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Bridlington on the East Yorkshire coast became a seaside resort after the discovery of a chalybeate spring, which is just a mineral spring water containing salts of iron. It was found in 1811 by Benjamin Milne. The Quay developed in the 19th century and was a popular holiday destination between the two World Wars. Bridlington railway station opened on 6th October 1846 between the Quay and the historic town and it soon became a popular resort for industrial workers from the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Left and below: Bridlington’s promenade in 1895 before the first Spa Theatre was built in 1896. It was destroyed by fire in 1906. The promenade was built between 1866 and 1869, which extends northwards. It has a high sea wall with the pavilion in the centre. In the distance are crowds of holidaymakers on the beach and in the sea. Much further in the distance are white cliffs that offer fine views of Bridlington.

In the view above the tide below the sea wall is out allowing people to walk on the sands.

In the photograph on the right the tide below the sea wall is in. Only in the distance further up the beach can holidaymakers be seen on the sands.

The railway poster on the left was produced by LNER to promote rail travel to Bridlington. It features smartly dressed people, with ladies carrying parasols to guard against the sun, leisurely strolling along the promenade past neatly laid out gardens and a bandstand. In the near distance is the renovated Spa Theatre that burnt down in 1906, it was reopened in 1907. This poster dates from 1930 and is by Henry George Gawthorn.
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Cover: Valley Gardens, Harrogate. Photo by Jeremy Clark

Left: A poster produced by British Railways to promote rail travel to the Yorkshire coastal resort of Bridlington. It shows three young people looking down at the harbour, where there are a number of boats and yachts. It gives a panorama of Bridlington, with Flamborough Head in the distance. In the background is the sea front with a wide sandy beach populated with holidaymakers. This poster is titled ‘Bridlington Yorkshire’s Gay Seaside Playground’ which at the time the poster was painted had quite a different meaning. It was issued in 1958, the artist is George Ayling.

The full article on ‘The Classic Vintage Yorkshire Railway Posters’ by Stephen Riley is published in the summer edition 2, 2011 of TYJ which can be download for free on our website.

Editorial

The Yorkshire Journal is designed to appeal to all readers and writers with an interest in Yorkshire’s heritage past and present. Our aim is to present an extensive range of articles for readers to enjoy. With this in mind the Summer edition of the Yorkshire Journal features five more interesting and captivating articles. The first feature is ‘A Pewter Chalice from Monk Bretton Priory, Barnsley, South Yorkshire’ by Rita Smith and Jeremy Clark. The medieval chalice was discovered during the 1923 archaeological excavations of the Priory. It was buried with a skeleton covered with a medieval grave slab simply bearing a carved chalice. Since then the chalice has had a turbulent past which is highlighted in their much researched article, which includes a comprehensive history of the Priory.

The next article is ‘Titus Salt – Philanthropist and man of vision?’ by Margaret Mills, who outlines his life and his ambitions for a better future by building Saltaire village for his workers. Little evidence of Titus Salt the private man exists in the form of letters, documents or other personal relics, but we can look at him and his career against the backdrop of the entrepreneurial and dynamic times in which he lived.

In her article ‘In Search of Freedom’, Diana Parsons explains how John & Rebecca Burlend emigrated from Barwick-in-Elmet near Leeds to Illinois in 1831 in the hope of achieving a better life. After years of toil and hardship their dreams were eventually realised in the lives they bequeathed to their descendants.

The Berry Brow railway station was opened on 1st July 1850 and closed on 2nd July 1966. Before the station closed many rail travellers remembered seeing a unique railway stone sculpture, which decorated the station. In Stephen Riley’s article ‘The Berry Brow Railway carving, near Huddersfield’ he details the history of this sculpture, which was created in 1886 by a sixteen year old apprentice sculptor, John Charles Stocks.

For our last story Paul Williams goes back in time to unearth Yorkshire’s links with ‘the Dambusters’ and reveals how a small factory in Yarm played a big part in developing a top-secret weapon which became known all over the world as the ‘Bouncing Bomb’.

But there is much more to these articles, please read and enjoy them. We welcome your comments.
A Pewter Chalice from Monk Bretton Priory, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

By Rita Smith and Jeremy Clark

On display at Barnsley Museum are a number of artefacts found at Monk Bretton Priory during archaeological excavations, which include medieval pottery, decorated floor ties and fragments of stained glass. A pewter chalice which was excavated in the North Transept of Monk Bretton Priory church in 1923 by the owner, John Horne also forms part of this display. A medieval grave slab simply bearing an incised chalice was discovered which covered a burial with the chalice. The skeleton was found in the grave at a depth of about 2 feet (0.6 m) laid at full length on its back with hands folded across the chest holding a small incomplete pewter chalice. Several pieces of the pewter chalice were found to be missing, only part of the foot along with its stem, and the lower part of the bowl remained.

*Right: The remains of the medieval pewter chalice mounted on glass to show its shape, now on display at Barnsley Museum*

The medieval grave slab found by Mr. Horne, which has a plain outer border, only contained an incised chalice at the centre. This clearly indicated that the slab belonged to the grave of a priest. The stone slab is of local sandstone which is broken in several places and the base is missing.

*Left: The medieval grave slab containing an incised chalice can been seen next to the grave situated near the north-west corner and to the west of the north Transept doorway, about 4 feet 6 inches (1.37 metres) from the north wall. Photo taken during the 1923 excavations*

*Below: Today the medieval grave slab containing an incised chalice can been seen in the same position where it was found in 1923 near the north-west corner and to the west of the north Transept doorway*
In 1926 J. W. Walker, of the Yorkshire Archaeology Society, published Mr. Horne’s excavations of Monk Bretton Priory in ‘The Priory of St Mary Magdalene of Monk Bretton’. Initially the chalice was moved to Wakefield Cathedral of All Saints, probably because of its religious significance. Walker was a Wakefield historian and had connections with the Cathedral, which could have been regarded as the best place for its safety.

