

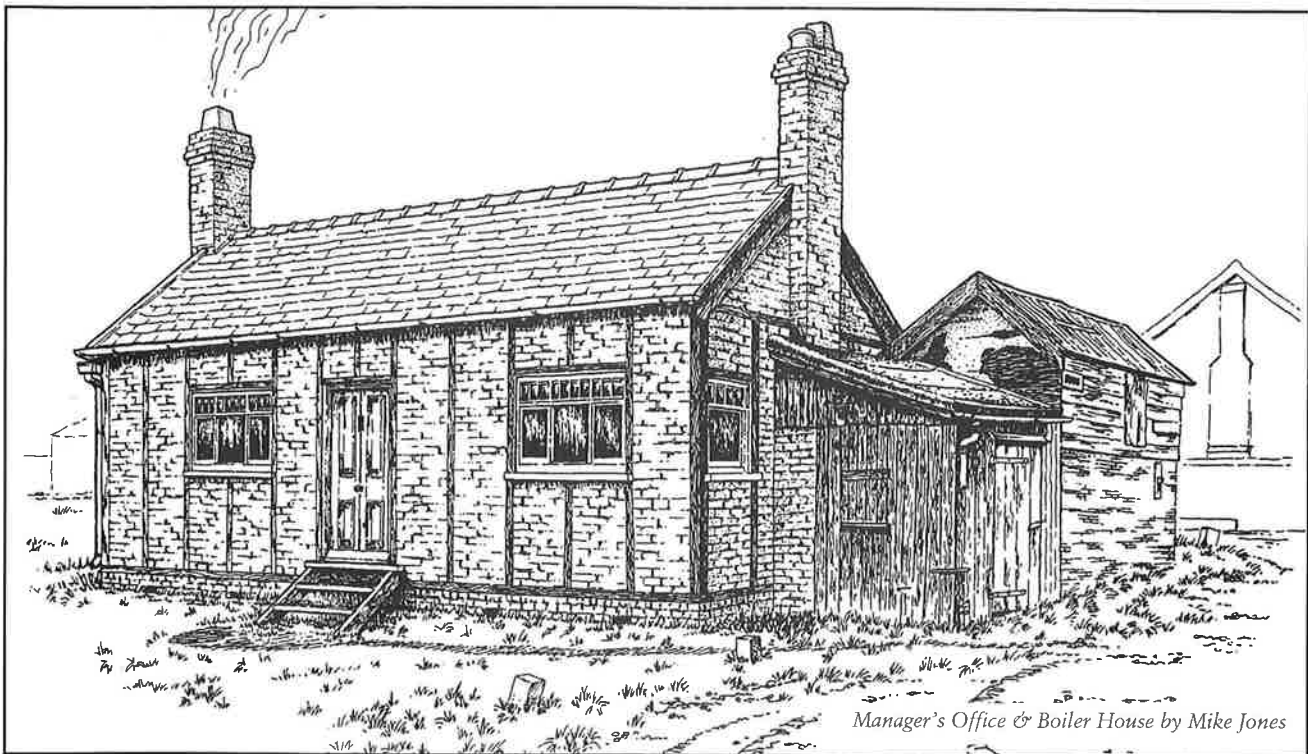
The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **SPRING 1996**

VOLUME 2 No. 1



Manager's Office & Boiler House by Mike Jones

THE Manager's Office and Boiler House are small but prominent buildings on the site. Early restoration of these buildings was identified as important in displaying the potential of the site.

Our last newsletter reported work being carried out to the timber frame of the building, the southern window and brickwork to the front and side of the manager's office. This required many brick panels to be carefully removed and rebuilt with new ties to hold the bricks firmly within the timber frame.

The restoration work continued this spring with funds from Vale Royal Borough Council.

The rear wall of the Manager's Office was in better condition than the front and southern walls. The old sandy coloured repointing was raked out and replaced by a grey coloured mortar which restored the building to how it would have looked about 1900.

The contract to repair the building was again awarded to Bernard Shepherd and Sons of Whaley Bridge who had to battle against the recent icy cold winds and weather.

