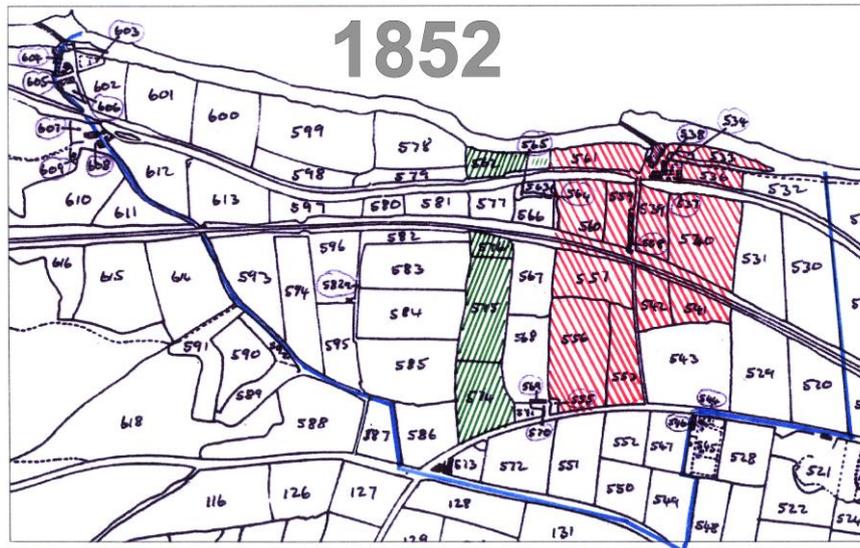
The Shipley Local Board were in favour of the scheme, though they had to get the formal approval of the West Riding Magistrates in order to confirm their decision. This was done in the Quarter Session meeting at Leeds in September of that year.

The process of closing roads and transferring public rights of way allowed for public consultation and the right to object to the plans. The law required that notices of the intention of a change of use had to be posted at either end of the 'old' lane, and that duplicate notices were to be fixed to the door of Shipley Parish Church for four successive Sundays after the 21<sup>st</sup> August. It was also required that notices be published in the local press. This had also occurred in 1852, in connection with the first road and bridge. The Bradford Observer ran the formal announcement about the changes in Saltaire for four weeks, from the last week in August through to the third week in September 1863. The records show that there were no objections from either Shipley or Baildon residents to any of the proposals that Salt had planned, and the transfer of rights to the new road went ahead as planned.



**The new Victoria Road, showing its relationship to the second Dixon Mill Lane**

The new road was integrated into Dixon Mill Lane at Caroline Street. The legal closure of the southern section of the lane, (marked in blue on the above plan) allowed it to be eradicated and subsequently lost, by the development of the houses that constitute the eastern side of Victoria Rd, the building of which commenced in 1868, and the building of the Institute (later Victoria Hall), opened 1871. This same period also saw the development of the Alms houses and the hospital.



**ShIPLEY Purchase 1852**

Towards the end of 1851, one year after the purchase of the Dixon Mill site, Titus Salt bought another set of fields running from the turnpike road down to the river, (shown in green on the above plan). He also bought two fields between the river and the canal at this time from Dr. John Outhwaite of Bradford.

Now this situation is interesting, in that, as we can see, he now had two blocks of land, separated by another piece of land that he didn't own.

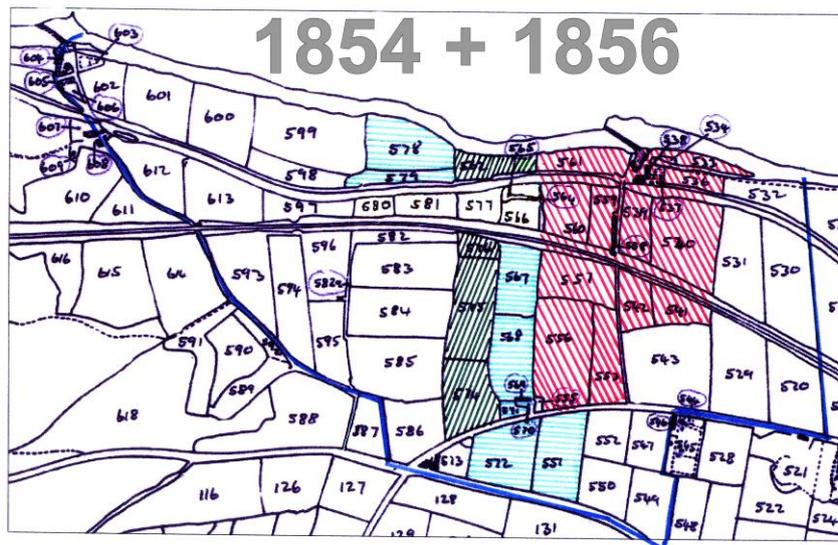
And it highlights another of the big questions regarding Saltaire. That is, why did Salt start building the mill and the village before he had bought all the land that he needed for the construction?

We do know that house building for the village started in 1853. The first houses to be erected were in William Henry Street and the lower eastern side of George Street. Shortly after the first few houses had been built, work stopped for some time. There are various theories for this stoppage, though it did coincide with the period before he obtained the middle block of land, which he acquired from the Earl and Countess of Rosse, the lords of the manor of Shipley, in February 1854. Following the recommencement of the work, building then proceeded slowly, up, and across the hill, for the next 21 years, as and when the various blocks of land were purchased.

The implication of this second purchase with a gap between it and the first block, is that either Salt must have been very confident about his future purchases, or he was very flexible concerning the final development of the village.

It is known that there was an original plan for a much larger development than the one that took place, with the village stretching across both sides of the river. If this is evidence that Salt changed his mind at least once,

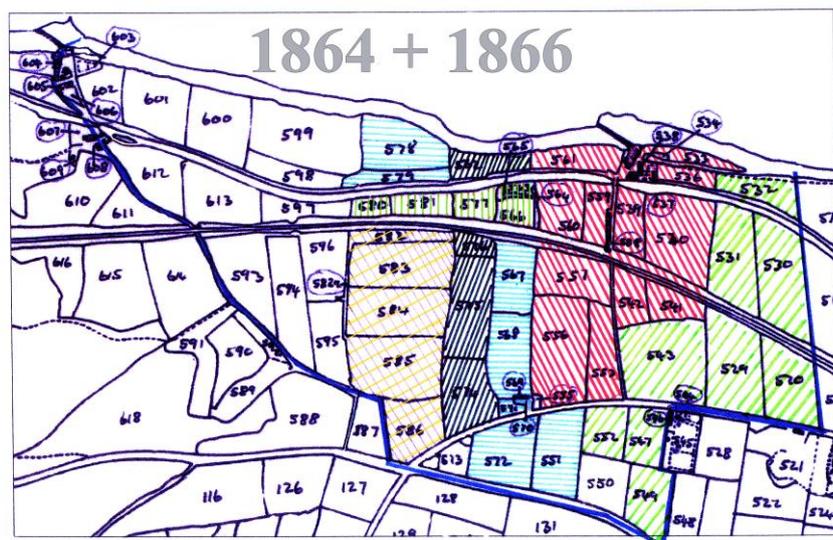
the implication is, therefore, that he could have changed his mind on several other occasions.



Shipleigh Purchase 1854 - 1856

In the same year, 1854, Salt bought land on the south side of the Shipleigh to Bramley Turnpike Road from two members of the Denby family. This land would be used for the future development of Dove Street, Jane Street and part of Gordon Terrace.

In 1857 Salt bought several plots of land between the railway and the canal from the Midland Railway Company.



Shipleigh Purchase 1864

There was then a gap of a few years before he bought the next plot of land from a Thomas Chambers of Brighouse. This consisted of the land that lies to the east of the present Albert Road, (marked in yellow on the above plan).

But, even though by 1864 he now had virtually enough land for his village, he didn't stop there.

A couple of years later, in 1866, he bought the land on the south side of Saltaire Road, between the present Park Street and the rear of the top section of the present Victoria Road.