The pewter chalice was displayed at the Cathedral Treasury but it was further damaged when an attempt was made to steal it, resulting in the stem being broken and separated from what remained of its bowl. The chalice was then sent to the Yorkshire Archaeological Trust where conservation work was carried out at their laboratories in York.

On examination it was found that an attempt had been made, at some time in the past, to reconstruct the chalice. Plaster cement and a layer of yellow adhesive had been used in its extensive reconstruction and, when removed, the original metal underneath was extremely fragile. After cleaning and restoration was complete the chalice was transferred to the Barnsley Museum.
The practice of burying clergymen with a chalice and paten probably began in the 11th century. There are no archaeological records of these goods found in graves or carvings of chalices on grave slabs earlier than this date. In the 13th century William de Blois, Bishop of Winchester ordered that each church should have two chalices, one in silver and one in pewter, the first used to celebrate Mass and the second for the burial of the priest. Later on, the use of pewter chalices and vessels for Mass was banned and in 1229-31 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard le Grant, forbade his bishops to consecrate pewter chalices. It is probable that this ban was imposed because lead and its alloys were recognised to be highly poisonous and therefore only allowed for burial.

The Monk Bretton chalice probably dates to the 13th century, but we will probably never know who the person was buried with it. All the evidence suggests that the Monk Bretton burial was the grave of a priest, monk or even a prior.

Monk Bretton Priory

The ruins of the Monk Bretton Priory are situated 2 miles (3.2 kilometres) east of the centre of Barnsley, now on the edge of housing estates and industrial developments. When the monastery was founded in about 1154, it was located on the north bank of the River Dearne in a wooded valley which was then peaceful and remote.
The Priory was founded by Adam Fitzswaine as the Priory of Saint Mary Magdalene, and was colonised by monks from the Cluniac priory of St John at Pontefract, of which his father had been a notable benefactor. Its early history was stormy and bloody, because of interminable disputes between the two houses about the appointment of its priors. Pontefract sought to retain direct control of Monk Bretton. The bitter dispute was only resolved in 1281, when Monk Bretton broke away from the Cluniac Order to become an independent Benedictine house and from then on, apart from a disastrous fire in 1386, its history was largely uneventful. Gradually the name of the priory was replaced by that of the nearby village of Bretton to be commonly known as Monk Bretton Priory.

The priory owned properties across South Yorkshire, with rights over five parish churches, and worked coal and ironstone in the Barnsley area. In 1295 it housed 13 monks and a prior; there was exactly the same number at its closure on 30 November 1538 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Left: A reconstruction of Monk Bretton Priory showing the main buildings viewed from the south-west in about 1380

Courtesy of Howard Levitt

After 1538 the priory was plundered for usable building materials, the north aisle of the church was dismantled and reconstructed as the parish church of Wentworth, only to be demolished in the late 18th century. Lead was stripped from the roofs, loaded onto carts with seven bells, and taken to London to be melted down.

In 1589 the estate was bought by William Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, and the west range of the cloister was converted into a country house for his son Henry. The priory site changed hands several times over later centuries, before being placed in state guardianship in 1932. The site is now in the care of English Heritage.

Right: The refectory viewed from the south. In the background is the west range of the cloister converted into a country house. From a drawing of 1855 by W Richardson
Description of the Priory

Today little remains of the church. It was built in the late 1150s, but it was not completed until the 14th century. The nave was wide, stretching from the west door steps to the four columns that held up a bell tower over the crossing. It had a flagstone floor and stone benches along its west and north walls. Along the north and south nave walls were two side aisles, each of which was made by an arcade of four arches on piers that ran from their west wall buttress to the bell tower and held up a clerestory, consisting of a row of high windows. On the south side are some stones from later, private, chapels built into these aisles.

Adam Fitz Swain and other high-ranking monks were buried inside the church nave. Several grave-covers survived although they are not in their original position.

Above: The remains church looking east

At the east end of the church was the presbytery, which was extended shortly after the church was built. A large east window was introduced above the altar during the 15th century. It has a raised platform with a high altar, where the monks said Mass. North and south of the crossing tower were the transepts, giving the church its cross shape. Each transept gave access to two private chapels on the eastern side.

Left: The presbytery looking east with a raised platform

A doorway from the north transept led to the monks’ cemetery. In the south transept there was the night stairs, by which the monks came down from their dormitory for services during the night. There was also an arched window that became a book cupboard, and a newel stair that reached to the roof spaces.

Right: The night stairs in the south transept

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The cloister on the side of the church was surrounded by four covered walks linking various, better preserved, domestic buildings used by the monks. The lean-to roofs that covered the walks were supported on 13th century arcades. The buildings on the east side began with the chapter house where the monks met for prayer and their daily orders. Priors were often buried in this room. Next to this was the inner parlour, where monks were allowed to talk about priory business without breaking the cloister rule of silence.

Above: The cloister looking south-east.

A day stair from the dormitory came down into the parlour wall. Beside this was a passage way giving access to the monks’ infirmary. The south side was dominated by the monks’ refectory. In a wall on the cloister side of the refectory was a basin where the monks could wash their hands before eating. A hatch on its south wall communicated with the kitchen service lobby and refectory. To its left was a pulpit, where a monk read from the scriptures during meals.

Above: The remains of the priory kitchen is in the foreground and in the background can be seen the low serving hatch on the south wall through which meals where passed from the kitchen with two of its great windows on the right
On the west side of the cloister was the Prior’s Range which was a three storey building of the 13th and 14th centuries. On the ground floor are the remains of the cellar and a storeroom, with a floor drain and a draw well for water. To the north is the outer parlour where monks held meetings with visitors. Above was the prior’s chamber, where he slept, studied and met his private guests. The chamber was fitted with a well-carved fireplace, wall cupboards and a high door into the church. Next to this was a great dining hall stretching to the south. There was a service lobby and stairs at its far south end near to the kitchen below.