Mike Jones, who contributed to our 'Victorian Trail' leaflet and provided the Trust with illustrations of the Manager's Office and Smithy, has completed his course at Mid-Cheshire College, Hartford and is now working as a freelance illustrator.

If you need illustrations why not contact Mike on 0151-339-4387 and discuss your requirements.

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

SALT

*Well below ground thrown as a stone
Onyx black lift shaft, the only way home
Steps cut by hand most of the way
Lifts as we know them a lifetime away.
No automatic doors, electric lights
A candle to see where pick axe should strike
Walls of diamonds must have shone through
That is how rock salt looks to me and you
Colour of every hue.*

*Most miners wore a moustache, kept for life
Standards were kept to please the wife;
Her way stricter way today helped to keep boots from
rotting away.
Salt caked them as hard as rocks, even socks.
We need not do that, a machine helps in that way
Just like the mine is run today*

*I wonder, if they could return what would they say?
To see lorries running around like tropical ants without
getting in the way.
Machines as high as a house.
The whole place like a town under the ground
I feel sure the hundred years my family were down the
salt mine were not in vain.*

*The only rock salt mine to remain
Gave them something for which to aim.
Food to eat, families to keep
Brine pumping caused havoc along the way,
Whole streets were lost all in a day.*

A poem sent to us by B Potter who came to the Northwich Christmas Extravaganza enjoyed the day but couldn't get room in the local papers for his thank you poem.

He and his family had a good time and asked if we could print this special salt poem in our newsletter instead.



Volunteer Malcolm Sargent and Project Officer Andrew Fielding man the Lion Salt Works Trust stand at Vale Royal Borough Council's Xmas Extravaganza.

BOILER HOUSE

Bernard Shepherd has also completed restoration work on the Boiler House which raised steam to power the brine pump, winch as well as a horizontal engine which powered a line-shaft within the smithy.

The Boiler House is an interesting composite structure housing a 'cornish' type boiler made in 1891 by William Lord of Bury.

Repairs were required to three main elements of the boiler house. Firstly the supporting brickwork was repaired and repointed.

The second element was to replace rotten roof boards and re-felt the whole structure. Thirdly, replacement cast iron gutters and down spouts were provided to match the surviving sections.

Illustrated leaflets about the Manager's Office and Boiler House are in preparation. Other booklets will provide information about the history of the site, our pitched roofed salt van and the salt making in our replica salt pans.

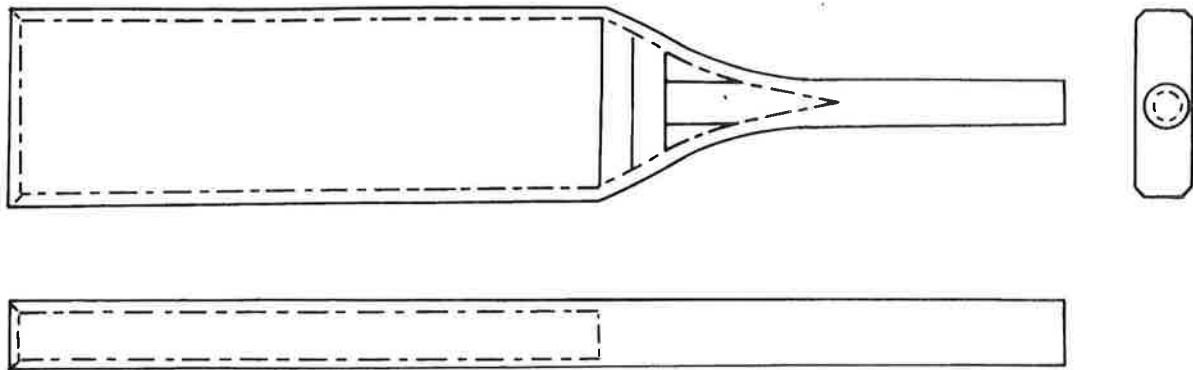


SOLAR PAN(EL)S

Last year apprentices constructed a working replica of a C16th salt pan. A new intake of apprentices at Brunner-Mond have now begun work on a second salt making project. This year's project is to complete a pan which is much more environmentally friendly as it will take its energy from the sun through solar panels.

