

# The MUNDLING STICK



the LION  
Salt Works  
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust **AUTUMN 2005**

**VOLUME II No.3**

## NANTWICH FOOD FESTIVAL



### Kevin Woodford Tastes Fresh Salt Made in Cheshire

Andrew Fielding and Tony Leonard met the celebrity chef, Kevin Woodford at the fourth Nantwich Food and Drink Festival. Andrew and Tony spent a whole day making salt in Nantwich town-square as part of the 'Country-side comes to Town' event on Sunday 29th September.

Andrew had also given two talks on the Friday and Saturday in the Speakers Corner.

Kevin Woodford was interested to see the traditional Cheshire process of evaporating brine in an open pan and discover the process of making fine and coarse salt by boiling or simmering the brine. If he attends the festival next year he promised that he would use salt made by the Lion Salt Works.

### Inside Report: Fête du Sel at Salies-de- Béarn

Trustees and volunteers of the Lion Salt Works Trust attended the 25th Fête du Sel at Salies-de-Béarn, France over the week-end of 8th - 11th September. The invitation had been made by the organising committee, the Jourade du Sel. Accommodation and expenses in France were provided by the town of Salies-de-Béarn and travel costs were supported by Vale Royal Borough Council to whom the Trust is extremely grateful.

The festival celebrated salt heritage and the arts and so the Trust was accompanied by the Comberbach Mummies.

It was a privilege to be able to describe the salt history of Northwich alongside a performance of a traditional Cheshire mumming play to audiences from French and Spanish salt making towns. We look forward to further exchanges in the future.

### HLF APPLICATION

Our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant towards the restoration of the Lion Salt Works was formerly accepted in August and a case officer allocated in September.

The Trust is currently preparing plans to secure the matching funding it will require in order to move the restoration work forward. If you would like to help secure the long term future of the Lion Salt Works please contact the Project Director, Andrew Fielding.

## 'You are truly the salt of the earth' ... a trip to the Fête du sel at Salies-de-Béarn, France



*Presenting the Lion Salt Dolly.*

*Left to right: Monsieur Peyruseigt, Richard Hamlett, Luciene Basse-Cathalinat, Monsieur Saule and Philippe Villaine, President of the Jurade du Sel.*

On Friday evening all the delegations to the festival gave presentations in the town's conference centre. Martin Boyett one of our Trustees gave a presentation about the Lion Salt Works which was particularly well received as Martin had gone to considerable pains to present it all in French! The Cheshire contribution to the festival was completed by the short, but stunning 'Peter's Play' delivered by our own Comberbach Mummies, again introduced in French by Jane Smith.

The audience was then treated to some Spanish dancing, and a presentation on Inland Spanish salinas, by our old friend, from Guadalajara, Katia Hueso who visited the Lion Salt Works in 2003. (Descriptions of her projects are included in the Trust Research Report No.2 *Salt Works and Salinas.*)

Friday evening concluded with a performance, by a group of singers and musicians "Groupe de Lanne", in which everyone joined in before rather reluctantly saying goodnight around midnight.

An interest-packed visit to the salt festival started on Friday, 9th September with a formal reception in the council chambers. Richard Hamlett (Chairman of the Lion Salt Works Trust) presented Mayor, Lucien Basse-Cathalinat with a traditional slip-ware salt-dolly, featuring a representation of a Lion, for display in their salt museum.

A short presentation by Monsieur Saule describing the history of salt making in Salies-de-Béarn was followed by a visit to the salt museum of Salies-de-Béarn.

Accompanied by our guides Clive and June Budd and Jane Sully and we were able to have an instant translation and explanation of everything that was said.



*Salt pans in the Salies-de-Béarn museum.*



*Spanish Dancers.*



*The Comberbach Mummies.*

Saturday morning found us taking in all the sights and sounds of the festival market before enjoying lunch at the casino, hosted by co-president André Escarpit. After lunch the Mummers really had to work hard and presented their play to the townsfolk in the canal basin where they were followed everywhere by curious local children. The rest of the party were able to enjoy themselves visiting the local commercial salt works, where “les fleurs de sel” are harvested, before witnessing the traditional salt festival races between teams of ladies carrying 20 kilogram loads of water in wooden tubs on their heads. On Sunday the men’s races were held where barrels of brine carried on poles were raced to and from the brine spring.



*Curious local children inspect the Mummers.*



*The race is on.*

Saturday concluded in the town square where we all sat down to a giant paella cooked in a pan about 2 metres in diameter. The local rosé wine was freely flowing and we were regaled non-stop by a very lively brass band, comprising mostly of the local youngsters.