Following the suppression of the priory in 1538, the site was bought by the earl of Shrewsbury in 1589, who gave it to his son, Henry Talbot. Henry converted the prior’s range and refectory into a grand house, possibly employing the famous architect Robert Smythson. The Talbot family and their successors, the Armyne family, occupied this house until 1785.
Above: The remains of the cellar, and storeroom, of the Prior’s Range. The well can be seen next to the wall on the right.

Right: Above is the prior’s chamber with a carved fireplace, which has a wall cupboard on the left and a high door into the church can be seen in the wall on the far left.

Right: A reconstructed drawing of the prior’s chamber illustrating the carved fireplace with a wall cupboard on the left.

In the 17th century the Armyne family built a new gatehouse attached to their house with a broad carriage arch and a narrower pedestrian arch, both with elliptical heads.
North-east of the church is a large late 13th century building that stands alone. This building was probably the courthouse and administrative building for the management of the priory estates. The upper floor may have housed the monks’ manorial courthouse where rents from the tenant farmers who worked on the priory’s lands would be paid. It was also the place where manorial disputes were settled. The upper storey was supported by tall octagonal pillars and was rebuilt in the 17th century. Despite its great size, this building did not have fireplaces or latrines.

Above: Courthouse and administrative building

Left: Drawing of a tenant farmer who worked on the priory’s land paying rent.

The imposing priory gatehouse, which was built in the early 15th century, is still almost intact, although roofless. It is the first building to be seen when approaching the priory which controlled access to the outer court. The gate passage is set a little to the west of the centre spanned by a single round arch in the north and south walls, wide enough to allow the passage of carts. Above the outer arch is a much worn small carved figure holding a shield of arms of the priory and above this is a canopied niche perhaps intended for a statue of St Mary Magdalene, to whom the priory was dedicated. This front wall has battlements that were more for show than defence. At the middle of the gatehouse was a long, walled passage, barred halfway by a heavy gate. To the west was a porter’s lodge, the wall of which still carries inner and outer doorways, and a gatepost slot. The gatehouse had fireplaces on both floors. Alongside the south lobby is a stair tower which gives access to the upper rooms and roof.

Below: A much worn small carved figure holding a shield of arms of the priory above this is a niche perhaps intended for a statue of St Mary Magdalene

Above: The outer gatehouse with a passage running through under the arches
Above: The gatehouse from the south showing the tower on the left

Left: Drawing of a cart being inspected in the passage way of the gatehouse

Above: Plan of the Gatehouse

Right: Inside the gatehouse from the Almonry looking west
Medieval Grave Slabs

There are twelve medieval grave slabs lying amongst the ruins, some are difficult to recognise while others are sometimes overgrown by grass. The most obvious ones are the three that lie in the former monks’ graveyard, to the south-east of the church. They are dated to about the late 13th century.

Right: Three medieval grave slabs in the former monks’ graveyard

The two crosses in the Chapter House are also easy to find. One cross has a sword and shield behind the shaft, with the inscription ‘…W. Bretton’ at the top of shield, which may have been carved at a later date. This cross dated to the later 12th century and the second cross to the late 13th century.

The three crosses in the nave are situated between the western tower piers and can easily be recognized. Grass now grows where the slabs are broken. They date from about the 13th to the 14th centuries.

Right: Three medieval grave slabs in the nave
In the north aisle of the nave, near the east end is a simple cross with an inscription inlaid in lead on one side of the shaft. It reads ‘HIC IACET F…. ….ERT .E GRESBI’ translated, Here lies Brother Osbert de Gresbi.

Above: The medieval grave slabs situated in the north aisle of the nave with the lead inscription

Right: Detail drawings of the medieval grave slab. Courtesy of Peter Ryder

Monk Bretton Priory is in the care of English Heritage. There is no information centre or guide book available for the priory but there are illustrated information boards around the grounds explaining the use of the priory buildings.

The Priory is opened daily from 10 am to 3 pm, closed 24-26 December and 1 January, admission is free

Left: Illustrated information display boards in the priory grounds Courtesy English Heritage

Above: Aerial view of Monk Bretton Priory
Monk Bretton Priory Mill

A number of mill sites, used for grinding corn, are known to have been owned by Monk Bretton Priory. The best surviving example is Priory Mill, which probably dates to the 13th century and has been modified in the 17th century. In 1878, Barnsley Borough Council bought the mill and surrounding land for the development of a sewage farm, but the mill fell into disrepair. It was subsequently redeveloped as a pub and the surrounding land has become part of the public park.

The Priory Mill is now an Italian restaurant located on Grange Lane about a half of a mile south-west of Monk Bretton Priory.

Above: Monk Bretton Priory Mill now an Italian restaurant

Left: Rear view of the building

Many of the industrial activities of the monks at Monk Bretton Priory were eventually to be followed by other land owners through the 16th and 17th century but it was not until the 19th and 20th century that industrial and extractive use of this area was to have a significant impact on the landscape.

Numerous collieries developed along this stretch of the River Dearne and they were associated with large numbers of railway lines running from all points, curving and crossing one another to reach each colliery. These have left their impact on the landscape in the form of linear earthworks that have often become the route for new footpaths though the area.
Monk Bretton Priory
Titus Salt – Philanthropist and man of vision?

By Margaret Mills

A man with a name that is not easy to forget, Titus Salt was born on 20th September 1803 at Morley, Yorkshire, to Grace and Daniel Salt. When he was ten years of age, his father moved the family to Crofton (Titus was the eldest of 7 children), where Titus senior took up farming and his eldest son went to school in Wakefield.

Unfortunately, Daniel Salt’s venture into farming seems to have been unsuccessful, and he turned his thoughts towards the expanding town of Bradford, centre of the manufacturing industry and ‘boom town’ of the 19th century. Daniel established himself in business as a wool-stapler, a ‘middle man’ trader in wool, supplying the ever-expanding cloth trade in the area. After leaving school, and to gain more experience in the wool trade, young Titus found himself a job with a company called Rouse & Sons, who appear to have given him a good grounding in the wool trade, which enabled him to return to his father’s business after 2 years, with a business acumen far in excess of that shown by his father so far.

