

The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

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

VOLUME 7 No. 1

OBJECTS RETURN TO LION SALT WORKS

In 1986 objects and artefacts from the Lion Salt Works were taken into the care of the Cheshire Museum Service. The Museum Service were assisted in buying the objects by a 50% grant from the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Fund in order that furniture, documents and artefacts from the office in particular would not be lost.

However, following recent budget cuts at Cheshire County Council staff at the Cheshire Museum Service were made redundant and the collections could no longer be given the attention they needed. Over the autumn objects within the collection were assessed for donation to suitable organisations within the County. Following a process carried out through the North West Museums Service and under the criteria of the Resource: V&A Purchase Fund it was agreed that the objects from the Lion Works could pass into the care of the Lion Salt Works Trust.



The smaller objects were brought to the Trust in mid-March by Margaret Harrison who is co-ordinating the transfer of objects from the County's museum stores. The larger items of furniture will be moved from the store at Runcorn in mid-April. Although, at present, most items will be kept within our stores the long term intention is that they will be returned to their original home within the Manager's Office.

Trustees have been delighted that the items could be returned to the site. Many of the pieces date from the earliest days of the works and were still in use when the office closed in 1986. We are also pleased to say that some of the smaller items are already on display. The older office equipment certainly shows the changes which have taken place in the workplace over the last 50 years. The typewriter and clock are just two examples. Furniture from the office also includes wooden filing cabinets, swivel chairs, drawing equipment, a letter rack as well as office stamps and ink pads.

There were two clocks in the office, one in Mr Thompson's office the other in the clerks office. The more elaborate pendulum clock has mother of pearl decoration around its face and was said to have been supplied the local Blackhurst firm of Weaverham about 1870-1880. The plainer clock has the name EC Parker, Knutsford hand written on the face.

Site Steward Tony Leonard inspects the office typewriter. The Royal Bar-Lock Typewriter still has its cover as well as the original instructions and 'Manual of Typewriting issued by His Majesty's typewriter Makers', by appointment to His Majesty The King and HRH The Prince of Wales.



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.

LIFTABLE BUILDINGS — AN INTERACTIVE RECONSTRUCTION

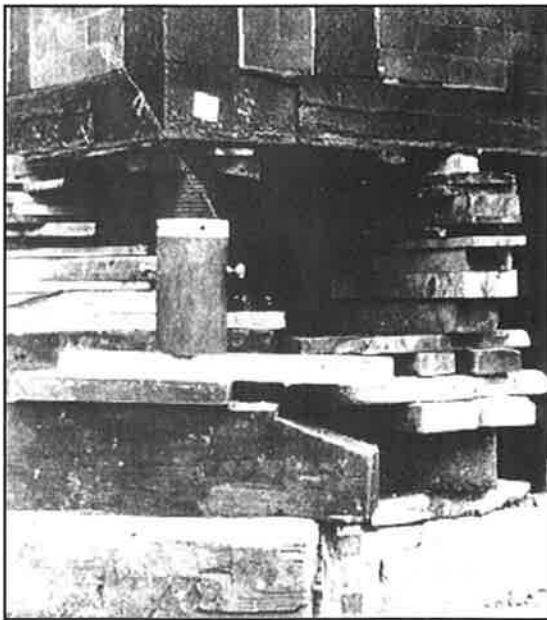


Rogerio Passos, an Information Technology student at Manchester Metropolitan University has been working on assignment with the Trust to help design an interactive teaching aid. This will demonstrate the processes involved in lifting the timber framed buildings constructed in Northwich to withstand ground movements associated with salt extraction.

Because of salt extraction ground movements caused brick buildings to crumble. By using a timber framework design buildings were held together and could be levelled with jacks, even put on rollers and moved to firmer foundations.

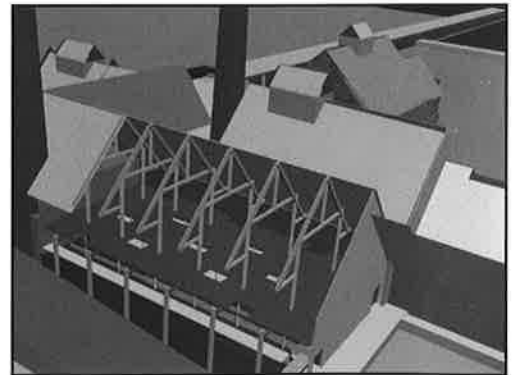
The Trust's collection includes all 24 of the Brine Board's hydraulic jack system which was used to raise the buildings in Northwich. They weigh 1.5cwt each, therefore a 'virtual system' which can demonstrate their use would have many advantages over the real jacks.

