

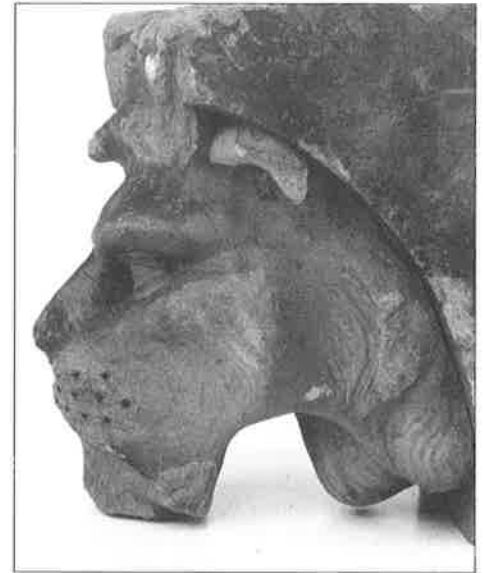
The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **AUTUMN 2001**

VOLUME 7 No. 3



THOMPSON LION FOUND IN GARDEN

A piece of moulded brickwork by Jabez Thompson was found in a Northwich garden this summer. Thomas Lewis found it whilst digging in the grass trying to mend his swing. He thought it was just a brick but began to take more care when he realised it had curious decorations. It took over an hour to carefully extract it out of the ground and to find it was in fact the head of a Lion with a stamp on its base. Though not well stamped he could read the name 'Thompson' and 'Northwich' and showed it to his grand-mother. She thought it was likely to be of historic interest and made enquiries through the *Northwich Chronicle* to ask if their correspondent on local history, Brian Curzon, could give them any information about who had made it. From the description and the Thompson name, Brian immediately thought they should contact us at the Lion Salt Works Trust. Jabez Thompson worked with his father John Thompson at their brick works and salt works, eventually

specialising in brick making. His early trade adverts describe his joint operations at the Road Brick and Terracotta Works and the Alliance Salt Works.

The decorative lion is known at a number of properties in the area, in particular at the entrance to the extension of the Northwich Workhouse now used as the County's Salt Museum where a pair of lion heads are positioned either side of the doorway. Though moulded each piece is hand finished and has an individual appearance which is both stern and regal.

Thomas and his grandmother made contact with Project Director, Andrew Fielding and brought the Lion to the museum to find out more about it. The Trust is grateful to Thomas that he agreed to donate his find to the museum collection where it would be seen by our visitors. Within a few hours it had been numbered and placed in our display case reserved for Jabez Thompson bricks.

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Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for Development Funding submitted on 8th October 2001.

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.

A NEW VIEW FROM THE AIR



A new air photograph was taken of the site this summer providing a record of improvements made around the rear of the site by last years grants from the Manchester Airport Community Fund and a North West Water Landcare Grant.

The removal of soil mounds, improvements to the herb garden and a coppice woodland planting to the south are not easy to see at ground level. The greatest impact has been provided by a regular mowing regime which removes all grass cuttings. This encourages the special flowering plants in the grass especially orchids which have continued to increase in number. The composted grass is eventually used to add much needed organic matter into the herb garden and flower borders.

The photograph shows the Marston Flashes to the north of the Trent and Mersey Canal caused by the collapse of the Adelaide Rock Salt Mine in 1928. Also visible is the site of the Thompsons' earlier, Alliance Salt Works extending into the field east of the Lion Works along the canal. The remains of a now filled in canal arm can also be seen. This is easily seen whilst walking along the tow path.

DESIGN OF SALTMaking PLANT BEGINS

Thanks to a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation we are able to move ahead with the design of the salt making equipment which will be a major part of the restored site.

Cox and Speller have been recruited to help in the design work which will investigate the design criteria for heat recovery and the use of biomass as a fuel. In fact we shall be aiming to make the site as self sufficient as possible and a beacon site for environmentally friendly energy in Cheshire.

The modern process will put into context the processes and efficiencies of modern salt making plants providing comparisons with Roman and Medieval salt making and the fossil fuels used by the industry from the seventeenth century.



SUBMISSION TO HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

In the summer the Trust worked with Donald Insall Associates to produce an Action Plan document with the Project Team of Bob Costello, Brian Morton, Past Forward and Davies, Langdon and Everest. This was presented to the Trustees and then to the Executive Committee of Vale Royal Borough Council.