The family business was now named Daniel Salt & Son, and Titus was established as the company’s wool buyer, learning all the time and travelling around the country, seeing the wool business from the sheep’s back to the finished articles. It was during one of his wool-buying trips that he met Caroline Whitlam: Titus was 27 and Caroline only 18 when the couple married and set up home in the Bradford area. In common with many dynamic industrialists of the 19th century, Titus was a Nonconformist, and an active member of the local Congregational Church at Horton Lane.

Ever alert to innovations, Titus saw the possibilities of alpaca wool, which came from a type of Andean cameloid. Starting a new enterprise in the cloth trade required much the same business principles and careful planning as it would today: Titus needed to experiment with the new wool to test its capabilities and suitability for weaving, invest in appropriate machinery and do his market research. The result was well worthwhile – the new fabric was welcomed with open arms by the fabric houses of the day, it looked like silk but was much cheaper and wore well. Titus would never forget the debt he owed to the humble alpaca – he would use the alpaca as his own personal symbol from then on and sharp-eyed visitors to Saltaire ‘model’ village can still spot the symbol on various buildings. When in 1844 Queen Victoria sent him the wool of two alpacas kept in her grounds at Windsor Castle, with a request that he make the wool up into his famous cloth, the reputation of Titus soared.
As a prominent man of business, Titus Salt was now eligible for important positions of authority within the town of Bradford. An important man in his own part of the world, he held posts as a magistrate, Commissioner of the Peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire and was later appointed Deputy Lieutenant of the County. In 1848, he was appointed as Mayor of Bradford, but his time in office would not be easy. The year 1848 has come down to us in history as the Year of Revolutions, when there were political upheavals, outbreaks of mob violence and demonstrations throughout Europe. For the new Mayor of Bradford there were troubles closer to home, with Chartist demonstrations, an outbreak of cholera in Bradford and the effects of trade depression to contend with.

On the domestic front, Titus and Caroline Salt now had 7 children, and perhaps anxious to move away from the unhealthy environment of Bradford, Titus took a lease on a mansion named Crow Nest at Lightcliffe, travelling by coach to his works each day, and (it is said) happy to offer a lift to any walkers sharing the road!

Above: Crow Nest house, Titus Salt rented the house between 1844 and 1858 and in 1867 he bought the property for £26,500. Sir Titus Salt lived at Crow Nest until his death on December 29th 1876. Sadly the house was demolished many years ago and in 1995 the land was converted into a golf course and is now owned by the Crow Nest Park Golf Club. Photograph courtesy of Crow Nest Park Golf Club

He was now approaching 50 – the age at which he had planned to retire from his busy working life and leave his sons to carry on the good work. However, his plans changed, and instead of retiring to take life easy, he created the village of Saltaire. In conversation with Lord Harewood at a later date, Salt was frank about the reasons why he had changed his mind about retiring; as a man who had been involved in the business world from a young age, a man not from an aristocratic or land-owning background, he began to question whether now was not the right time to put the power and prestige he had accumulated to good use. As a devout Nonconformist, his thought was to do something on a large scale that would benefit his fellow man, his Nonconformist faith endowing him with a strong spirit of philanthropy. We might also be naive not to suppose that he would also consider any benefits that might accrue to his business from his actions.

Over many years in trade, Salt had seen for himself the dire conditions in which many of his workpeople lived. Bradford was only one industrial town that had vastly expanded as people crammed into it from rural regions, with the idea of earning more money in the mills and factories which were making Bradford wealthy and making obsolete many of the pre-industrial ways of working. A complete lack of both welfare provision and the infrastructure to cope with this influx of people meant that workers lived in poor conditions. Overcrowding led to epidemics and the lack of clean air and clean water, and few (if any) measures to keep the streets clean and free from refuse, meant that life for working people was usually ‘nasty, brutal and short’, as the saying goes.

Titus planned to move his enterprise outside the unhealthy town of Bradford, 4 miles away to Shipley, where the advantages of railway, canal, river and roads – and fresh air and space – could be utilised, and goods transported quickly and economically.
Titus approached a firm of architects named Lockwood & Mawson, to draw up plans for his ambitious project to create not simply a new and impressive mill, but a ‘model’ village for his workpeople, using an Italian Renaissance style of architecture. Building work would begin in 1851, and continue until the 1870s. The model village would be named Saltaire, a combination of its founder’s name and the River Aire that ran through the village. As a man of business, the first concern of Titus Salt was (perhaps understandably) to make the focal point of his plan the mill building, but he determined it would be a mill like no other in the area. This mill would not simply be a utilitarian building, but a building that would be designed with much thought as to light, space and safety features, and inspire admiration in all who beheld it. In fact, an architectural wonder, all six storeys of it, at a cost of £100,000! Acquisition of the land required to carry out Salt’s ‘model village’ plans would take time, but by September 1853, the mill was completed, just in time for Titus Salt’s 50th birthday celebrations! Some 3,000 workers would produce over 25,000 yards of cloth in the mill every day.

Above: A view of Saltaire, pre-1857. This early illustration shows the mill and some of the first group of houses already complete. Image courtesy of Shipley College

Right: Map showing the layout of Saltaire ‘model’ village designed by Architects Henry Francis Lockwood and William Mawson in the 1850s for the staff of Sir Titus Salt’s mill. It was a model village, with the grid of streets, most named after members of Salt’s family, providing terraced housing of a superior quality to the burgeoning industrial suburbs of nearby Bradford. The hierarchy of the workplace was reflected in the provision of larger houses for the ‘overlookers’ and managers. Schools, churches, shops, an institute, a park and other leisure facilities were included in the design, but famously no pubs. Saltaire is now a World Heritage Site.
Perhaps needless to say, the double celebrations were marked by a huge event, and the “Illustrated London News” of October 1853 reported on the plans of Titus Salt...“healthy dwellings and gardens in wide streets and capacious squares, ample ground for recreation, a large dining hall and kitchens, baths and wash houses, schools, a mechanics’ institution, a church; these are some of the characteristics of the future town of Saltaire”.

