

Llandrindod Wells & District U3A Meeting January 2020

Titus Salt Junior and his Son on the Grand Tour - Nicholas Salt

Report by Clive Barrett

Chairman Roger Malvern welcomed everyone and wished them "a happy new year". He firstly announced that the group's website manager Nick Talbott had recently got married and he offered members' congratulations. He hoped members had enjoyed the Christmas show at the December meeting. Roger also said that the film groups last showing had to be cancelled at short notice because of illness and unavailability, and he recommended that members check three days before the next scheduled showing. He mentioned about the group's AGM at the March meeting, and he hoped members would stand or nominate for the Committee. Roger also announced that there would be a change of speaker next month February. The speaker on Monday 10th would now be Gavin Hooson, and his talk would be entitled "Genealogy from Various Sources".

The Chairman then introduced the speaker for the morning Nicholas Salt, his talk originally being called "Titus Salt Junior and his son Gordon on the Grand Tour". The speaker began by stating that his great grandfather was Titus Salt Junior, and his talk would be in two halves, firstly about The Saltaire Institute, its Foundation & Aims in 1871. The building was part of the town of Saltaire which was created by Titus Salt, who made a fortune in the woollen cloth industry in Bradford. He was determined to establish good conditions for his workers, just outside Bradford, with the factory and village area. Titus also incorporated public buildings, a wash area, Methodist Church, and a Sunday School, the last three are not there now. The Saltaire or Shirley Institute being the last building to be constructed, with the aims of being for adult education, science and art. The site was opened in 1871 by Titus Salt Junior, who had married Katherine Clough, whose family were prosperous Halifax carpet makers. The Salt family were Congregationists, Liberals and Radicals. Amongst the descriptive photos Nicholas showed were the house which Titus Salt Junior built. The lecture had an alive and realistic feeling, possibly because the speaker was talking about close relations -- his immediate ancestors. He mentioned the advanced battery systems they used in the house because of course there was no electricity. Titus Salt Junior was reported as saying that the Saltaire Club and Institute had the advantages of a public house without all the disadvantages. He also described the class rooms, social rooms and spoke about the good Victorian values provided for the workers of the villages, and that the Mill could employ 3,000 people. At the Institute where General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army once visited, threeday events were held, talks and balls plus medical facilities, everything provided for the workers except a public bar -- now there is one there called *Don't Tell Titus!!!*

The second half of the talk was subtitled "Titus Salt Junior and his son Gordon on the Grand Tours of the 1860's and 1880's." Titus and his son, Gordon(Nicholas' grandfather) travelled widely because they could afford to, and had an interest in doing so. Titus Salt Junior was known as an excellent photographer taking top class standard cameras and equipment on trips abroad. Glass negative plates were found in 2006, but unfortunately the

family photo album of the 1850's has no description or names on the prints. Titus and Gordon, the latter was educated at Winchester and Cambridge, travelled to amongst other places the Holy Land, and afterwards gave a detailed talk on the area. They travelled firstly by boat via Alexandria, Cairo and Suez, and the newly constructed first railway in northern Africa which greatly shortened the distance between previously "faraway" countries. He showed impressive old photos of Alexandria, the Pyramids(which his grandfather climbed), Cairo and "up" the Nile. Actually the photos included pictures of his ancestors trips of both the 1860's and 1880's. The father and son pair also visited Athens and Greece, Temples in Egypt, and were known to photograph the locals, and buy female and male costumes for the local people to wear when he gave talks back in the UK. They also travelled to Granada, Indian Palaces, and Norway showing pictures of the group around the ffiords in a boat (1887). Some beautiful and amazing pictures of Norway showed he must have had some firstclass equipment. Titus also visited Niagra falls, having business connections with America.

Chairman Roger thanked the speaker for his fascinating talk, which with the photos shown had been much appreciated, adding that it was good Nicholas was so closely connected with his subject – his ancestors. He then answered some audience questions, stating that Saltaire had now achieved UNESCO World Heritage Status and indeed the whole project of preserving the town Titus Salt built was going well.