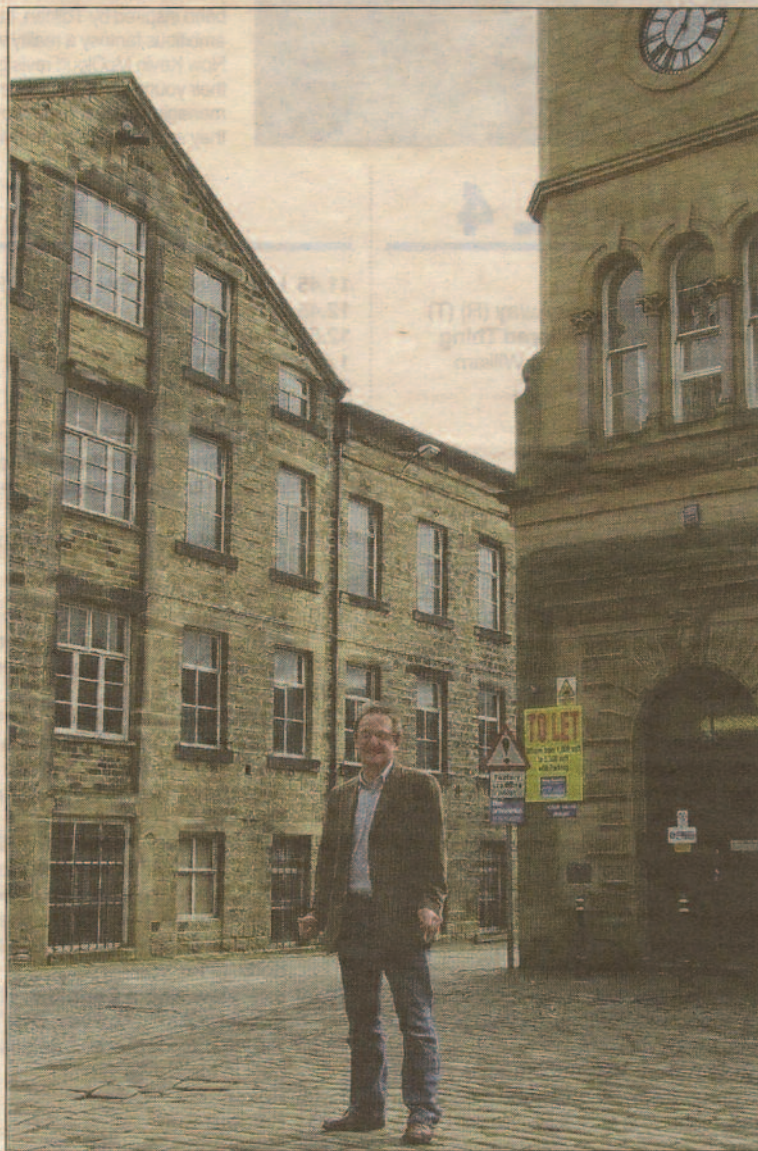


Training centre plan for master craftsmen



PLANS to create a training centre for master craftsmen in West Yorkshire have been launched.

The centre, which will be based at Shaw Lodge Mills, Halifax, is aiming to combat the severe shortage of skilled heritage craftsmen in West Yorkshire.

It will be situated in the 1830 Mill, at the heart of Shaw Lodge Mills, which is being transformed into an urban village for the 21st century by award-winning Leeds-based developer, St James Securities.

Steve Oxley, pictured left, who will run the training centre, said: "The remit of the centre will be to provide education and training for craftsmen who want to take their skills to another level. There is a chronic shortage of master craftsmen in West Yorkshire to preserve and enhance our wonderful architectural and cultural heritage.

"Over the past few decades, the number of skilled craftsmen has declined dramatically and we are now in the dire situation where we are losing the last generation.

Preservation

"That has desperate implications when 33 per cent of housing stock in this country is pre-1919 and is in increasing need of preservation and restoration. I believe that the foundation of a school and training centre, together with an archive and reference library, will provide services and resources to combat this skills shortage."

The centre will initially run courses in decorative skills but also deliver training in architecture styles, interior design, sign-writing drawing, wood-carving, gold-leaf work and stained glass.