Right: Saltaire Houses in Victoria Road

This extract makes no mention of the hospital and alms-houses for the elderly or infirm former workers that were also built, neither does it mention that public houses and pawnshops were forbidden, thus earning committed teetotaller Titus Salt a subsequent reputation as a bit of a killjoy. But should we be surprised at the ban? As a true Nonconformist, Titus was concerned with improvement in living conditions, and this included not giving his workers the remotest opportunity to fritter away their wages on drink, which would inevitably lead to their reliance on pawnshops in order to feed themselves and their families. Many hard-pressed women, struggling to bring up their families on their husband’s wages alone, may have blessed Titus Salt as much as others mocked him for his anti-public house and pawnshop stance.

Saltaire Hospital and Dispensary was opened in 1868, and was originally just a two-storey building. It was intended as a six-bedded casualty ward to deal with accidents at Salts Mill, but it developed into a cottage hospital for the whole community. In 1909 the hospital was extended to three floors and was able to provide seventeen beds. During 1926-27, the hospital was further extended to accommodate a further thirty beds. The Alms-houses in Saltaire were built in 1868 around Alexandra Square at the top of Victoria Road. They were originally intended as a sanctuary for the aged and infirm, but management of them proved problematic over the years. Of the 45 cottages some are now privately owned and the rest are managed by a Housing Trust for Bradford Council.

For those of his workers fortunate enough to be able to rent one of the 800 houses built, the result was well-planned housing accommodation far healthier and roomier than most workpeople could ever aspire to. The houses, built in an arrangement of some 22 streets (named variously after Queen Victoria and members of the Salt family), were of varying sizes, according to the family size and status of the individual worker. Single men were catered for in large houses intended as shared accommodation.
Not surprisingly, foremen (called ‘overlookers’) and administrative/senior status workers enjoyed larger and more prestigious houses, but all houses were lit by gas, had running water, an outside toilet, separate cooking and living facilities and separate bedrooms. Truly innovative for the times. Rental was strictly limited to those who worked for Salt’s mill and who were deemed to be ‘of good character’.

Above: The former Factory School, it was opened in 1868, it is now part of Shipley College. The building is only one-storey but has three pediment pavilions, and as usual in these important buildings the central pediment is carved with the Salt coat-of-arms with an alpaca on either side. The bell-turret has figures of two children, a boy and a girl, with a globe. Approvingly, children were only allowed to work half time at the mill and for the rest were sent to school.

In September 1869, Titus Salt was offered a baronetcy by Gladstone in recognition of his business achievements and philanthropic efforts. With his staunch Liberal political beliefs, Titus would be delighted to receive this honour during the ministry of Gladstone, his own party’s leader.

Only a few years after becoming Sir Titus Salt of Crow Nest and Saltaire, Titus Salt died, in December 1876. As befitted a person of importance, his funeral was a public event, attended not only by the well-known and important, such as local officials and manufacturers, but by his friends, family and workpeople: an estimated 100,000 assembled along the route of the cortège, before Sir Titus was buried in the family mausoleum he had built in the grounds of the Congregational church at his beloved Saltaire.

Left: Titus Salt Mausoleum is attached to the north side of the United Reformed Church. The square mausoleum which has a leaded dome was built in 1861. In addition to Sir Titus Salt, who was buried here in 1877, the vault contains those of seven other members of the family. The last interment was made in 1930.

Right: Inside the mausoleum is the statue of the Angel of the Resurrection, carved by John Adams-Acton Photo by Jenny Freckles
Dynamic men are often followed by descendants who do not necessarily have the same abilities or ideals as their forefathers. Although he left ample sons to continue the family business, Titus Salt would be a hard act to follow, and for some years there was concern about the future of Salt’s mill. Eldest son, William, was no longer actively involved in the business, having moved to the Midlands, but “cometh the hour, cometh the man” – and the truth of this saying seems to have been proved by the fact of Titus Salt’s youngest son, also named Titus, stepping into the breach and shouldering much of the responsibility of keeping the company operating. Sadly, Titus junior would not be long-lived, dying at the age of 44 in 1887, leaving his brother, Edward, the only member of the family on the Board of the company. Several historians have put forward the view that Sir Titus had seriously undermined the company finances well before his death, by his extravagant generosity and philanthropic efforts, but other factors, such as changing fashions in the world of fabrics and worldwide economic conditions (including a slump in trade with the USA) also played their parts. Whatever the reasons, in the 1890s the faltering business of Sir Titus Salt, Bart. Sons & Co. Ltd. was sold to a Bradford consortium. The village site had become absorbed as part of Bradford Metropolitan District as the town spread ever outwards.

For a time in the 1890s, the “good old days” seemed to have returned to Saltaire, but the later impact of two World Wars, the trade depressions and changing economic conditions that followed, particularly after the First World War, made maintaining the business as a viable concern increasingly difficult, with short periods of growth often negated by those of trade depression.

In 1958, Illingworth, Morris & Co. purchased the shares of Salts (Saltaire) Limited and heralded the acceleration in changing world conditions.

By the 1980s, the world was a very different place to the days when textiles were one of the industries on which the wealth of Britain was built. The textile industry was declining rapidly, recession was bearing down on many businesses and Saltaire mill closed in 1986. Thankfully, Jonathan Silver, an entrepreneur, purchased the mill building and gradually brought it back into use as a commercial site for businesses, shops, a gallery and eateries. The gallery displayed the work of an artistic son of Bradford, David Hockney.

