

The MUNDLING STICK

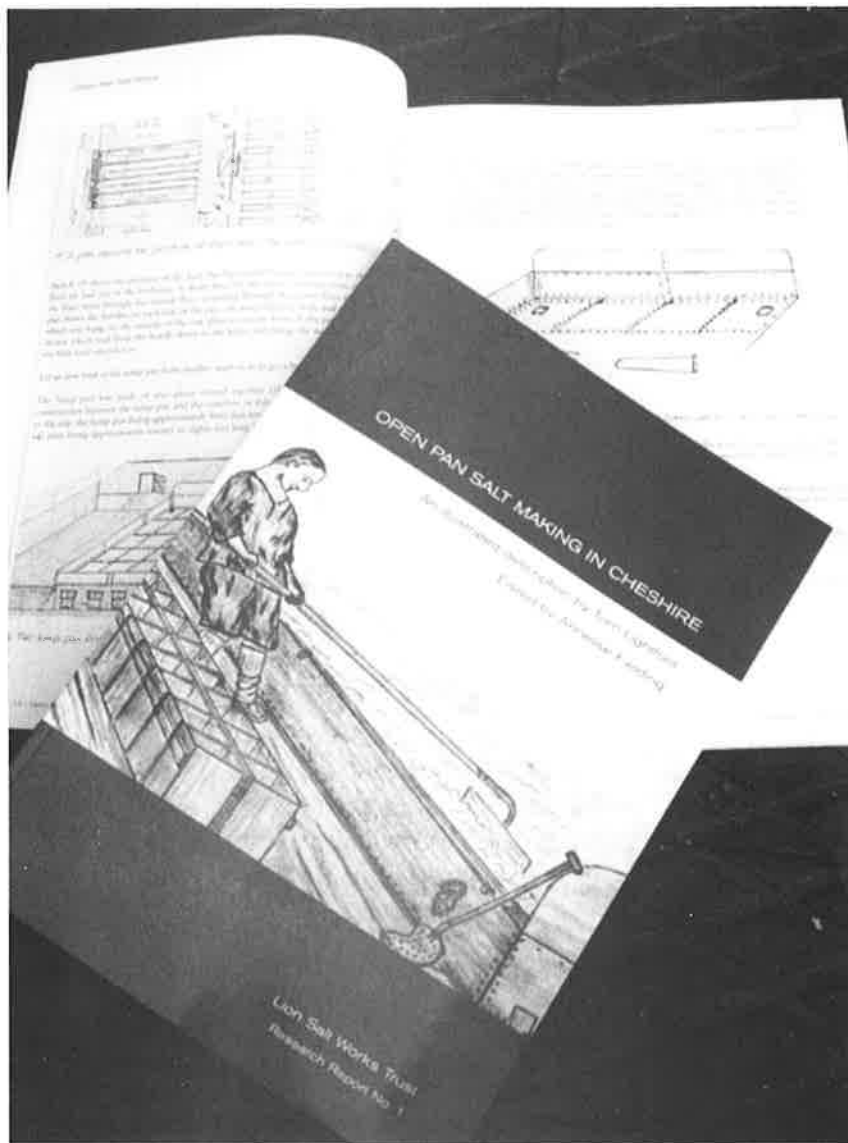


the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **AUTUMN 2000**

VOLUME 6 No. 3

FIRST RESEARCH REPORT PUBLISHED



This is devoted to *Open Pan Salt Making. An illustrated description by Tom Lightfoot*, edited by Annelise Fielding.

The book reproduces the memories of a lifetime working in the salt industry by Tom Lightfoot who started work in Winsford in 1928 at the age of 14.

It is over twenty years since Tom was encouraged by George Twigg and Lady Rochester to describe his life on the River Weaver and in the salt works at Winsford and Middlewich. His companion work *The Weaver Watermen* was edited by Lady Rochester and published by Cheshire Museums and Libraries in 1983 to coincide with a river festival. Unfortunately, the salt memoirs were put to one side, possibly because at that time the Lion Works was still in operation and the activities of open pan salt making could be seen at first hand.

It was following the death of Tom Lightfoot that the original manuscript was passed to the Trust by George Twigg with the approval of Tom's family. Sadly Lady Rochester died before the project could be completed

Grants to enable the book to be published have come from the Worshipful Company of Salters, the Salt Manufacturers Association and The Manifold Trust.

We anticipate that Research Report No. 1 will become a standard reference work on open pan salt making.

Future reports will look at the archaeology of the site, the architecture, tools and equipment as well as interpreting the business records of the site.

mundling stick n.~tool used to pack salt crystals into the wooden tubs when making lump salt. This newsletter will likewise try to cram in all the latest information about the conservation and restoration of the Lion Salt Works.

Tom Lightfoot 1914 - 1996

Tom went to Gladstone Street School in Winsford, Cheshire. At fourteen he was taken on by the Salt Union to work in the joiners' shop at the Birkenhead Salt Works, one of many works which at that time lined both banks of a two mile stretch of the river between Town Bridge and New Bridge.