Rogerio has created an introduction to lifting framed buildings which takes the user through the components of the jacks and demonstrates how they work before allowing you to have a go at lifting a 'virtual' building.



The project requires further development and will be extended to enable the maths and physics of the process to be explained in a simple way and could eventually be made available via our web site. As he completes his university course Rogerio will finish the project at Lion using the graphics computer provided for the Trust by the Carnegie UK Trust.

The computer is also enabling us to investigate the construction of a 'virtual' salt works which could be used as a design tool and to look at the growth and adaptation of the works over time.

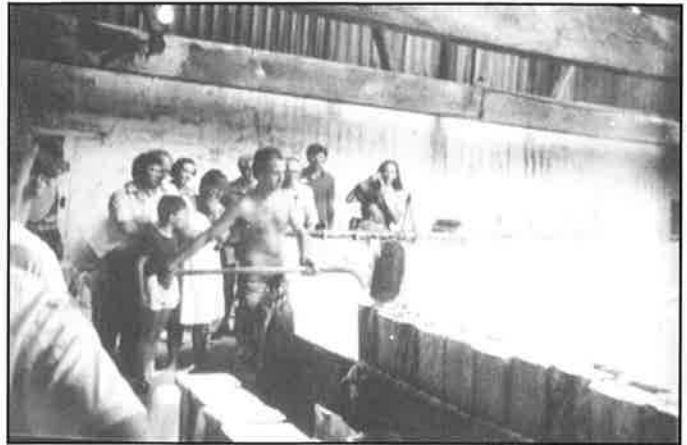


TRUST WEB SITE — A *GLINT* of the FUTURE

By the end of April we will have begun to reshape our web site with the help of Don Allen at *Glint*. Our site was one of the first museum web sites in Cheshire. It received start up support from a Seed-corn Grant from Cheshire County Council and sponsorship from the Northwich branch of *Interactive Developments*. However, following ID's take over by Parity we have had to transfer design to another local company currently based just around the corner in Wincham. *Glint* are not new to working for the Trust as they designed the *Salt 2000* brochure and Tom Lightfoot's memoirs published as our first research report *Open Pan Salt in Cheshire*. The site will be updated quarterly as *The Mundling Stick* is published and will reproduce some of our black and white newsletter images in colour. The site currently receives 5,000 hits per month.

IMAGES OF SALT MAKING AT THE LION WORKS c.1980

We have been allowed to copy more photographs which were taken whilst the work was operational. Twelve colour prints taken by Prof. David Parson about 1980 were brought to us by Basil Jeuda. There are a number of shots showing the skimming of salt and happing of blocks on the hurdles. There are also pictures showing the buildings from Ollershaw Lane and a coal van which used to be located on the private railway line. To add to our collection Henry Thompson has kindly lent us fourteen atmospheric, black and white prints taken in 1970 by Sean Du Pre which we will include in later issues of the newsletter.



ERIH Visits Lion



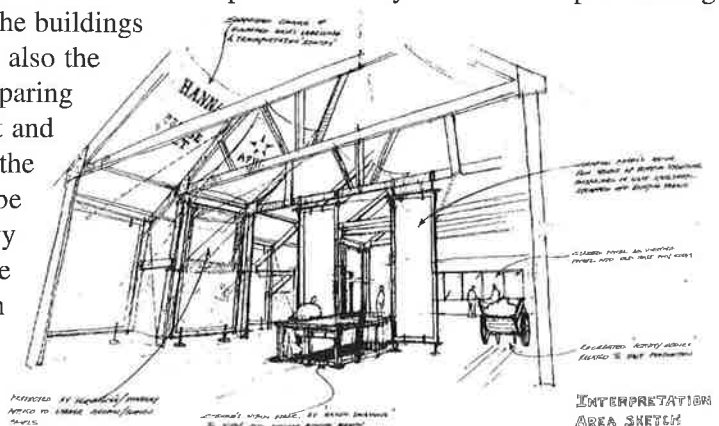
During one of the wettest weekends of the winter a meeting of partners from the European Route of Industrial Heritage finished their itinerary in the sunshine at the Lion Salt Works. Partners came from Saarland, Belgium, Holland and Rhine-Westphalia. The UK partners were represented by partners from the UK World Heritage Sites of Ironbridge and Blaenavon as well as those from Essex and Manchester which is itself proposed as a World Heritage Site. The day included presentations on land regeneration schemes in the area such as the Northwich Community Woodland, part of the Mersey Forest and The River Weaver Initiative.