Some of the buildings, including the Congregational Church and the mill itself, were listed in 1966 and declared conservation areas. In 2001, the area became a UNESCO Heritage Site, and has been recognised for its influence on the development of town planning.
Much has been said and written of Sir Titus Salt, the builder of Saltaire. Was he truly concerned about the welfare of his workpeople, or just trying to win honours and reputation for himself? Did he deal harshly and ruthlessly with any mutterings of strike action in his mills? He seems to have left behind little written evidence for us to form judgments on any these and any other claims, but one thing we do know: for those of his workers able to rent a house in Saltaire, living standards – and consequently life expectation – must have been considerably higher than that of the people living and working in the smoke, fumes and disease-ridden streets and buildings of early to mid-19th century Bradford.

If you haven’t visited Saltaire before, why not pay a visit, walk its streets, look at the houses and buildings once inhabited by Titus Salt’s workpeople and form your own impressions?

Above: Statue of Sir Titus Salt, in Roberts’ Park, Saltaire
Discovering Saltaire over a century ago

Left: This photo of about 1900 shows Saltaire Hospital, known today as Titus Salt Apartments. Photo courtesy of Shipley College

Right: The postcard of Saltaire Factory School is dated to about 1903. The school is known today as Shipley College Salt Building. As an employer of children working in his mills Sir Titus Salt was required by law to ensure that they attended school regularly. However, he was not required to provide a school for them but built this school in 1868. In 1870 over 1,000 children attended the school, most worked part time at the mill and attended school part time. Boys were housed in the wing to the right of the picture and girls in that to the left. The middle section of the building was a mixed infant school. Image courtesy of Shipley College

Left: This photo of about 1900 shows Gordon Terrace, Saltaire. When Titus Salt began building his village it was at least a ten minute walk to the nearest town of Shipley so he provided plenty of shops for his workers. In 1870 there was a choice of six grocers in the village. By the 1890s there was a demand for even more shops as the population of the area grew and people from Bradford came to Saltaire and nearby Shipley Glen on day trips from Bradford on the tram. Gordon Terrace was originally built as houses but converted to shops in the 1890s and early 1900s. Photo courtesy of Shipley College
In Search of Freedom – A True Story

By Diana Parsons

The small brown book on the library shelf bore a long, but intriguing title. “A True Picture of emigration, or fourteen years in the Interior of North America, being a full and impartial account of the various difficulties and ultimate success of an English family who emigrated from Barwick in Elmet near Leeds in the year 1831”. Written by an anonymous author it had been published by G. Berger of London in 1848.

In the early nineteenth century England experienced a recession following the end of the Napoleonic wars. Unemployment, poor seasons, excessive taxation and rising prices forced many landowners drastically to increase their rents so that tenant farmers found it increasingly hard to survive. Many chose to seek a new life in another country and some wrote home, often with accounts of rapidly increasing prosperity derived from rich virgin land which they had been able to buy. However some of these letters were inclined to be economical with the truth which the writer of the book had been at pains to point out. One such letter was from George Bickerdike, a member of a farming family in Thorner near Leeds, who after emigrating to Illinois, wrote home with a glowing account of his success. The letter came to the notice of friends, John and Rebecca Burlend from nearby Barwick in Elmet who were finding their situation increasingly untenable, and after much thought, they decided to follow suit.

John, born in 1782 in Thorner where his father was the village blacksmith, had left home in the early 1790s to live in Horsforth on the other side of Leeds where he met his future wife Rebecca, eleven years his junior, born at Sandal near Wakefield. In 1811 they married at St. Oswald’s Parish Church, Guiseley and at first continued to live in Horsforth where their first two children were born. Subsequently the marriage would produce a further thirteen children of which only five survived into adulthood. Because the land in Horsforth was shallow and poor, more suited to sheep than crops, in 1817 they took a fourteen year lease on a farm at Barwick in Elmet.

Un fortunately matters did not improve, and in 1831 they decided to follow George to Illinois, leaving Edward, their oldest child then training to be a school teacher and his sister Mary who was in service with ‘a good family.’

Early on an August morning in 1831 the family set off for Manchester in a covered waggon containing a few possessions including Rebecca’s much treasured rocking chair. Standing in the road to wave them off for the last time were their friends, neighbours and their two older children whose feelings can only be imagined. The route taken followed the old turnpike road through the West Riding villages of Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Marsden and Delph, and the Lancashire town of Oldham, passing through some of the bleakest country in England. Arriving in Manchester in the early evening they stayed overnight at an inn, and the next morning were able to take the recently installed train to Liverpool, a great adventure in itself. With its carriages devoid of seats, passengers stood, their heads and shoulders exposed to the elements, soot and burning cinders. Nine year old John became so excited that he spent most of the journey in imminent danger of falling out.
Once in Liverpool they found lodgings in a dingy, dirty street where, without cooking facilities they were forced to spend several days while John went to the docks in search of a passage. Time hung heavily, the children were fractious and John began to doubt the wisdom of their decision. Had it not been for Rebecca, who felt they had no option but to continue, he would have returned to Barwick. Instead at sunset on the 2 September they left England on board the 410 barque, ‘Home’ bound for New Orleans and the start of a new life.

The journey to New Orleans lasted for two months, during which they endured violent storms, sickness and uncomfortable quarters in close proximity to uncongenial companions. During the voyage there were two near catastrophes, one when a pan of pitch caught fire, and the other when young John climbed out along the bowsprit and had to be retrieved by his father. In the hold Rebecca cooked the food they and other passengers had taken on board, and even became something of a nurse to the sick. In quieter moments she enjoyed going on deck to watch the porpoises, and when nearer to land was able to observe the sugar cane and tobacco plantations tended by the first black men she had ever seen.

