HERITAGE COUNTS 2016 - CASE STUDY

Saltaire

Salts Mill © Historic England

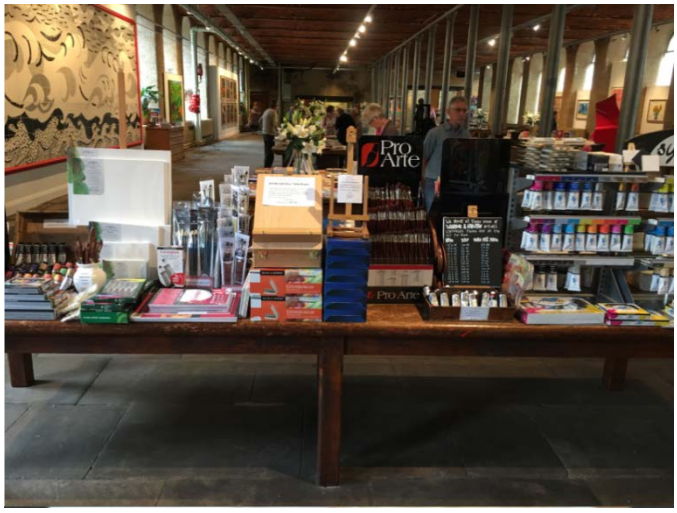
Saltaire is a village in the Metropolitan District of Bradford that was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001. It is named after Sir Titus Salt who built a textile mill called Salts Mill in 1853 and the surrounding village to house the mill workers. When the mill stopped operating in 1986, it was purchased by Jonathan Silver who created a place for commercial and cultural activities. Now it is to the largest collection of David Hockney works in the world. Salts Mill is now considered a creative hub as it is the home of a number of independent artists and artisans who were attracted to the studio spaces offered in the converted mill. It is also home to TV set top box maker formerly known as Pace (now taken over by US technology company Arris Group).

Promotion of the village as a tourist destination, a host to festivals and a place for artists and creative businesses is anchored by images depicting the heritage of the place.

Salts Mill is an iconic landmark. As such, the dramatic façade features in the branding of the mill – on signs and merchandise. Salts Mill is a focal point for the village and is the main draw for visitors to experience the Hockney gallery as well as an exhibition on the history of the village and the opportunity to buy work from local artists and artisans.

> *"The exhibition about the history of the mill and its founder was excellent; it really made me feel connected to the history of the building"* Ben Pechey, visitor to Salts Mill.

Saltaire hosts a number of festivals and events such as the annual Saltaire Festival that promotes the villages' new connection with the arts. This annual event, held in September, marks the anniversary of Titus Salt's birthday. Interestingly, the logo used throughout the Saltaire Festival website is a silhouette of an alpaca. This may seem an unusual choice, but is a nod to the industrial heritage of the village and the use of alpaca wool to create high quality cloth in the mill. Place-branding here is subtle and witty, but for those interested in the heritage of Saltaire it will perhaps raise a smile.



Interior retail space at Salts Mill ©Ben Pechey

Saltaire Inspired is an annual art trail where residents open up their gardens to display various art works. The logo for this event also references the architecture of the mill by incorporating the dominating chimney that is characteristic of the mill. This subtle branding places the heritage of the village at the heart of the event. The event is also an opportunity for locals and tourists alike to explore what can be done within the limited confines of the gardens of the grade II listed properties that make up the majority of the model village.

The volunteer-run village website acts as a centre for tourism, history and local news and uses an image of Titus Salt to identify itself. But it is not just Salts Mill and marketing for visitors that makes use of the heritage of the place. Saltaire Brewery was established in 2005 and uses powerful imagery of the mill on their bottle labels to help make their products stand out within the market. The brand will have benefitted locally from recognition and appreciation of Saltaire and now that the beer is being sold nationally it will, in turn, be helping to promote the entire village.

Saltaire Brewery Logo ©Saltaire Brewery

The brand of Saltaire based around the striking Salts Mill and its incredible heritage plays a clear role in promoting the village as a tourist attraction, as well as a vibrant place to live and work.

"*I enjoyed the way that the gallery space retained its industrial feel, linking the past to the present and allowing the mill to have a future.*" recent visitor to Salts Mill.

Contact: Rachel Pechey, Business Officer, Historic England (Rachel.Pechey@HistoricEngland.org.uk)

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Telephone 0370 333 0607
textphone: 0800 015 0174
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