The Trust is grateful for the many letters of support which we received over the summer. These were incorporated into our submission documents and show the wide interest there is in the preservation of this unique industrial monument.

At the beginning of October the report, with supporting information, was delivered to the Heritage Lottery Fund with an application for Development Funding. The work involving stabilisation work and a full development plan is expected to cost £290,000 as part of a total restoration package of £4.4m.

LEASE TO SITE

At the same time the HLF application was submitted the Trust is awaiting legal work to be completed providing a 35 year lease to the site from Vale Royal Borough Council.

Thanks are due to Janet McBurney of Percy Hughes & Roberts for legal advice provided through Arthur



Andersen Skills Bank run by Business in the Arts : North West.

Following local consultation meetings a planning application will be made for the restoration of the historic parts of the site and the creation of a new salt pan for the demonstration of historic process.

NEW TRUSTEES

At its meeting in September The Trust welcomed two new Trustees. Cllr Mainwaring is the new Cheshire County Council representative, replacing Ron Carey, and equally committed to preserving the heritage of Northwich. Mr Carey stood down as a councillor at the last election but as a founder trustee he wished to remain on the Trustee Board to support the important progress now being made with the project. Also joining the Trust is Martin Boyett. A trained architect, Martin retired from Vale



Royal Borough Council this summer where he had been Head of the Community Partnerships Division. Martin had been in the Planning Department when the site was created a Listed Building and an original member of the Council's Joint Working Party, established in 1986, shortly after the Lion Salt Works had been purchased by the Council.

Chairman, Richard Hamlett (left) and Trustee, Ron Carey (right) welcome Martin Boyett (centre left) and Cllr Mainwaring (centre right) to the Lion Salt Works.



MODEL NARROWBOAT

In August Mr Rogers, now of Burton-on-Trent, brought over a model of a narrowboat which he had made many years ago. After a recent visit he had promised to find it and donate it to the Trust's museum collection. In his youth Mr Rogers worked at Yarwoods boat yard in Northwich and worked on Thompson narrowboats and Weaver flats. He continued his interest in boat building at home making ship models. The wooden model is built at a scale of 1/4 inch to one foot.



LION SALT WORKS ROAD SIGNS

Returned to the site with office furniture from the Manager's Office were two road signs. These had been removed from Ollershaw Lane by Cheshire Highways Department when the works closed in 1986 and stored by the Cheshire Museum Service.

Each sign is large, measuring 0.77m by 1.20m (2ft 6in by 4ft). The raised black lettering has inserted glass beads to reflect light from oncoming car headlights at night.

The signs were a local landmark and we are frequently asked if they survived the closure of the site. Many people believed they had been stolen and were lost forever.

Salt Making Displays A Success at Roman Middlewich Weekend



Bryan explains the use of ceramic and lead salt pans in the process of evaporating brine to make white salt crystals.

Model lead salt pans in use with replica briquetage salt containers and a ceramic salt pan in the background.



An excellent weekend was spent at Harbutts Field, Middlewich, the scene of a well attended Roman invasion of the town. The event launched a guide book about Roman Middlewich written by Tim Strickland and a series of information panels placed at key sites around the town.

We took along three ceramic salt pans and three scaled down versions of lead salt pans. In the marquee we used a gas burner to heat the brine in order to show visitors the historic process of brine evaporation.

Over 10,000 people attended the event and we were kept fully occupied answering questions about salt making. We met many people who had visited the site at Marston or regularly received our newsletter. Thank you for all your good wishes for our Heritage Lottery application.

BRISTOL BLUE GLASS

Our range of table salts has been increasing this summer. Bristol Blue Glass now supply us with three styles of glass salts: a shallow blue bowl and two optic footed bowls, one in clear glass with a blue foot and blue edged rim, the other also in deep blue.

Each piece is freely blown by craftsmen, using recycled glass. Finished items are hand engraved with the trademark signature 'Bristol' and comes in a presentation box at £17.50.



Trust Contribution to 'Food Court', Radio 4

The Trust contributed to a Radio 4 programme 'Food Court' in September when Andrew Fielding described how salt used to be made in Northwich when the Lion Salt Works was in full production. The programme was looking at the effects of salt in modern diets, in particular the amount of salt used in modern processed foods which is now of great concern to many people.

OPENING TIMES

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

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

Help interpret your local heritage to others. The Trust still requires additional volunteers to assist with maintenance and to open the exhibition centre especially on Saturday afternoons.

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 Gift Aid form.

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