After docking in New Orleans on the 1 November they began the next stage of their journey by steamboat along the unimaginably wide Mississippi River to St. Louis. Here they transferred to an even smaller boat for their journey up the Illinois River to their destination, Phillips Ferry in Pike County. Arriving in the middle of the night cold, hungry, wet and frightened they and their possessions were lowered from the boat and rowed ashore to a landing stage where they found no sign of habitation. While John went in search of help, Rebecca and the children remained at the landing stage surrounded by dark woodland, only recently abandoned by Sauk Indians, from which came the cries of unfamiliar animals and birds. Surrounded by frightened and tearful children Rebecca, holding baby William, knelt before them to say a short prayer.

Eventually John returned with the owner of the ferry who offered them temporary accommodation in his own cabin until they could find George. Rebecca was shocked by the appearance of both his cabin and, later, with that of George. Both had holes in the walls providing little protection from the elements, and contained only crudely constructed furniture. It was not what she had anticipated and it was clearly imperative for them to buy land on which they could build for themselves quickly.
Within only a few days they had a stroke of luck when a previous settler who now wished to move on wanted to sell his 80 acre holding. Three miles north of the small settlement of Detroit, it had everything they needed - sixty acres of partially broken land, a cabin, fertile soil, a stream of clear water and plentiful woodland. After paying $60, and a further $100 for the title deeds, they had enough of their savings left to buy a cow and calf for $14, an in-foal mare for $20 and a bushel of corn for 30 cents from which Rebecca made a bread dough. Deer, pigs and rabbits provided meat. With timber from the surrounding woodland John made stools, a table, benches, beds and fencing; in the evenings Rebecca made clothes by the light of an improvised candle consisting of a piece of rag dipped in lard; during the day she also made soap out of a mixture of ash from the fire, and pig’s entrails.

The family was appalled by the savagery of their first winter. The river became unnavigable, meat had to be hacked apart and milk froze as soon as it left the cow. All water had to be thawed over the fire, food stocks were quickly exhausted, their bedding was inadequate and they all developed chilblains. Accustomed to treating ailments and wounds with herbs which she no longer had, Rebecca hoped that no one would develop anything more dire, and for the most part they all remained surprisingly healthy. When John fell onto a sickle badly gashing his knee she was able to improvise a tourniquet, but when he subsequently developed a fever she could only pray while she and the children struggled to bring in the harvest. Much later, when she had established her herb garden, she was able to treat the whole family when they developed malaria. Through it all Rebecca remained indomitable. Often alone and lonely she met only a few people some of whom were unwelcoming, falsely claimed possession of their land or stole their stock. On winter nights she often heard the howling of wolves which sometimes came up to the door.

As the children were unable to attend school Rebecca taught them to read and write using her Bible, and also to do simple arithmetic. Meanwhile young John helped his father and Hannah, the oldest girl, assisted with cooking, sewing and caring for the younger ones. Although staunch Methodists at home they were now unable to attend church because of insufficient clothing, but Sundays were still kept a day of rest, John reading aloud from the Bible. Afterwards they all sang hymns.

Throughout the following years work on the land was relentless, laboriously grubbing up roots by hand in order to reclaim the ground. Eventually the generous offer of a neighbour to lend a plough team enabled them to progress more quickly and to increase their cultivated plot to twelve acres. In the spring of 1832 they successfully harvested three hundred weight of maple sugar and a barrel of molasses from their own trees, bartering it at the local store for an axe, meal, coffee and seed. However the transaction left them in debt for which they were deeply ashamed.

At the age of thirty nine Rebecca became pregnant again but still continued to work on the land. Once while harvesting on her own she encountered a rattlesnake which she beat to death; even more disturbing was the occasion on which young Sarah got too close to a fire which ignited her dress. Rushing in distress around the field she ignited all the sheaves before John could capture her and although not seriously hurt, an acre of their precious harvest was destroyed. Not surprisingly in 1833 Rebecca gave birth to still-born twins who John buried in the depths of the forest.
The following five years were more settled and highly productive. Soon there were other incomers, many of them from Yorkshire, and there were regular prayer meetings in Detroit to which Rebecca walked barefoot to preserve the shoes which she put on as she approached. They had now acquired seven horses, twenty cows, pigs, sheep and poultry as well as new furniture, and when their neighbour left they also took over his fifteen cultivated acres and planned to build a new cabin. In 1838 George Bickerdike died of typhoid fever and his brother John visited from Thorner to inspect his inheritance. The Burlends were keen to show him their own estate which now amounted to some 360 acres with two tenant farmers. Impressed, John Bickerdike decided to return to Thorner to collect his family and Rebecca took the opportunity to visit England again. On her return to Illinois she took with her the daughter she had left behind, now married with her own family; her son Edward, now the village schoolmaster in Swillington, near Leeds, remained in England and never saw his mother again. He was the author of the book which told her story.

Right: John Bickerdike

Left: Edward Burlend, author of the book which told Rebecca’s story

In 1843 the other Bickerdikes left Thorner for good and also settled in Pike County where they raised a large family, one of their daughters, Elizabeth, marrying ‘baby’ William who Rebecca had carried all the way to Illinois. During the years that followed many other Yorkshire families followed suit. Soon there were the Nettletons, scythe stone makers from Thorner, and the Briggs and Dalby families together with Robinsons and Turnbulls. Today the local cemetery testifies to the influence of the ‘old country,’ its headstones recording the names Dixon, Rhodes, Moore, Lister, Butterfield and many others.

Right: Elizabeth and William Burlend

As for the land where John and Rebecca hewed out a living, their descendants now farm some 3000 acres with a herd of 150 Hereford cattle, 4000 pigs and 200 chickens. In place of the trees which John and Rebecca knew, the farm now stands on the prairie in the town of Griggsville. With 1200 inhabitants, many of British descent, it was once a ‘dry town’ where alcohol was forbidden. The young descendants of John and Rebecca make their own home based amusements; horse riding, volleyball, table tennis and playing in an orchestra; all have been to university and attendance at their local Church of the Nazarene is an important part of their lives. At the end of the twentieth century the land for which John and Rebecca paid $1.25 an acre had risen to $2,300 per acre. It had not been won easily. Every dollar they earned by means of almost unceasing labour was poured back into the land. They could never have dreamed that one day their great-great-great-grandson would tend his crops from his own plane.