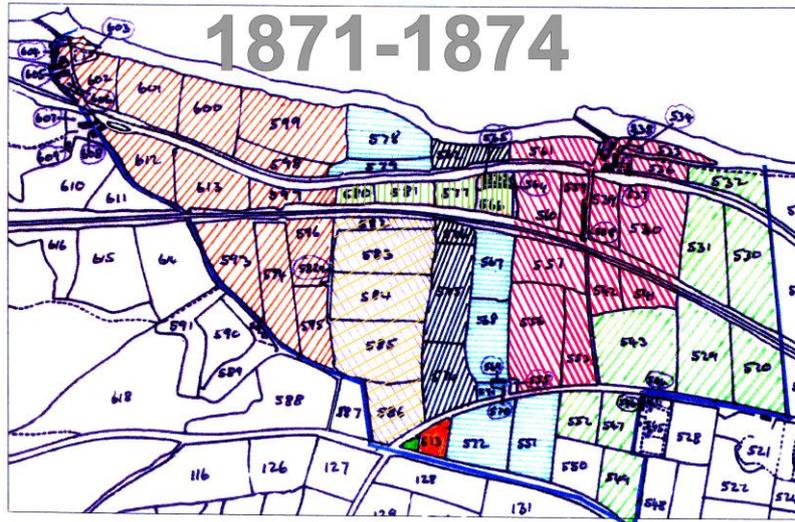
Also, around this time he bought a large area of land to the east of his first acquisition from Matthew Wilson of Eshton Hall at Gargrave, one of the trustees of the estate of William Wainman of Cowling, whose family had owned Shipley Hall, now the Conservative Club in Otley Road.

This new land stretched all the way down Saltaire Road to just beyond, what is now the Wycliffe Middle School, and included the site to the east of the school. Sir Titus sold the land for the school, following the 1870 Education Act. The school, which opened in 1876, was at first known as the Shipley Board School and later as Shipley Central School.

In 1872, Sir Titus gave land to the east of the school to the Primitive Methodists, who built a large chapel on the site.



**Saltaire Road showing the Central School and the Primitive Methodist Church**



**Shipley Purchase 1871-74**

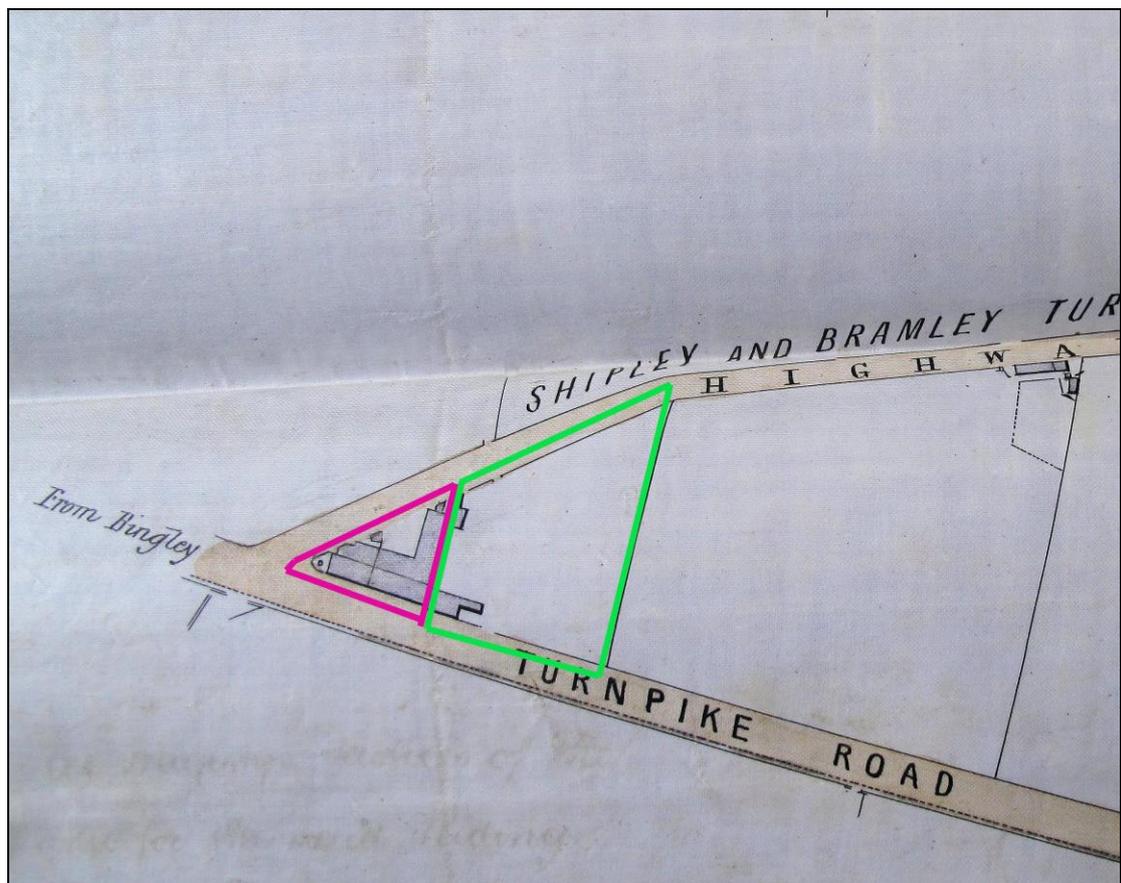
That same year, 1872, Salt bought a large area of land to the east of Hirst Lane (coloured orange on the above plan), from the paper manufacturer, William Wright. The purchase also included Hirst Mill where Wright had had his manufactory.

Much of this land was bought by Shipley Urban District Council in 1922 and used for the building of a new council estate. The land between the river and the railway was converted into playing fields and allotments around the same time.

In 1871, Salt had bought the very corner site at the junction of what later became Saltaire Road and Bingley Road. The buildings on the site, at the time of the purchase, consisted of a few cottages and a beer-house. These buildings may have included the old turnpike house, as this had been the junction of Shipley to Bramley Turnpike road and the Bradford to Keighley Turnpike, and there is some evidence of a chain bar being located in somewhere in this vicinity.

But the absolute last piece in the jigsaw of Salts acquisitions of land required for the village, was the plot of land, on the eastern side of that corner plot.

It had been owned by the Shipley Overseers ever since the enclosure in the 1820s and had been used for many years as a council yard, until Sir Titus obtained it from the Shipley Local Board in 1874.



Corner Plot 1871-74



### **Gordon Terrace**

It was this final purchase that allowed Salt to complete the building of Gordon Terrace, Jane Street and Dove Street, the eastern sections of which had been built some 8 years earlier.

This purchase marked the final stage in the building of the village of Saltaire, and indeed, the end of Salt's land purchases in Shipley. In fact, Titus Salt died two years after this final purchase.

The Salt's mill company did acquire more land in Shipley after Titus Salt's time, but that is another story.

## BAILDON

The origins of Titus Salt's first purchase in Baildon lay in the decision of the Lord of the Manor, and the largest property owner in the township at this time, Miss Anna Jane Meek, to sell off the 750 acres of land, comprising her manor and farms in Baildon, in 1849.

At the time of the sale, Miss Meek was in her seventies. In all probability, she had been born in Baildon Hall, but by this time she was not a Baildon resident. She lived in Kirk Hammerton, which lies between Harrogate and York, and so perhaps she had just lost interest in the area, or perhaps property prices were on the rise, and she decided to take advantage of the situation.

**BAILDON.**  
VALUABLE AND EXTENSIVE  
FREEHOLD ESTATE, MILL, AND MANOR OF  
**BAILDON.**

In the Parish of Otley, in the West Riding of the County of York, FOR SALE BY PRIVATE CONTRACT.

**T**HIS Valuable Freehold ESTATE comprises the Manor or Lordship of **Baildon**, with all its rights and privileges, extending over at least 750 Acres, and the CORN MILL, with the capacious and substantial Stone Built MANSION HOUSE, called **BAILDON** HALL, together with the Rich Arable, Meadow, Pasture, and Wood' Lands, containing 606 Acres or thereabouts, conveniently divided into Eight Farms, with suitable Farm Houses, Cottages and Buildings thereon, situate in the Township of **Baildon**, and on the banks of the river Aire, in the most picturesque part of the beautiful and fertile valley of Airedale.