DIFFICULTIES IN SPRING — *Foot and Mouth Disease Reduces Visitors*

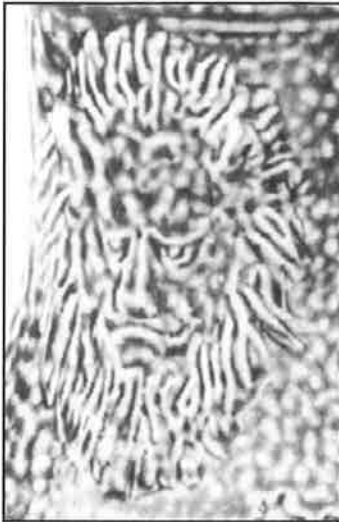
Visits to the site have been restricted during March as the canal and tow path have been subject to a closure notice by British Waterways because of concerns about the spread of foot and mouth. There has also been a reduction in walking groups in the area who normally stop off at the works as they complete our 'Victorian Trail' walking route which links Lion to the Anderton Lift and Great Budworth. We are currently open each afternoon and would like to recruit additional volunteers to help out as we move into the summer months by which time we hope the countryside will be open for business as usual.

TOWARDS A WORKING MUSEUM

Our consultants co-ordinated by Tony Barton from the Chester office of Insall & Associates have spent the first three months of the year gathering information about the site and its potential. They have had a rapid learning programme to understand not only the history of the buildings and the processes which were carried on here but also the condition they are now in. At this stage we are preparing a draft design based on a Conservation Statement and the reinstatement of a demonstration salt pan is at the centre of the project design. Proposals are to be presented to Trustees in May after which a strategy can be adopted for gathering support for the restoration as well as fund-raising and implementation of the plan.



Watch this space for an up date in the summer.



LEOMINE/ BELLARMINE



ITEMS AVAILABLE BY POST

OPEN PAN SALT MAKING IN CHESHIRE — An illustrated description by Tom Lightfoot; 83pp, 109 black & white illustrations. £9.50 + £1.30 p&p.

A GUIDE TO THE LION SALT WORKS — 48pp, full colour illustrations. £3.95 + 80p p&p.

'SALT TELL' TEA TOWELS — 100% cotton. £3.25 + 80p p&p.

TABLE SALTS, SALT PIGS/KITS or DOLLIES — John Hughes, Jean Knowles, John Hudson; Slipware and stoneware £45, £38, £17, £8. Please enquire about p&p cost.

LIMITED EDITION SALT GLAZED CERAMICS — Steve Harrison. 103 of 145 remaining. Images soon to be placed on our web site. £25 to £750 + postage at cost. Individually numbered with certificate. Price list and description available.

We have been asked to show a Bellarmine mask alongside our 'leomine'. This example is from a post card produced by the West Australia Museum. The bellarmine was recovered from the shipwrecked *Vergulde Draeck*, a Dutch East India Company ship wrecked in 1656.

FEATURES ON THE LION SALT WORKS

We hope that wider appreciation of our limited edition salt glazed pottery will follow from coverage in forthcoming publications. There will be a feature on the Lion Salt Works in the May edition of *The Craftsman Magazine*. The article will help spread the word about our plans to restore the site as a working industrial museum and demonstrate the skills in making traditional block salt. We were also able to ask readers who might have once used block salt, or would like to purchase it again, to get in touch with us.

Salt blocks made during our summer demonstrations have been used up over the last month as we received requests for a salt block from an artist in Bognor Regis and another enquiry resulted in a block of salt being sent to London to form a table setting in celebration of the Persian New Year. Other orders have been placed for a block to be used at the Black Country Museum, Dudley and for further supplies to be used during the annual country living exhibition at Hollinsclough, Derbyshire.



Also look out for a new book to be by Rosemary Cochrane. Her book *Salt Glazed Ceramics* is to be published by Crowood Press later in the year. This will feature work by all the salt glazing potters in the country including Steve Harrison and the Lion Salt Works 'leomines'.

OPENING TIMES

Exhibition is open each afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Donations : £1 per adult, 50p per child. For further information call 01606-41823.

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

The Trust needs more volunteers to join the team who enable its exhibition opens on a regular basis for up to four hours during opening times. Contact the Project Director, Andrew Fielding.

COVENANT FORMS AND GIFT AID

Covenant Forms and Gift Aid Declarations are now available for anyone wishing to help support the project by making regular financial contributions. Please request a form from Andrew Fielding by post, email or by leaving a message on our answer phone.

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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