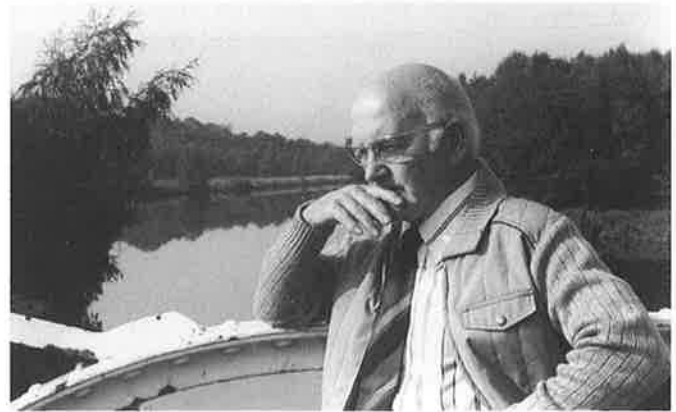
At sixteen he became apprentice on the Salt Union packets, *Albion* and *Charles*. In 1935 he went to George Hamlett and Sons working as mate on the *Premier* and *Prince of Denmark*. Richard Hamlett, chairman of the Lion Salt Works Trust, can remember Tom working on his family's salt boats at this time.

In 1939 he joined Henry Seddon and Sons, salt manufacturers at Middlewich, working on *Gowanburn*, which had formerly been owned and operated by Henry Ingram Thomson.

From 1955 until retirement in 1976 he worked at the brine pumping station of Murgatroyd's Salt Works at Middlewich.



Above: Tom at work as pumpman at Murgatroyd's.
 Right: In reflective mood on the River Weaver.
 Below: A page from the original manuscript.



THE ABOVE SHOWS WHAT THE WOODEN WATER BUTTS LOOKED LIKE, THESE WOULD BE ONE OF SEVERAL ON EACH HUNBLE WHICH MEANS THAT THERE WOULD BE TWO BUTTS TO EACH PAN. OF COURSE THEY WERE NOT ALL MADE OF WOOD SOME WERE MADE OF IRON PLATES NAILLED TOGETHER. THE SIZE OF THESE BUTTS WAS ABOUT FOUR FEET LONG BY TWO FEET WIDE BY TWO FEET DEEP, THEY WERE CALLED THE BUTTS BY THE LUMPERS. ON THE TOP OF THE LUMP PAN, THE BUTTS WERE AND THE LUMPERS WERE STANDING ON THESE ALL WORK IN LINE WITH EACH OTHER.

THE ABOVE SKETCH SHOWS THE POSITION OF THE PAN, THE FLUE UNDER THE PAN, ALSO THE WAY THE DITCHES AND FLUES ARE LAID OUT IN THE HUTHOUSE, IT ALSO SHOWS HOW THE HOT GASSES TRAVEL FROM THE PAN THROUGH THE FLUE GOING THROUGH THE OUTSIDE FLUES AND RETURNING THROUGH THE CENTRAL FLUE TO THE CHIMNEY. IT ALSO SHOWS THE BRIDGES ON EACH SIDE OF THE PAN, THE WATER BUTTS OR BRUSH, AND THE DODGETTING PLANK WHICH WAS HUNG ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE HUTHOUSE ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE PAN, THE STEPS ARE ALSO SHOWN WHICH LEAD FROM THE BUTTLE DOWN TO THE TUBS, THIS BEING THE NAME OF THE PLACE WHERE THE FIRNS WERE

The Manuscript

The original text and illustrations which form the basis of this book were written in pencil by hand. George Twigg aided and prompted Tom, providing fresh lined paper. Pages would be worked on until an accurate and fair copy was produced. Each page incorporated the drawings and the text, making re-writing a time consuming business.

Editing has involved three basic tasks, removing the blue lines from beneath the pencil sketches, removing repetition and reorganising some of the sections so that the processes can be followed by readers unfamiliar with salt making.

Designed locally by Don Allen of Glint, the A4 paperback has a glossy two colour cover featuring a lumpman raking salt crystals to the side of an open pan.

The book has been dedicated to memory of Lady Rochester and comprises 83 pages, 2 maps, 2 photographs with 109 black and white illustrations and an index of terms.