On a large portion of the Estate there are splendid and unequalled sites for the erection of genteel Residences, and also for Buildings connected with Trade.

**Baildon** is within 4 miles of the flourishing and increasing Town of Bradford, and 8 of Halifax; its proximity to the Leeds and Bradford Railway affords the means of cheap and easy Transit to all parts of the Kingdom.

The capitalist, the man of business, and the building speculator, will find this an opportunity rarely if ever offered for the profitable investment of capital.

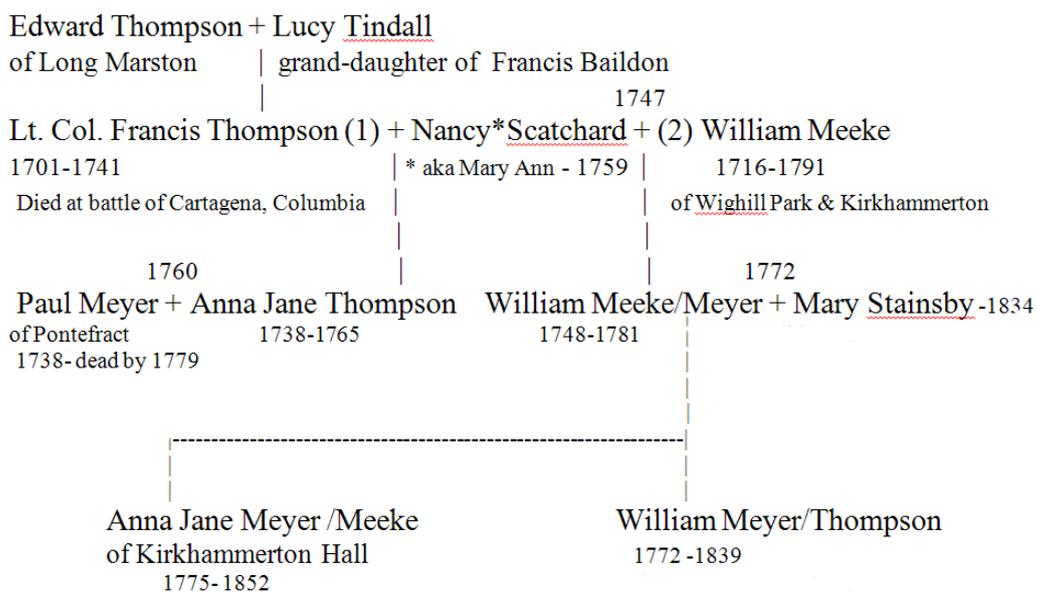
The Estate may be viewed on application to Mr. THOMAS WALKER, of **Baildon** Mill, with whom a Plan thereof is lodged for inspection; and further particulars obtained on application to  
Mr. DESS, Solicitor, Knaresbrough.

Knaresbrough, August 15th, 1849.

Baildon Manor sale advert : Bradford Observer August 1849

In 1737, the lord of the manor of Baildon was Lt.Col. Francis Thompson. His Baildon lands included ‘Jowetts Farm’, now the eastern end of the Coach Road; ‘Hall Farm’, which spread from the banks of the River Aire and then up the hill between Cliffe Lane and Baildon or Barnsley Beck; ‘Brackenhall Farm’, on the Glen and the ‘Moor Farms’, better known now as Low Springs Farm, by the boundary with Hawksworth. The manor also included the possession of Baildon Hall and the Corn mill by Baildon Bridge. There were also a few isolated small farms and individual house properties scattered around the township.

### THOMPSON – MEEK – MEYERS of BAILDON



### Thompson-Meeke-Meyer Family Tree

Francis Thompson and his wife Nancy had one child Anna Jane, who had married a Paul Meyer of Pontefract in 1760.

Following the death of Francis in 1741, in South America, at the battle of Cartagena, now in modern day Columbia, his widow, Nancy, married a William Meeke of Wighill Park, near York.

They had a son also named William, who eventually inherited the Baildon manor and lands from his half-sister, Anna Jane, who was childless. But she left it to him, following her death in 1765, only on condition that he changed his name to that of her late husband, and he adopted the name of Meyer.

On the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1780, this same William Meeke, now William Meyer, shot dead a York court official named Joseph Spink.

It appears that earlier in the day Meyer had been arrested by the bailiffs of York for debt. The Sheriff of York had signed the warrant, as Meyer owed £82 in an unpaid debt to a James Beckwith, which suggests that, despite his apparent wealth, he was living beyond his means.

Following the arrest, it was the intention of the officials to take Mr Meyer to the debtor's prison on the Ouse Bridge.

But he managed to persuade the bailiffs to let him remain in his lodgings in Micklegate, in order for him to try and arrange bail. So, the bailiffs left him in the care of two of their staff, one of whom was Joseph Spink.

Sometime during the course of the evening, Meyer persuaded his wife to bring him his pistols from another room, and on acquiring them, he threatened his guards. As they were trying to run away, Meyer fired, and Spink was hit in the throat. (National Archives: ASSI 45/34/2)

He died of his injuries the following day, and both Meyer and his wife were put on trial for murder. His wife was found not guilty, but William Meyer, who had claimed in his defence, that he had only meant to frighten the guards, and that the pistol had gone off by accident, was found guilty. He was sentenced to death, and subsequently executed at the York Tyburn on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1781.

On his death William Meyer left a widow and two children, William and Anna Jane. William was only 9 years old when his father was executed, and it can be assumed that the family estates would have been held in trust for him until he reached legal maturity at twenty-one.

What we do know is that practically the first thing he did when he finally came of age was to change his name, presumably to try and avoid the embarrassment of being connected to his notorious father. As the London Gazette for that month shows, on March 18th 1794 he legally adopted the name of Thompson. Although he had no blood connection to the Thompsons of Baildon, he claimed it was a means of honouring the old family whose lands he now possessed.

On his death in 1839, he left everything to his sister, the second Anna Jane Meyer. Though by this time she had changed her name back to Meeke, in order to inherit from her Meeke grandfather. (London Gazette 29<sup>th</sup> October 1839)

And it was this Anna Jane Meeke who placed all her Baildon property up for sale in August 1849.

The auction, held in Bradford in October of that year, was not a complete success, and only part of the property was disposed of.

The unsold land was then advertised for sale in the February 1850 issues of the Bradford Observer. And it was at this second sale that Titus Salt bought his first Baildon property, according to the date in the deed, in July of that year, 5 months before his first Shipley purchase of Dixon's Mill.

**BAILDON.**

**VALUABLE FREEHOLD BUILDING GROUND & LAND AT BAILDON, near SHIPLEY, in the West Riding of the County of York.**

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, by Mr. G. T. LISTER, at the George Hotel, in Bradford, on Monday, the 4th of March, 1850, at three o'clock in the afternoon precisely, subject to the conditions of sale to be then produced:**

**A**LL those several Closes or Parcels of Arable, Meadow, and Pasture LAND, containing together by a recent admeasurement 31A. 2R. 9P., more or less, situate in the township of Baildon, near to Shipley, and in the several occupations of Thomas Walker, Nancy Walker, Benjamin Taylor, and in hand, bounded on the north by the Bradford and Otley Turnpike Road, on the south by the River Aire, and on the west by Baildon Mill, in the following Lots as now staked out.