The apprentices are designing and constructing the pan under the direction of Bill Shaw, tutor at North Trafford College, Stretford, Manchester with advice from Sundwell, a specialist solar heating company based in Washington, Tyne and Wear. The pan will be demonstrated for the first time at the Cheshire Show.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE - NO. 1 MUNDLING STICK



Scale 1:5

The title of our newsletter has caused much discussion. It seemed appropriate therefore to provide more information about mundling sticks and begin a series of articles about salt tools represented within the Lion Salt Works collection. Not all types of salt need a mundling stick in their manufacture so not all Salt works used them. Few now survive. Two remained at the Lion Works when it closed. The mundling sticks at the Lion Works are made of elm.

The size of salt crystals could be varied by the heat of the brine and the time they took to form. Different wages were paid to salt workers for different types of salt because some forms took longer to make. As the salt crystals were put into the salt tubs, the mundling stick was used to pack down the crystals to form a solid lump. Salt blocks were normally sold by the number of lumps which made a ton weight. If 100 lumps were required to the ton higher wages were paid than for 160's or 180's because the salt crystals would have to be compressed using the mundling peg or stick.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes a "mundle" as a dialect word for a stick used

for stirring. It references the Robert Holland's Cheshire Glossary, 1886, "A glossary of words used in the County of Chester," published by the English Dialect Society and Thomas Darlington's Cheshire (South) Glossary, 1887 - "The folk speech of South Cheshire", also EDS.

Dimensions	Length	Width	Depth	Weight
Stick 1	720mm	137mm	41mm	2.18kg
Stick 2	720mm	135mm	46mm	2.27kg

Stick 1 has had a hole drilled through the end of its handle having been displayed to visitors in the 1980's by being nailed to a beam over salt pan no. three.

There is little or no wear on the stick and scribe marks survive from its manufacture suggesting that it was not used after being made.

Saw marks show it was cut using a circular saw.

Stick No 2 is identical but with straight saw cuts. It has been used and may be older than stick No 1.

The Lion Salt Works

will be attending

BAYSDAY^{NW}

SATURDAY, 16TH MARCH

IN CREWE AT

MANCHESTER

METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

The Lion Salt Works will be demonstrating the production of salt by evaporating brine in its replica C16th open-pan with the help of students from Little Leigh County Primary School.

BAYSDAY is organised by BAYS, the Youth Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

**displays, exhibitions and presentations*

**practical activities, competitions and workshops*

**BAYS*DAY pack, badge, programme and kit for problem solving activities

Advance booking recommended .

For booking details contact the British Association on 01606-247-5212.

BAYS members £3.00, non-members £3.50, adults £4.00

SPRING CLEANING YOUR GARDEN?

Are you renovating your garden? Splitting clumps of bulbs? Dividing shrubs? Please let us know if you have any plants which might help to increase our herb garden and surrounding borders for the benefit of the site and our visitors. Also required are garden tools and a petrol powered strimmer. Could you help with transplanting trees, general landscaping and pond clearing?

Contact the Project Officer for details of a "Garden Day".



The Cheshire Wildlife Trust

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

1st May to 31st May: 1.30 - 4.30pm

BIODIVERSITY - The Wildlife of Cheshire in all its Variety. The Lion Inn will be one of the display centres for winning entries of the ICI / Cheshire Wildlife Trust children's art competition 1996.

There is still time to enter. Details from Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Grebe House, Reaseheath, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DA.

Tel: 01270-610180. Closing date 11th March.

MARSTON EXHIBITION

The Trust is working on an exhibition about Marston and would welcome any photographs, drawings or stories about life in Marston in the past.

Please contact the Project Officer if you are able to loan us any material or allow us to take copies.

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 Nick Davies, Project Assistant, Lion Salt Works Trust, Ollershaw Lane, Marston, Northwich CW9 6ES or telephone 01606-41823. Newsletters will be 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.