Sunday was definitely a day to remember. The proceedings started with a formal procession of guilds from around France, headed of course by the salt makers guild, all in their brilliantly coloured robes. The procession made its way to the local church for Mass, celebrated in the Béarnais language, and from there, to the town square for the formal presentations of the delegations and their official welcoming into the Brotherhood of Salt. We were then invited to the council chambers and privileged to witness the signing of an historic tourism treaty between the towns of Salies-de-Béarn and the salt town of Cardona, Spain.



*Martin Boyett and Richard Hamlett welcomed into the Brotherhood of Salt.*

Following the signing of the treaty we took our places as guests of honour among around 2000 people in the square for a truly unforgettable five course meal, accompanied by two brass bands playing non-stop and endeavouring to outdo each other. It seemed incredible but it appeared to be almost obligatory to get up and dance, on the chairs, all the way through the meal. We were quickly into the spirit of the occasion, no doubt encouraged by the free-flowing rosé wine, and took part with a gusto; what a fantastic memory to bring back! The afternoon passed far too quickly.

Undeterred by the heavy rain the Mummers took their place in the festival parade whilst the rest of us watched proceedings from underneath a market awning.

At the end of a highly enjoyable visit to the Salies-de-Béarn salt festival our delegation of trustees and volunteers from the Lion Salt Works, accompanied by the Comberbach Mummers, enjoyed a final “vin d’honneur” with their hosts. In a farewell thank-you speech, Ron Stephens (Mummer) described our hosts as being “truly the salt of the earth”. In truth it was difficult to put into words our gratitude for the wonderful hospitality extended by our hosts. A final “vin d’honneur” that evening with the mayor and other officials, accompanied by that ubiquitous brass band, rounded off what for many of us, was the experience of a lifetime. Truly, the folk of Salies-de-Béarn are the salt of the earth.

*Diary report by Tony Leonard on behalf of the Lion Salt Works Trust and Comberbach Mummers.*

## Dates for Your Diary

Saturday, 15th October 2005

### The Big Draw

10am to 4pm

Part of a national campaign to encourage people to take up drawing. Three different artists will lead three exciting art workshops! Have a go at watercolour painting, create your own cartoon, have a go at making a sgraffito tile or make a three-dimensional sculpture. Drop-in at any time throughout the day and take part in as many workshops as you like!

**Richard Carman**, noted for his appearances on TV programmes 'Watercolour Challenge' and 'A Brush With the Mersey' will use the Lion Salt Works as inspiration to lead sessions focussing on watercolour painting.

**Jaswindre Elwick** will be using wire to create three-dimensional images, exploring shape and form. A variety of media will be used to add colour and texture to the final pieces.

Cartoonist **George Brooks** will be encouraging people to explore cartoons as an exciting and fun way communication.

**Anne-Marie Rickus** will help you contribute to a large participatory art piece that all individuals will be able to contribute to during the day.

All materials are provided and individuals will be able to take home any work created.

If you would like more information please contact Katherine West on 01606 862862.

Sunday 16th October 2005

### Llangollen Food Festival, Llangollen Pavilion

Whilst attending the Nantwich Food Festival Andrew Fielding was invited to give a talk on salt making at Llangollen by Dai Chef. Dai makes bread at the Eagle Bakery, Ruthin specialising in using spelt grain. [www.diachef.com](http://www.diachef.com)

11th-14th March, 2006

### Making and Operating a Brine Graduation Tower

Following our theme of experimenting with practical salt making we propose to reconstruct a 'thorn wall' similar to one used in Rheine, Westphalia, Germany to concentrate weak brine. More in our Winter newsletter.



## ERIH LAUNCHED

Whilst our volunteers and Trustees were attending a salt festival in France, our Project Director took part in the launch of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, which will establish local, regional and trans-national links between industrial sites. The initial partner countries include the UK, Holland, Belgium and Germany.

The launch was held at the Ironbridge Gorge Trust Museum in Coalbrookdale near Telford where Sir Neil Cossons addressed the delegates from the UK anchor points and other European partner organisations.

The first UK anchor point plaque was presented to Glen Lawes, Chief Executive of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust by Dr. Robert Datzler, Lead Partner in ERIH and M.D. of Noidrhein-Westfalen Tourismus e.V. Other UK sites will launch their roles within the European Route over the coming year. The Lion Salt Works Trust is preparing a thematic salt route across the UK which will draw together the major inland and coastal salt making sites in this country and develop linking routes with European salt museums and salt making sites.

Information is available about the ERIH anchor points on [www.erih.net](http://www.erih.net)



### 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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### OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works is open each afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm. May be closed Friday and Saturday. 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.