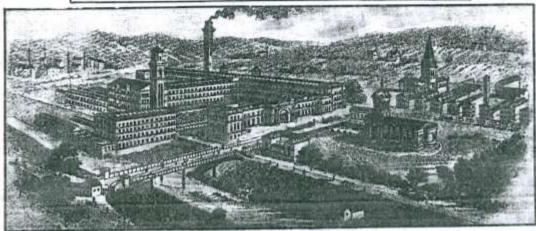
## What was the motive behind the founding of Saltaire? MIKE PRIESTLEY investigates



A COMMUNITY CREATED: The early days of Sait's Mill with the Congregational Church (right centre) and the hospital (top right), which were built for his workers by Sir Titus Sait in the late 19th century

ALTAIRE is a remarkable place event today.

So what an impact it must have made when it grew from the green fields of Airedale in the IBSOs, a model village created alongside a massive mill in a countryside setting to provide working and living conditions which were working to provide working and living conditions which were workers in the southlackened, disease-ridden streets of Bradford.

But why did Sir Time, Salt build.

Was it pure philanthropy, a genuline desire to improve the for of working men and women?

Or was it to create a "coft prison" where the political milliancy of the Chartist movement which was causting to end of strife in West Yorkshire could be bought of by good bousing and other amenities?

There has long been a suspiction that Sir Titus's motives were not entirely altruistic. That was acknowledged even at his funeral by the Rev J. Robertson Campbell, who said: "Sordid whisperers may hint, no doubt, that the great undertaking in which he was engage de brought to him a harvest of honour and reputation."

When Salt stood for Parliament, the word was spread by his opponents that he had moved out of Bradford to avoid paying taxes.

However, as local historian Doroothy White pointed out in the book Titus of Salts, published in 1978 to mark the centennary of Sir Titus's death: "Whispers and accusations are attracted by any man in a public position . A man employing as many workpeople as Titus Salt is land w

land wide open to charges of profi-bering at the expense of his workers and taking all the credit for their labours".

ohn Siyles confronts the same controversial matter of motivation in a highly readable new book. Thus Sait and Saitsive — industry and Virue, published by Saits Estates Ltd to sell mittally at the 1853 Gallery at the mill.

Stylos, locturer in social history at the University of Bristel, was at Bradford Gremmar School with Jonathan Silver, the current owner of the mill, many of whose photo-graphs of the village are used in the book.

graphs of the village are used in the book.

He asks, rheterically, if Salt's paternalism was a device for securing a captive workforce which could be ladoctrinated into disciplinde behaviour that ensured continued profits?

"These pojorative ways of characterising Saltaire may have an element of truth, but they are far from being the whole story," he declares.

"Salt did not have to move to solve the story of the saltained of





SUPPLY SUP

Believed be should use the power and wealth God had given him to intervene in

have prospered in the 1888s and 1880s even if amenities had not been provided there on such a lavish scale.

"Morcover, it is not clear that the disciplined, regulated tenor of life in Saltsire was something foisted on reluciant workers in order to shackle and constrain them.

"Rather it was some-thing in which they calluded. Indeed, Salt was probably giving many of them what they wanted.

"In spending to improve condi-tions for his workers, Salt was doing what the working-class rad-icals of the 1840s had criticised employers for failing to do.

never do. He was acknowledging that the relationship between master and men amounted to more than simply the performance of a task for the payment of a wage. 
John Styles points out the gap which existed at that time between the attitude of workers to their bosses and the socialist egalitarianism which was to lead to the founding of the Labour Party.

Most working people wanted their employers to acknowledge mutual obligations shove and beyond the wage contract.

obligations above and beyond an wage contract.
From the other side of the social fence, Thus Sait saw life in much the same terms. He cambined great personal ambition with an over-whelming sense of duty and a vision of Saltaire as (in John Styles's nearest "mores than simply a her-

Salt, a deeply religious man, credited God with his entrepreneurial success. Mr Styles writes: "If amassing a great fortune was a sign of divine favour, it also imposed great obligations. He believed he should use the wealth and power God had given him to intervene in public affairs. Thereby be could help create the kind of environment in which others would lead virtuous, harmonious and godly lives."

Bradford and its social and envi-

efforts to put his dressns into practice.

At the end of the 1840s, Titus Salt hit his mid-life crisis. Should be retire, which at the age of 50 he could well afford to do? Or should be found hin medel village at Saltaire?

Saltaire?

"It was not just business considerations that draw Salt there," writes John Styles.

"At Saltaire he could pursue his reforming objectives on a scale be could manage himself, utalimdered by the setbacks, timitations and compromises that were inevitable in a large, growing town with problems as intractible as Bradford's."

alt was an authoritarian.
He wanted to improve the
moral, intellectual and social
status of the working class and
bring about a harmonious society
but with people like himself
still firmly in charge.

"Negarthules"

"Nevertheless, it would be wrong to dismiss his approach as entirely suncratic." warms Mr Styles. "Although he was guided by a sense of personal mission, a belief that he was dotte: God's work, his chosen

of personal mission, a belief that he was doint God's work, his choose role was that God's work, his choose role was that God's work, his choose role was that God's work, his choose role was a paramalist, not a tyrant. Anyone seeking to understand Thus Salt's personality gets little help from the man himself. Atthough he was a poor and uneathestife, and served as an MI' for many years, he was a poor and uneathestife, and served as an MI' for many years, he was a poor and uneathestife, and served as an MI' for many years, he was a poor and uneathestife, and served as an MI' for many years, he was a poor and uneathestife, and description, "a man of perhaps as few words as could carry a human being through life." Yet he did inave a clue to himself in a written reply to Lord Harewood's 1853 inquiry as to why he had crested Saltaire instead of retiring to ergley his wealth. "As a landed proprietor, I felt I should be out of my element," he explained. "You are a nobleman with all the influence that rank and large estans can bring. Consequently you have power and influence in the country.

"But outside of my business I am nothing, in it, I have considerable influence. By the opening of Saltaire, I also hope to do good to my fellow men."

Titus Salt and Saltaire —
Industry and Virtue is available from the 1853 Gallery at