Lots.	Culture.	A.	R.	P.
1	Grass	...	3	1 20
2	do.	...	3	1 20
3	do.	...	4	0 0
4	do.	...	4	0 4
5	do.	...	4	0 0
6	do.	...	4	0 3
7	do.	...	3	0 23
8	Arable	...	5	2 19
Total...		...	31	2 9

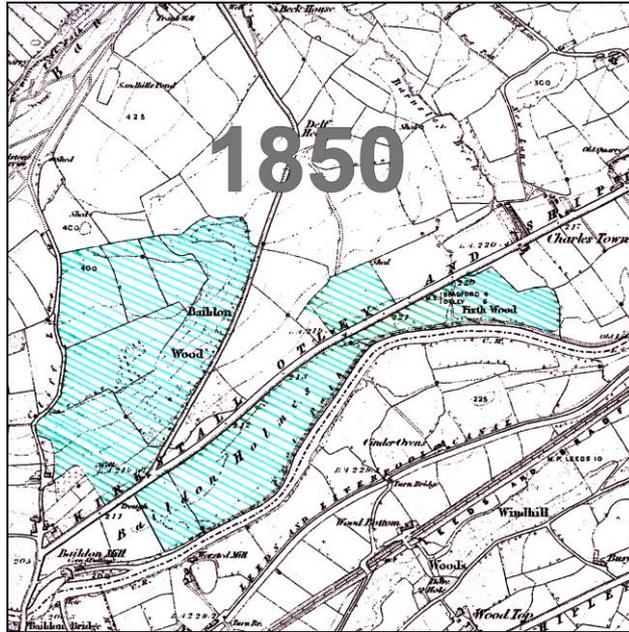
**LOT 9.** All those several Closes of Arable, Pasture, and Wood LAND, containing together by estimation 42A. 1R. 18P., more or less, situate and being near to Shipley aforesaid, and in the occupation of William Walker, Thomas Walker, and in hand, bounded on the west by Cliffe Lane, on the north by property lately purchased by Mr. Maud, and on the south and east by the road from Shipley to Baildon, and the property of Mrs. Rangdale.

The Lots from 1 to 8 inclusive, are eligible sites for the erection of Mills, and other buildings connected with trade requiring water or water-power, and a considerable portion of Lot 9 is also well adapted for Building Ground.

Plans of the Lots may be seen at the Offices of **Mr. LISTER**, the Auctioneer, at Bradford.

The Tenants will show the premises, and further information may be had, on application to **Mr. DEWES**, Solicitor, Knaresbrough.

21<sup>st</sup> February 1850 Sales advert of Baildon property



### Salt's 1850 Purchase

The first blocks of land that Salt bought in Baildon covered the area between Baildon Road and Cliffe Lane, as well as a large area of land between Otley Road and the river.

While the block of land that Salt bought down by the river does not correspond precisely with the above sales notice, it is close enough in description and size to suggest that this is the land that was advertised in the auction notice.

Now, it's interesting to note that the February sales notice made specific reference to the riverside land being suitable for mill construction; and it raises the question of whether Salt might possibly have originally planned to build his mill and village on the Baildon side of the river.

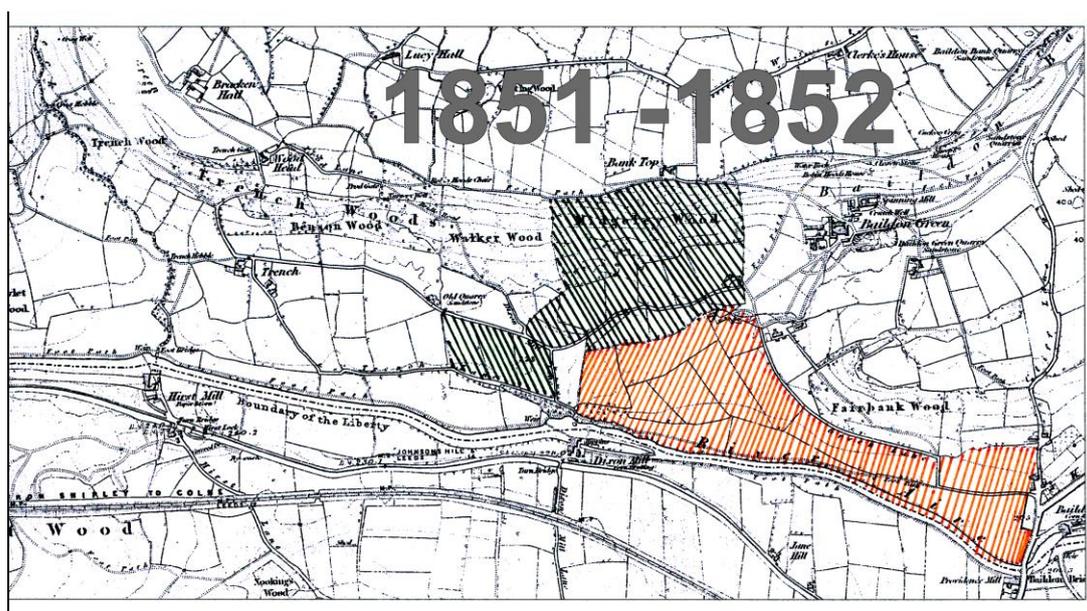
According to Balgarnie, Salt approached Lockwood and Mawson, the architects, in November of 1850, and told them that he had purchased land, 'near Shipley', and that he wanted them to do part of the work. He explained that the Shipley based architect and land agent, George Knowles was also to be involved in the project (p.91 Balgarnie's Salt, Barlo and Shaw (Nemine Juvante (Saltaire Publications 2003).

This story presents two problems. The evidence of the deeds suggests that Salt did not purchase the Dixon Mill site until the end of December, also, as far as I am aware, there is no evidence that George Knowles had any connection with the Dixon Mill purchase.

He did, however, have some connection with at least some of the land that Salt purchased in Baildon, as he was a partner of Bailey Blackburn (see below).

There is, therefore, just a hint of suspicion that the land that Salt was referring to when he went to see Lockwood and Mawson, was this land in Baildon.

If this was the case, then it is likely that Salt only changed his mind when the more suitable location of the Dixon Mill site in Shipley, with its closer proximity to the canal and railway, came up for sale later that year. Of course, the real problem is our lack of knowledge on Titus Salt's thoughts at this time. And I have to say that this is simply a speculative idea on my part. Although, what else he might have wanted this land for, given that, subsequently, he did nothing with it within his own lifetime, suggests that the theory might be worth considering.



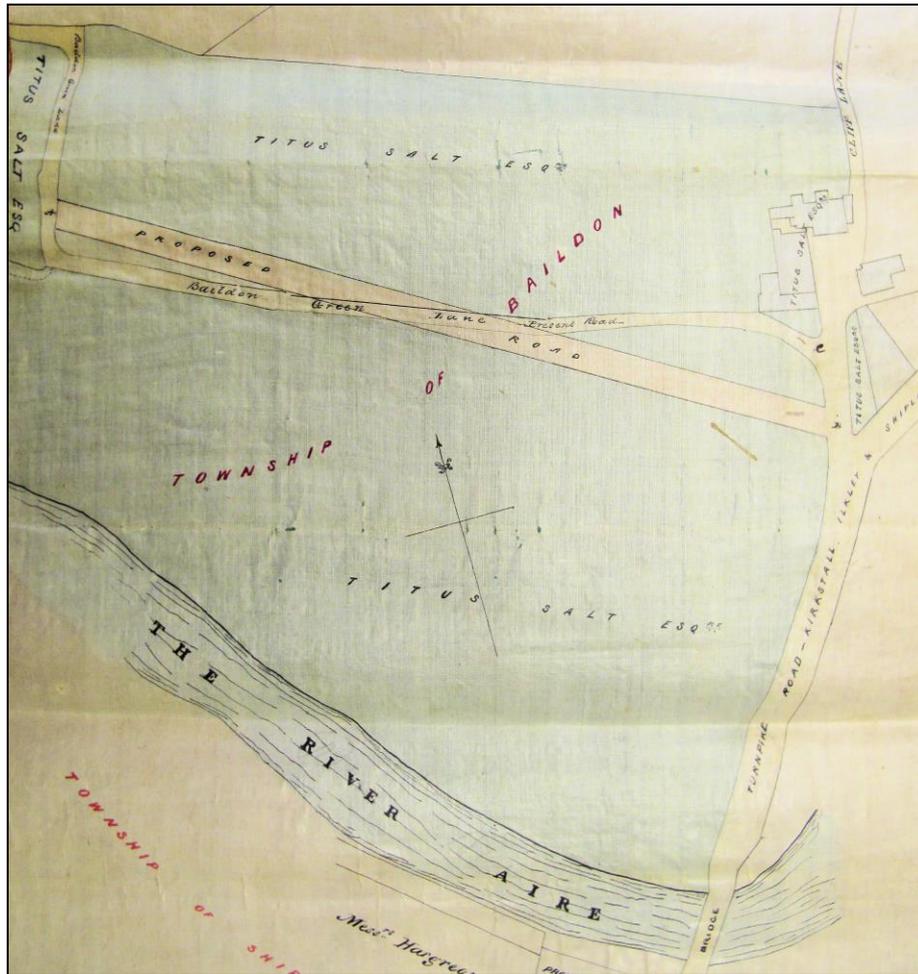
**Salts 1851-2-Purchase**

The year after his first purchase, Salt bought another large piece of land to the west of Otley Road.