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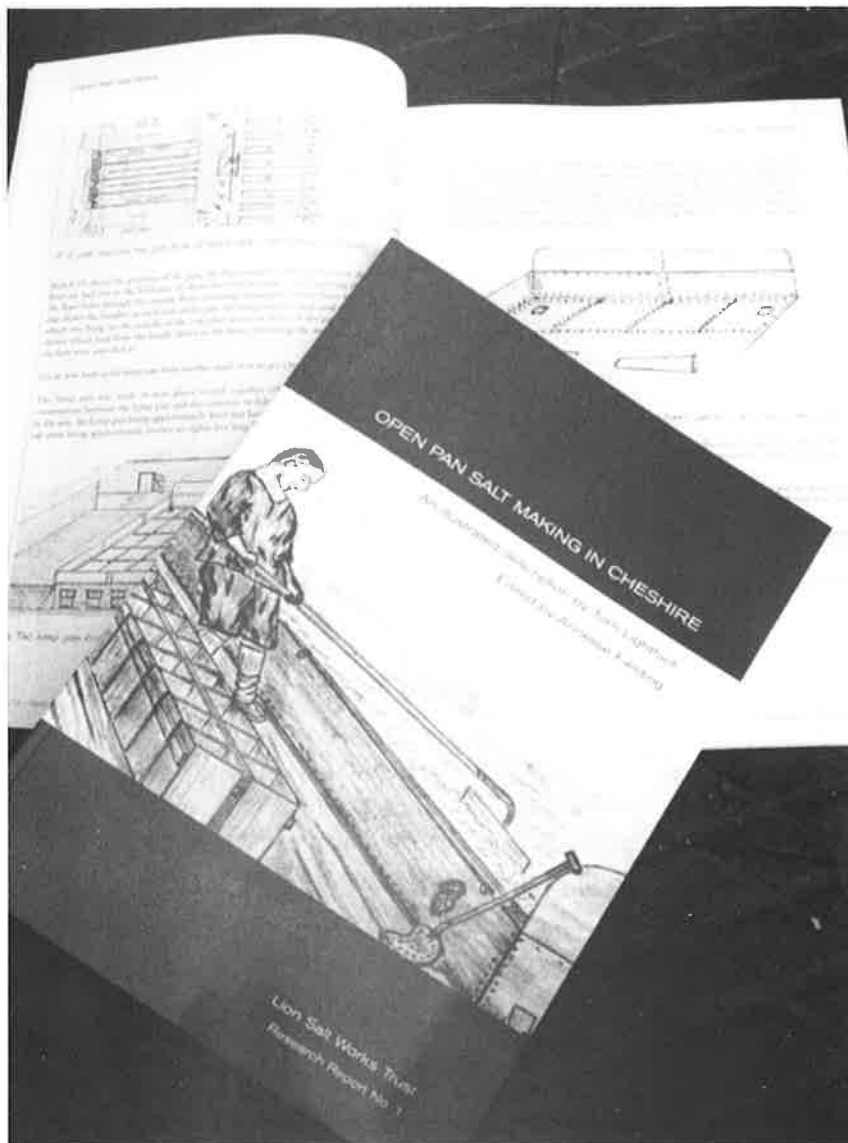


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AIA DELEGATES VISIT NORTHWICH

The annual conference of the *Association for Industrial Archaeologists* was held in Manchester this September and a field visit was made to Northwich following the main lecture programme.

Robina McNeil of Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit and Andrew Fielding, Project Director of the Lion Salt Works Trust, briefed delegates about the origins of salt making in Cheshire and the framed buildings of Northwich at an evening lecture the evening before the field trip.



AIA members outside Northwich library.

Robina McNeil had been the first UK archaeologist to excavate and publish a medieval salt making site at Nantwich, Cheshire in 1979.

The Northwich visit was one of the most popular excursions. The first seventeen members to sign up to the trip were able to visit the Salt Union rock salt mine at Winsford during the morning. The remaining 46 accompanied Andrew Fielding on a tour of the framed buildings of Northwich walking along Witton St and High St to the Bull Ring and down London Rd to The Salt Museum.

The group was extremely interested in the unique design of the framed building techniques developed to withstand ground movements caused by salt extraction during the nineteenth century. An unexpected presentation was provided by Clive Steggels of CRS Insurance who recognised the interest of the large group outside his premises and brought out his photograph album showing how the building had been lifted as part of the restoration work carried out to the former Parrs Bank.

After lunch at The Salt Barge in Marston the group visited the Lion Salt Works where volunteers demonstrated brine evaporation in our stainless steel salt pan and the replica iron pan based in the sixteenth century illustrations published by Agricola.

The day was rounded off by a visit to see the restoration work currently underway at The Anderton Lift, where it is hoped work will be completed in twelve months time.



OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works exhibition is opened each afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Donations : £1 per adult, 50p per child. Booked parties by arrangement. For further information call 01606-41823.

Web site address - <http://lion.saltworkstrust.co.uk>

We have been pleased to welcome four new volunteers to join the team who enable our exhibition building to open on a regular basis. If you have up to four hours to spare during opening times contact the Project Director, Andrew Fielding.

The AIA was established in 1973. It publishes an annual Review and quarterly News bulletin as well as running training courses, conferences, seminars and publishing the results of research.

If you would like to become a member of the AIA and find out more about industrial archaeology around the country send for details from the Liaison Officer, AIA Office, School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH. Tel: 0116 252 5337

THE MUNDLING STICK *by post*

If you would like to have a regular copy of The Mundling Stick sent to you by post please send your name and address to The Lion Salt Works Trust, Ollershaw Lane, Marston, Northwich CW9 6ES or telephone/fax 01606 -41823. Newsletters are currently sent free of charge.

Cheques for donations should be made out to THE LION SALT WORKS TRUST. If you would like to provide long term support for the Trust please ask for a covenant form.

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