

Sir Henry Ripley Bt

An article from Bradford and District Libraries Map Collection. 28/11/2022. This fits into St Matthew's Churchyard People of Interest, Midshipman Alfred Ripley.

<https://www.lightcliffechurchyard.org.uk/about-churchyard/people-of-interest>



Nineteenth century Bradford was notable for a group of textile magnates who possessed enormous wealth and political influence. Several were MPs. The development of the mill village of Saltaire (now a world heritage site) makes the name of Sir Titus Salt familiar even today. The existence of Lister Park and the Manningham Mills strike, which led directly to the formation of the Independent Labour Party, should ensure the immortality of Samuel Cunliffe Lister. Any student of Bradford history will soon encounter the names of Sir Isaac Holden, Robert Milligan, John Rand, and Henry Ripley.

The first plan shows the Bowling dyeworks; this very famous concern is always associated with the name Sir Henry William Ripley (1813-1882). I should explain to any readers outside Bradford that yarn was spun in a mill, and cloth was then woven in a weaving shed. Finally, the cloth would be dyed and finished. This next plan is a detail from the first Ordnance Survey map of Bradford (1852) which shows the general topography of the area, and the relationship of the Dye House to Bolling Hall.



This map from the LSL Reserve collection must date from the late 1840s. You can see the railway line from Bowling Junction curving round the building on its way to Laisterdyke and Leeds. Immediately outside the curve of the railway line should be the large ponds constructed for the works. The ponds are present on the first OS map and the 1849 Bradford map. Have these simply been omitted, or is it possible they were not yet constructed? The *Bradford Observer* reports a large sale of land in this area, including that piece accommodating the Dye Works, in 1850. The vendor isn't stated but might well be the Bowling Iron Company. Probably Ripley's purchased land at this time to allow for the expansion of his business and the assurance of adequate soft water supplies, which included the reservoir. Victorian historian William Cudworth records a 100-acre purchase by the Ripley company and also states that a contractor called Samuel Pearson constructed reservoirs for Bowling Dye Works and Bowling Iron Works at a date 'early in the fifties'. Samuel Pearson was a Cleckheaton brick-maker who founded a contracting dynasty with another important grandson. After being created a baronet Samuel Pearson's own grandson, Weetman Pearson, became the first Viscount Cowdray in 1917.



Parker states that Henry Ripley and his wife moved to Apperley Bridge, presumably back to his wife's former childhood home which she would have owned since her father's death in 1862. Subsequently Henry Ripley's name is associated with the Grade II Listed Bedstone Court in Shropshire. This was built on an estate he had owned since the 1870s, although he may not have lived to see its completion. Sir Henry Ripley was created a baronet in 1880 and died two years later. His son took over control of the business. In 1890 the company became part of the Bradford Dyers Association.