(This is the area marked in orange on the plan above. The area marked in black is the Midgeley Wood and Thompson Lane area, bought the following year from Richard Paul Amplett, the son in law of the Ferrands of Bingley, who had originally owned the land.)

This riverside land had been part of Miss Meeke's first sale, and had originally been bought by Bailey Blackburn, a Bradford chemist and land speculator, who lived in Baildon.

George Knowles appears to have advertised this land for sale in June 1850 (see Bradford Observer 27<sup>th</sup> June 1850), though Salt did not purchase the land until September 1851. According to Cudworth, Blackburn sold this land to Salt for £10,000, which was twice the amount he had paid for it a year earlier.

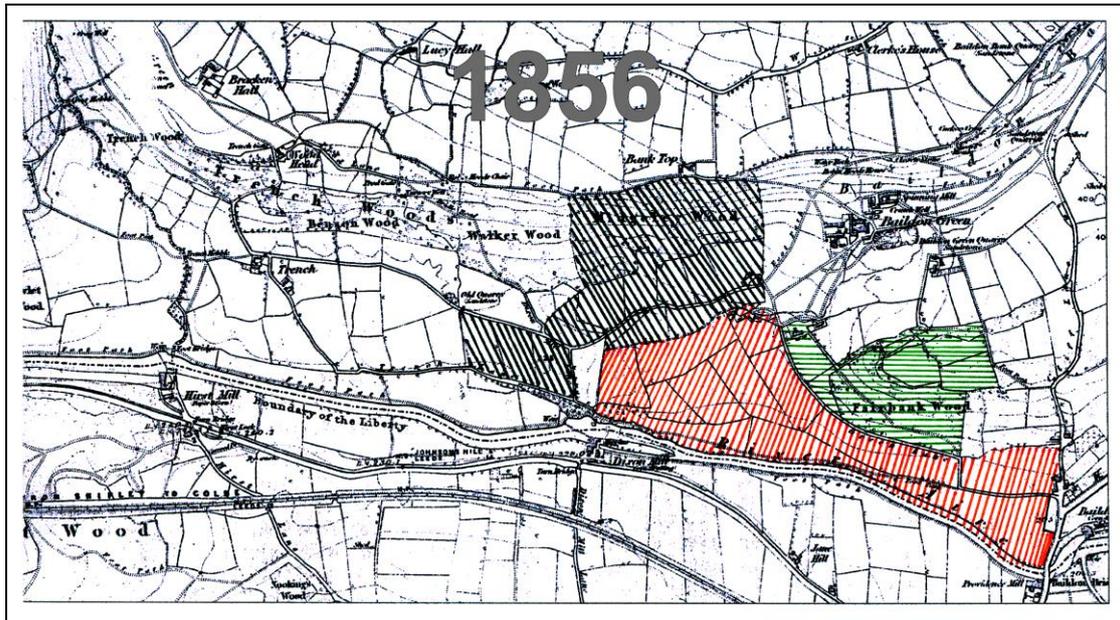


### The new and old Green Lane 1851

A short time after buying the river-side land, Salt had a new road cut through from Otley Road up to the sharp right-hand corner of the old Green Lane. This new road replaced the old, narrow lane, that for some reason didn't suit Mr Salt.

The laying out of this new road, does suggest that Salt was planning something in the area, and it has been suggested that he had intended to build a house, and create a parkland along the riverside.

The original Baildon Green Lane was a public right of way, and in 1852, Salt applied for permission to transfer that right onto his new road and eliminate the old lane.



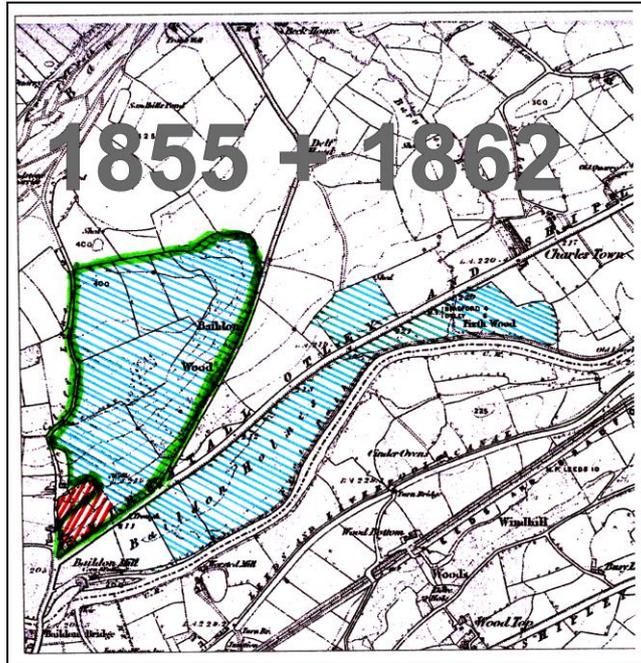
**Baildon-1856-Purchase**

In 1856, Salt bought the small wooded hill to the north-east of Green Lane, called Fairbank Wood, along with the associated farm.



**The Knoll**

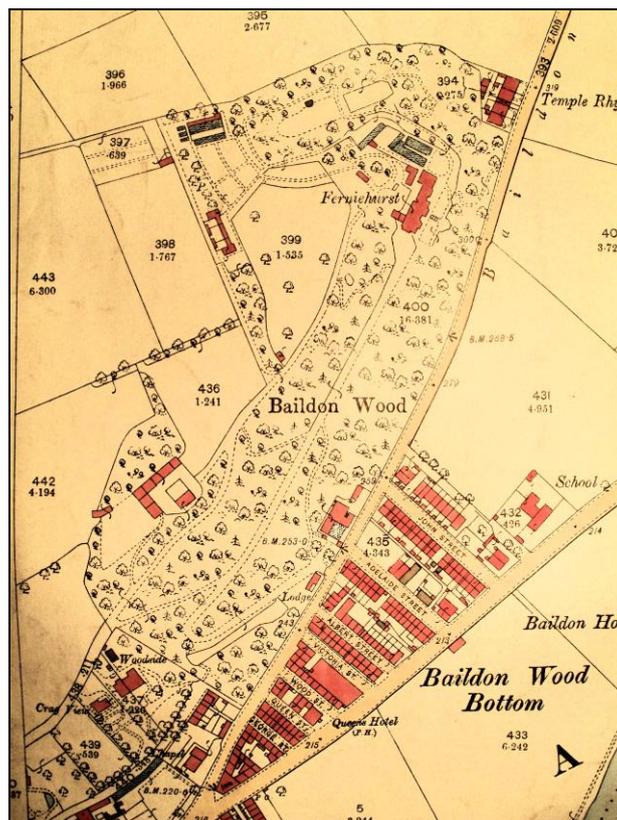
In 1862 he sold this land to Charles Stead, a manager and later a director of the mill who built a house called 'The Knoll' at the highest point in the wood.



**Baildon-1855-62-Purchase**

In 1855, Salt had bought a small group of cottages and orchards at the junction of Cliffe Lane and Otley Road.