Left: The front cover of ‘In Search of Freedom’. Copies of the book are available (£10.00 including UK postage and packing) from m.parsons@doctors.org.uk
The Berry Brow Railway Carving, near Huddersfield

By Stephen Riley

Berry Brow is a semi-rural village in West Yorkshire, situated about 2 miles (3 kilometres) south of Huddersfield. The present Berry Brow railway station was opened by British Rail in 1989 and comprises a single-platform on the Penistone Line which serves the Huddersfield suburban villages of Berry Brow, Taylor Hill, Armitage Bridge and Newsome.

Right: Berry Brow’s single-platform railway station looking north from the bridge.
Photo by Richard Harvey

The original Berry Brow station was situated 330 yards (300 metres) from the present location, in the direction of Huddersfield. It opened on 1st July 1850 and closed on 2nd July 1966.

Left: Berry Brow railway station in 1961

Before the station closed in the 1960s many rail travellers using the Berry Brow station remembered a unique railway stone sculpture, which decorated the station. The carving was of a 0-4-4 steam tank engine pulling a carriage as it emerged from a tunnel. It was created in 1886 by a sixteen year old apprentice sculptor, John Charles Stocks and was sculpted from sandstone bought from Scotgate Quarry in Honley for just ten shillings. It also formed part of the station identification sign.

Right: Berry Brow railway station in the 1950s, the stone sculpture can be seen in situ on the right

Left: An early photograph of the sculpture in situ, showing the three carved heads
This carving replaced an earlier one by the boy’s father Thomas Stock whose first sculpture of a steam train was carved on the rocks above the station platform in 1864, at the request of Mr Thomas Swinburn, chief engineer on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway’s Huddersfield to Sheffield line. Thomas based his carving on an engine of his day, but by 1886 the locomotive he carved was out of date. His son was then approached to carve a more up to date version as a replacement, and chose to carve a model of a LYR Barton

*Right: Berry Brow Station, note the smaller carving in the rock face on the right. This was carved in 1864 by John Charles Stocks’ father, Thomas. It depicts an earlier type of engine, a 2-4-0 with no cab and 4 wheeler tender*

Surmounting the sculptured model train was the carved head of the local permanent way inspector Mr Switenbank, with John Milton on the left and William Shakespeare on the right.

Two years after he made the model, the young sculptor went to America, later returning to make a name for himself in London where he was awarded two silver medallions by the Worshipful Company of Carpenters. He died in Huddersfield in 1949.

*Left: The sculptor John Charles Stocks with smaller examples of his work*

The original sculpture was removed from the station when it closed in 1966 and stored at York Railway Museum. In 1989, when the station re-opened there were some hopes of restoring the sculpture, but this proved impossible and for safety it was instead taken to the Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield where it is on display.

*Right: The Berry Brow sculpture with missing heads, on display at the Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield*
Top Secret: Yorkshire’s Links with the Dambusters

By Paul Williams

On May 17 1943 the RAF launched an audacious raid on three dams in the Ruhr region of western Germany. The mission was hailed a success and the pilots who carried it out became known the world over as ‘the Dambusters’. What is not so well-known however, is the role played by a Yorkshire company in the operation which was officially code named ‘chastise’.

George Hauxwell was born in Great Ayton in 1826 and established a millwrights and engineers business in West Street, Yarm around 1850. George later moved to Durham becoming a JP and alderman. He passed away in 1897, but the business continued to flourish throughout the 20th century under the watchful eye of George’s son Jack, expanding gradually and winning a contract to produce agricultural equipment during WW1.

In WW2, ‘shadow factories’ were established in many Yorkshire towns and villages most notably Leeds and Sheffield. This meant that works (or parts of them) were taken over by the government to help the war effort and employees were effectively ‘called up’. Hauxwell and Son was one such factory.

Recent research uncovered by North Yorkshire and Cleveland 20th Century Defence Study Group suggests a soldier who was visiting the factory whilst on leave during the war approached a lathe and noticed that the two employees who were working at it quickly covered up what appeared to be blueprints of a component.

Above: The Hauxwell and Son factory Yarm in the 1800s.

Right: In recent times it became a private dwelling with a plaque commemorating the company.
The employees apologised and told the soldier they had signed the Official Secrets Act and were forbidden from talking about the work they were doing. The soldier confided that he too had signed the act and was told by the employees that they were producing a component for something called the ‘Bouncing Bomb’.

Left: The interior of the company’s workshop where parts for the Dambusters bouncing bomb were manufactured. Photograph courtesy of Stockton Library Service

Such was the reputation enjoyed by Hauxwell and Son that the prestigious engineering company Head Wrightson had subcontracted the top secret and highly-skilled work out to the company- making them one of a number of ‘shadow factories’ in the process. The Hauxwell and Son factory, directly under Yarm Viaduct, was preserved and has now been converted into flats. The only clue that remains to its link with the Dambusters is a solitary blue plaque high up on a wall.

Sir Barnes Neville Wallis invented and developed the ‘bouncing bomb’ used by 617 Squadron ‘The Dam Busters’ to breach the Möhne and Eder dams in Germany in May 1943. They were both successfully breached, causing damage to the German factories and disrupting hydro-electric power. The raid was immortalised in Paul Brickhill’s book The Dam Busters and the 1955 film of the same name.

Right: Sir Barnes Neville Wallis (1887-1979)

Left: No. 617 Squadron practice dropping the 'Upkeep' weapon at Reculver in Kent © Imperial War Museum

Right: A group of observers watches as the bomb bounces toward the shoreline. Dr Barnes Wallis, on the extreme left of the group, can be seen urging the bomb on © Imperial War Museum

Left: Diagram depicting the Dambusters raid

Right: One of the Dambusters’ bouncing bombs

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