

## History of Salts Mill



Titus Salt was a man with a vision of an industrial utopia, and when he built Salts Mill and the surrounding village of Saltaire, he was bringing that vision to life. The mill was built to emulate a palazzo of the Italian Renaissance. Salt believed this was a time when social and cultural advancement were a direct consequence of the commercial ability of textile barons.

When Salts Mill opened in 1853, it was the biggest factory in the world. 3000 workers toiled away at 1200 looms, producing 30,000 yards of cloth every single day. In a twenty five year building spree, Salt also built housing, a church, schools and almshouses for his work force.

The textile industry gradually declined, and by the 1980's the Mill had become virtually redundant.

Jonathan Silver purchased the Mill in 1987. It was in poor repair in many parts and didn't seem to have much of a future but Jonathan didn't see it that way. He was undaunted by the vast project; indeed it thrilled and excited him and by the time of his death 10 years later, he had transformed Salts from an empty, decaying place into a bustling centre for art and commerce. He opened the 1853 Hockney art galleries, and made other areas into restaurants, shopping and office space.

Today hundreds of people are employed on the site by firms which include large hi-tech manufacturing companies like Pace Electronics and Filtronic Comtek.

The success of combining these developments in an historic building has helped Salts Mill and the surrounding village of Saltaire to win several leading National and European awards and is now a World Heritage Site.