But in 1862 he transferred most of this land and the land to the north of it to his son Edward, who had the house he called 'Ferniehurst' built on the site.



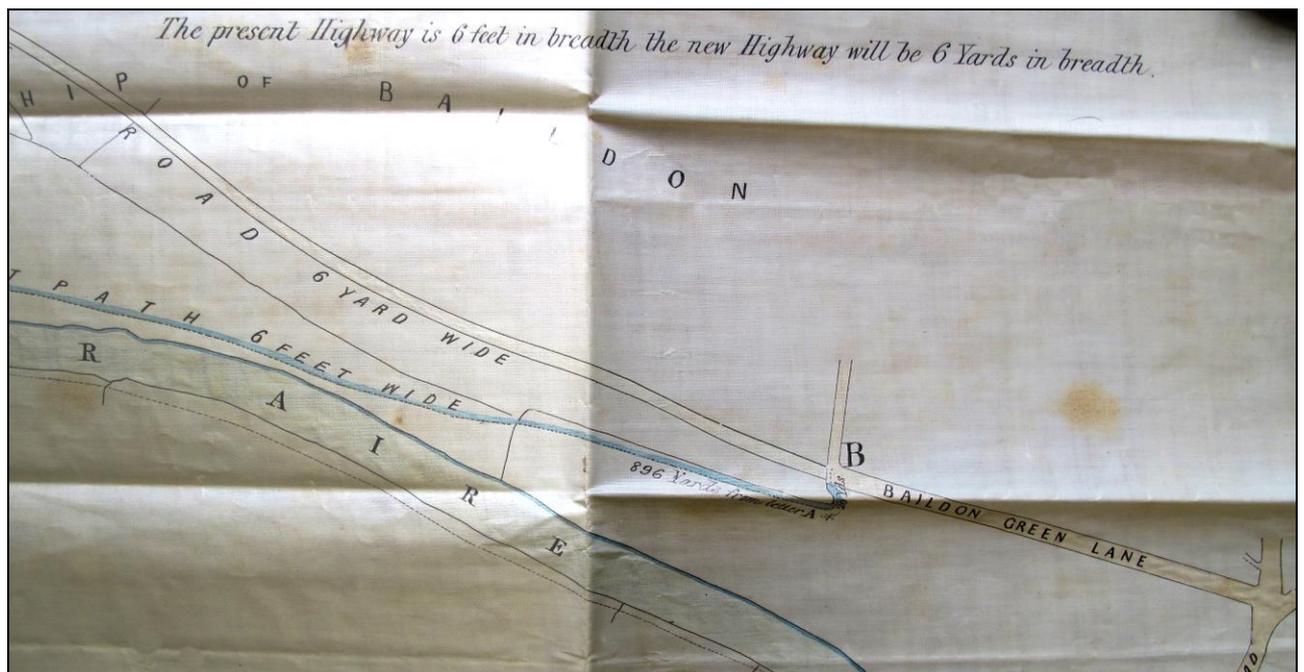
**Ferniehurst**

There are no known photographs of Ferniehurst, but as can be seen from the OS map above, it was a substantial house. It had formal gardens, several large glass-houses and from the lodge in Baildon Road, a long winding drive through a private wood.

Even though Salt was buying a lot of land during this period, he also occasionally sold some.

Throughout 1856 and '57, he was selling off small plots of land around the area of Green Lane and Cliffe Lane, to various private individuals.

Following these sales, several private houses, and terraces were constructed in the area.



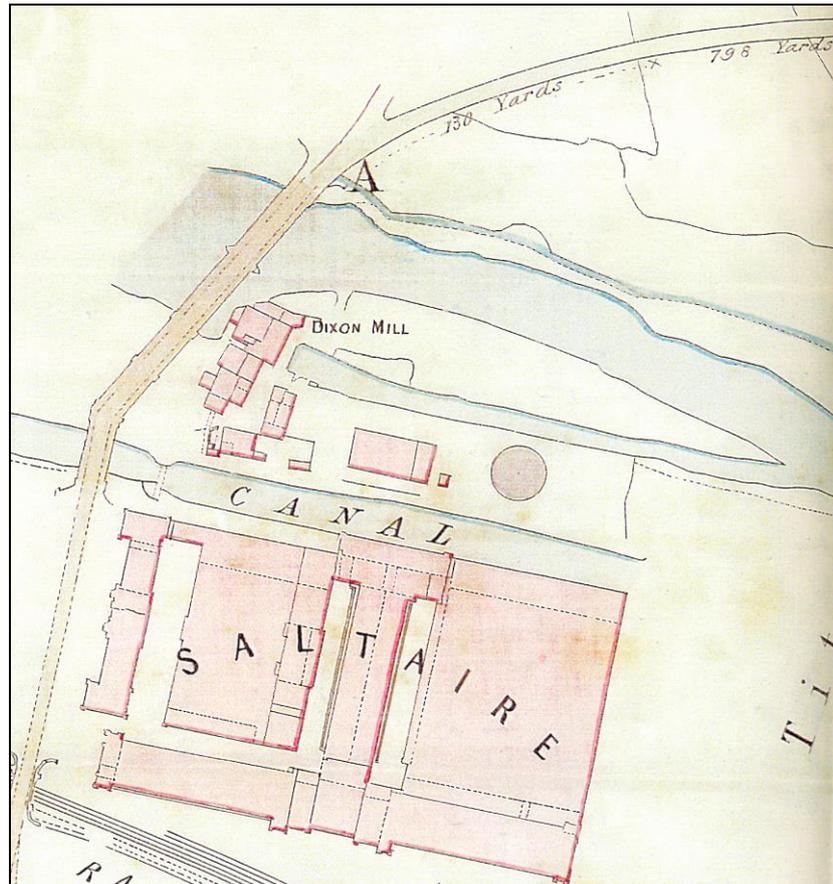
### Green Lane junction

It may be argued that whatever his original intentions regarding his Green Lane and Otley Road purchases, Salt had changed his mind, and he was getting rid of some of his surplus land.

He did however, remain committed to most of the land lying to the west of Otley Road.

A few years after laying out the new Green Lane, Salt started the construction of another brand-new road, leading from the corner of Green Lane to the bottom of Victoria Road.

The plan above shows the first section of the new road, with the old riverside path highlighted in blue. And the plan below shows the continuation of the new road as far as the bridge.



**Coach Road 2-1863**

The plan above shows the continuation of the new road as far as the bridge. It also shows the relationship between Salt's new mill and the old Dixon's Mill. The junction of the road and bridge may look slightly strange, compared to the present Coach Road, but it's only because there was a re-alignment of this western end of the road, when the new straight bridge was put across the river, and a new link to the bridge had to be made.

It's interesting to note that in all probability, this road, which was nearly 1 mile long, was built simply as a private carriage road to allow Salt's son, Edward, and his manager, Charles Stead, to travel to the mill easily, rather than going around and through Shipley. And of course, he also built an extension to this road following the purchase of Milner Fields, for the benefit of Titus jnr., all of which seems to be an indication of the extravagance of Salt at this time.

Having completed this eastern section of the Coach Road, Salt applied to have the ancient public right of way transferred from the river-side path up onto his new road.

This meant that although the Coach Road was a private road, pedestrians and horse riders had the legal right to use it.

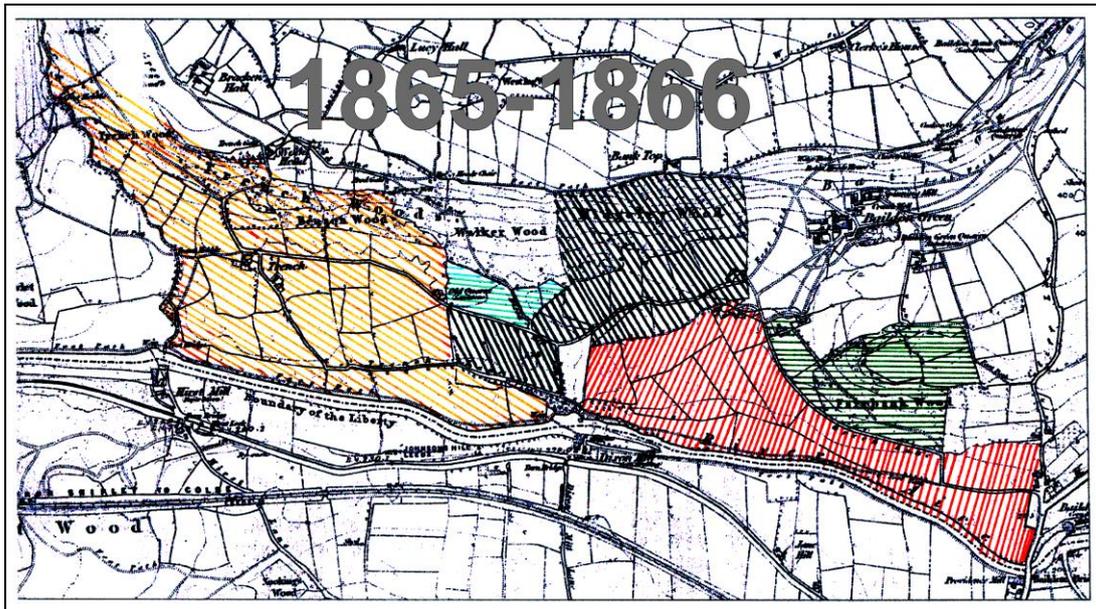


**Gate house**

Old photographs show gates at the corner of Green Lane and the Coach Road, and there were also gates at the bottom of Victoria Road, But they were only there to stop the unauthorised entry of commercial vehicles, who needed permission to access the road and the bridge. However, various farmers and other property owners who lived within this area had certain legal rights of access, and they did have the right to use the new road and the Victoria Road bridge.

The removal of the legal entitlement to use the old riverside path meant that it could now be closed, leaving the land free for some form of development, though we now know, this never happened in Salt's lifetime.

There are, of course, sections of this path still surviving on the side of the river between Otley Road and the Victoria Road bridge. Though it can be assumed that they are not officially public rights of way anymore, and their survival is presumably just a matter of luck.



### Baildon-1865-6 purchase

In 1865 Salt bought two fields just below Walker Wood, from the Dawson family of Baildon Green (marked in light green on the plan above).

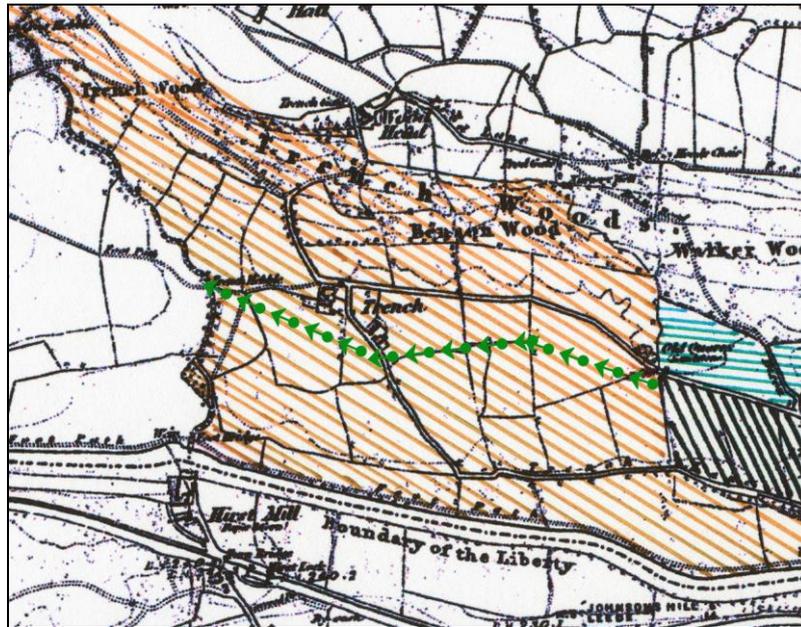
The following year, Richard Paul Amplett sold Salt the two Trench Farm properties. Their fields ran from the lower section of the future Saltaire Park, right up to the boundary with Bingley at Load Pit Beck (This land is marked in orange).

Now these, at least as far as I have been able to identify, were the final acquisitions that Titus Salt made within Baildon.

It is possible that I have missed some of the purchases while searching the indexes at Wakefield; and I should point out that, there is just one field in the centre of this picture that I have not been able to prove was bought during Titus Salt's lifetime, though it almost certainly came into the possession of the family at some point in time.

It's also possible that his sons bought more land either before or after Titus' death, but that is something that I have not gone into up to the present time.

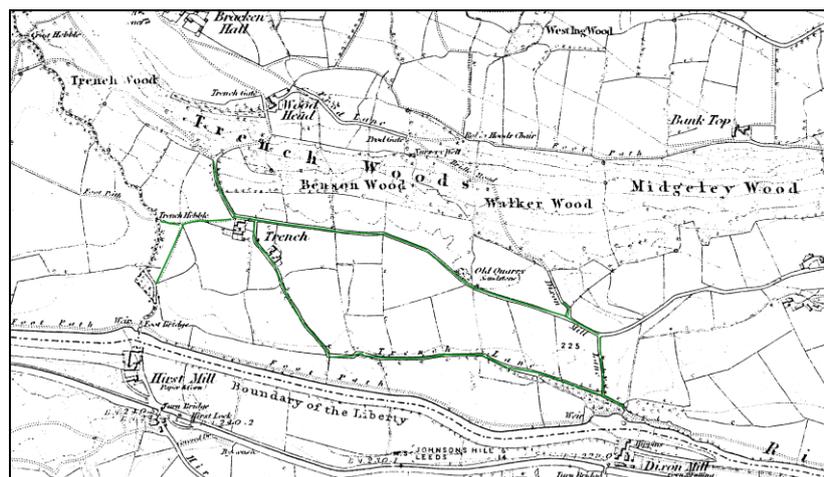
But what I have been able to show is that Titus Salt himself, bought at least 250 acres of land in Baildon, over a period of 16 years; and this compares with just over 100 acres that he bought in Shipley.



**The western Coach road**

The western section of the Coach Road, was constructed sometime before 1870, following the purchase of the Milner Fields estate, which, of course, is in Bingley, and outside the scope of this study.

The green-arrowed track on the above plan shows the line of this new road, cutting through the fields towards the eastern entrance to the Milner Fields estate.



**The closed lanes**

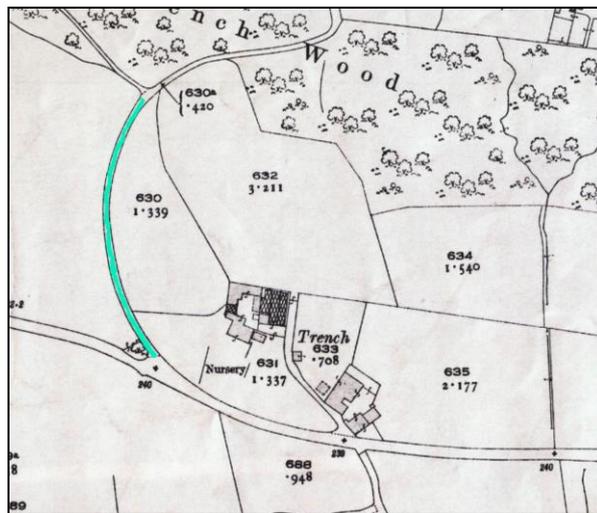
In March 1870, following the completion of this new road, Titus Salt applied to the Baildon Local Board of Health to close several old paths running between the bridge at Saltaire and Load Pit Beck. These are shown in green on this plan.

And just as on the eastern section of the road, he wanted the old rights of way transferred onto his new road.

Interestingly, the public right of way on this side of the bridge was not on the river-side path, but on the lower of the two paths leading up to the Trench Farms. I can only assume that this change had been made when the farms were built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

After passing between the two farms, the public path then returned back down to the river-side path, which leads on towards the Seven Arches.

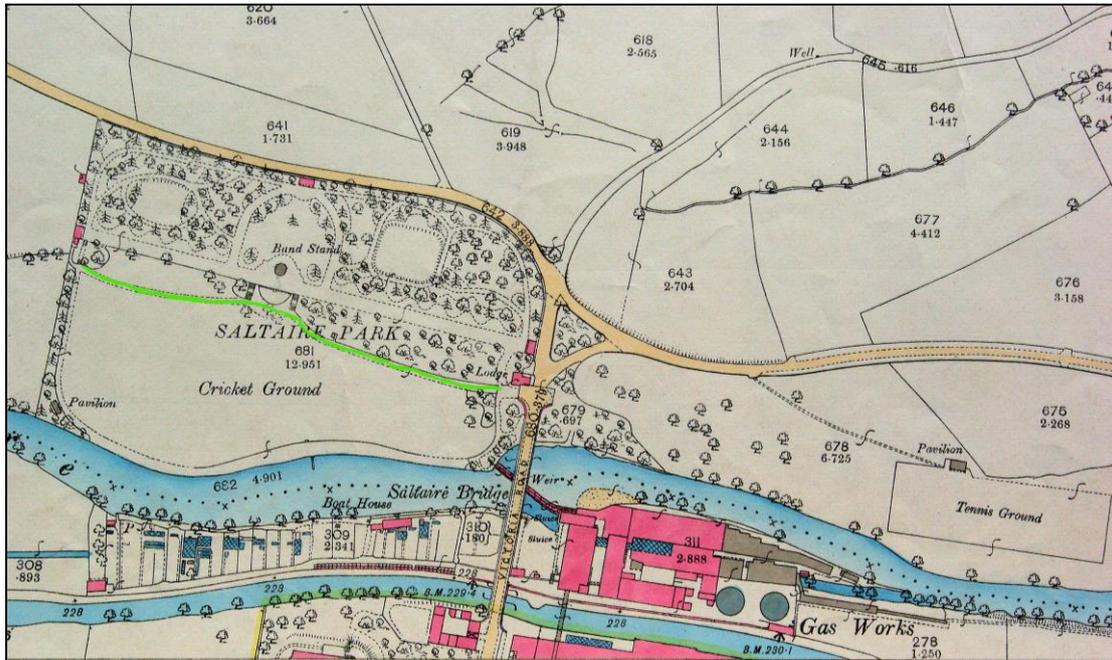
For some reason, Salt decided to restrict access to the two Trench properties, and that section of the old way that ran between the two farms was closed to the public.



**Western Coach Road - New Trench Road**

It was replaced by a brand-new lane leading up to the junction with the ancient pack-horse route between Baildon and Bingley (marked in green on the above map). Following the construction of the new lane, the top section of the old lane was removed.

Approval for all these changes was given at the Quarter Sessions held in Bradford on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1870.



**Saltaire Park**

It would have been about this time that Salt started to develop Saltaire Park, which was opened in July 1871.

Interestingly, the park was laid out across part of the old lane leading from the stepping stones to the Trench farms.

And that section of the old lane survives to this day (marked in green on the above map) in the form of the path that divides the cricket field from the higher terrace and formal gardens.



**Green Lane junction-with houses**

As I mentioned earlier, much of the land on the top side of Green Lane and at the bottom of Cliff Lane, had been sold off in the late 1850s. These small-scale sell-offs continued, and in the early 1870s Salt sold most of the land, fronting Otley Road, between the bridge and Green Lane, and a terrace of houses were built on the site. The corner plot, though, was not sold until 1887, by Salt's sons.

### **BAILDON POSTSCRIPT**

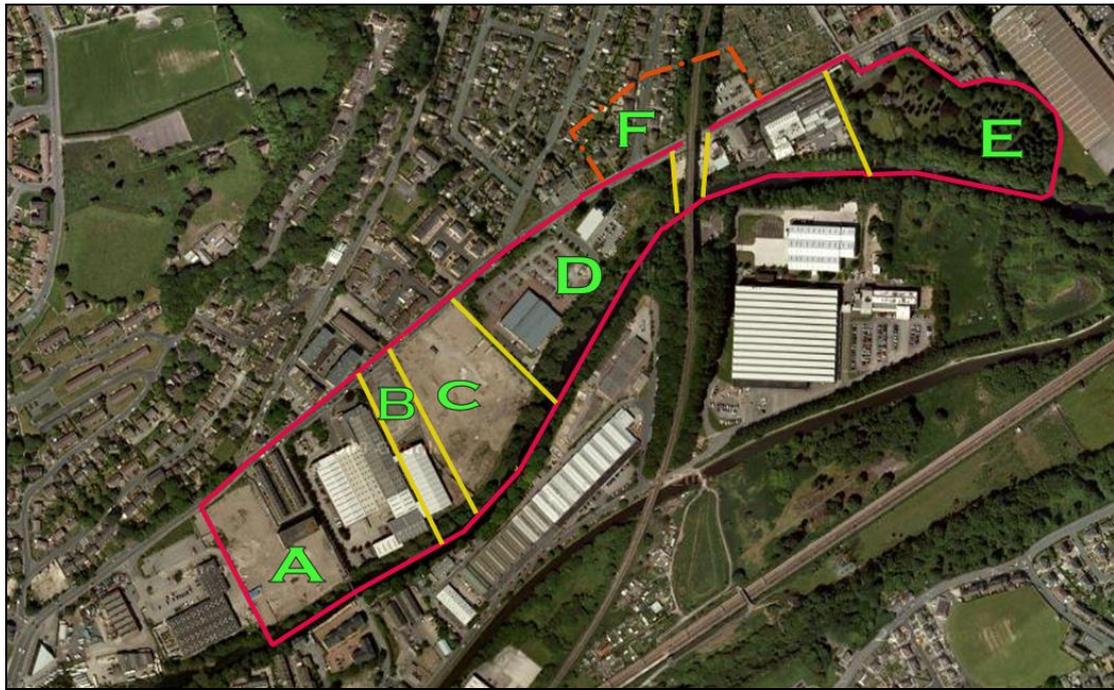
As far as the land on the other side of Otley Road is concerned, with the exception of a few sales, Salt did practically nothing with the bulk of this site, and it was left to later generations to dispose of it.

He had sold a large plot of land (A) (see below), at the south-western end to C.F.Taylor in 1862, and Taylor built a new mill on the site.

While at the other end, he sold, or maybe he gave, the land for Charlestown cemetery,(E) which was opened in 1863. Though, for some reason the deed of transfer from Salt to the Airedale Cemetery Company, does not seem to have been made until 1871.

The land for the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel had been sold to the Trustees in 1870. While the Midland Railway Company had bought the land required for the viaduct, in November 1874.

Nothing much then seemed to happen to this area during the remainder of the Salt's family involvement with the mill.



I have not been able to determine the sequence of events regarding the one field on top side of Otley Road (F), that had been part of Salt's original purchase, and which is now covered by the bottom of Midland Road.

In 1895, the Salt's mill company tried to sell off all their undeveloped land in both Shipley and Baildon. But the planned disposal appears to have been a failure, because most of the land advertised in the sale notice of that year was left unsold.

In 1898, though, William Butterfield bought one plot on this Charlestown site (B), on which he later built a galvanising works. Nine years later, he bought the neighbouring plot (C) in order to extend his business.

The remainder of the land between Butterfields and the railway viaduct (D) was bought from the mill company by Bertram Roberts, the son of Sir James Roberts, in 1910.

He gave the land to the people of Baildon for recreation purposes, and it came to be known as Roberts Park. The land then seems to have remained in Baildon's possession until 1952, when the UDC sold it to Butterfields.

So, that is the story of Titus Salt's property acquisitions in Shipley and Baildon, as far as I have been able to determine it.

And, it brings us back to the original question. Why did he buy so much land on both sides of the river and left so much virtually untouched.

It's probably the case that we will never know why he did what he did, but it's this kind of question that keeps the interest in the subject of the life and work of Titus Salt alive.

