

The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **SUMMER 1995**



Trust moves to the Lion Inn

IN November 1994 the Lion Salt Works Trust moved into the former Lion Inn to use the building as offices and as a display centre.

The Trust took over the building from the Macclesfield and Vale Royal Groundwork Trust who vacated the building to centralise their offices at Bollington, Macclesfield.

Groundwork had been responsible for the restoration of the building in 1988-9 following the purchase of the site by Vale Royal Borough Council. The building had been in very poor condition following the closure of the salt works in 1986. The Lion Salt Works Trust was assigned the lease for the building from Groundwork at the same peppercorn rent agreed with Vale Royal Borough Council.

New exhibition July/September featuring Jabez Thompson and the Alliance Salt Works.

At the sign of the Red Lion

IN the spring the Lion Salt Works Trust commissioned local Marston sign writer and artist Bev Blain to design a new sign to hang at the front of the office and exhibition centre.

Bev's sign reflects the former use of the building as the Red Lion Inn by depicting a red lion rampant surrounded by striking blue and gold lettering.

Mr. Blain said he was pleased to have been asked to provide the sign and hoped it would help draw visitors into the exhibitions.

Chairman Richard Hamlett, was delighted with the sign which is bright and attractive and particularly pleased to be able to utilise the excellent talents of local people. The sign shows that some progress is being made and helps to improve the surroundings of the works. It is an important rallying point.

Repairs to the Manager's Office

WORK started in June to repair sections of the Site Manager's Office. Many of the brick panels were in danger of falling out of the timber frame. On the south side of the building damp penetration had rotted woodwork which needed to be replaced.

Pressure on the brick panels was being caused by corrosion of hoop iron used in the original construction 100 years ago to hold the bricks within the timber frame.

The work will also insert a damp proof course around the building to prevent moisture rising through the building. This is a problem particularly in the winter when water is sucked up via the chimney stacks and wets the floorboards.

The work has been funded by Vale Royal Borough Council who also paid for the repointing of the two works chimneys last year.

Volunteers Wanted

VOLUNTEER stewards are important and valued by the Trust. As the number of visitors rise there is a growing need for more helpers to assist with presenting the site as well as mowing grass, decorating and cleaning. If you would like to help promote the industrial heritage of Northwich to visitors or would like to sponsor aspects of the Trust's work please contact the Project Officer, Andrew Fielding, tel: 01606 41823.

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.

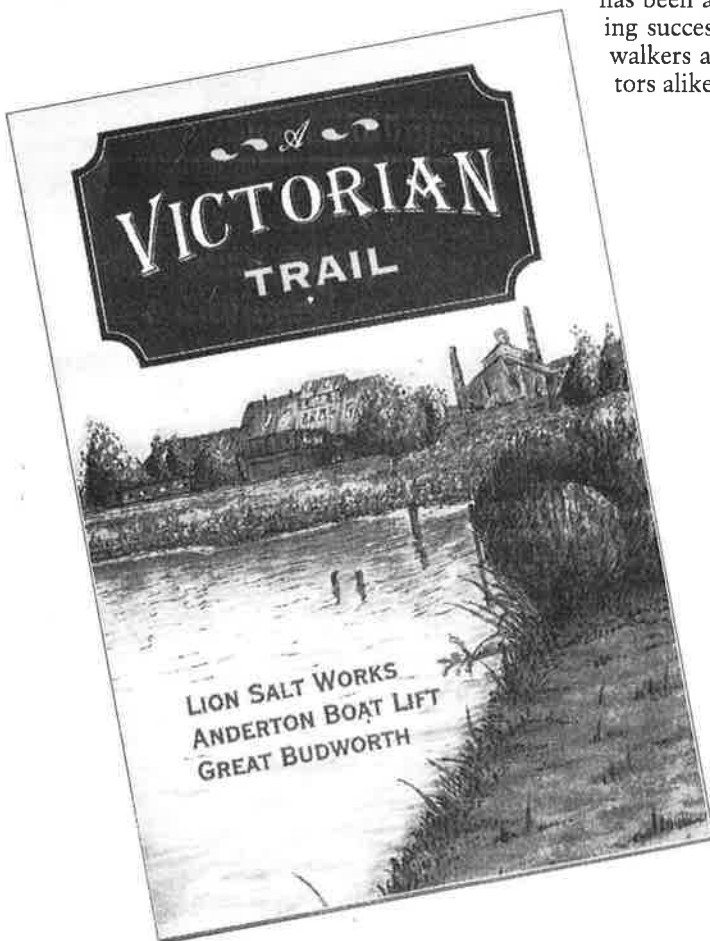
Projects with Mid-Cheshire College

A NUMBER of projects have been initiated with Technical Illustration Students of Mid-Cheshire College.

Students are required to complete particular assignments and add work to their portfolios. In addition they have a requirement for external work experience. Tutor Mark Griffeths has worked with Andrew Fielding to place students into a series of work assignments at the Lion Salt Works

Some projects will provide technical illustrations of archaeological artifacts or structural records of buildings, others will help with museum interpretation as part of display panels or leaflets.

One of the first projects looked at producing a map for a self guided walk around the surrounding countryside, describing aspects of the areas Victorian history. Future work will provide explanatory exhibition panels for the steam engine and the herb garden. These will be spotlighted in later newsletters.



A Victorian Trail

THE route of 'A Victorian Trail' was walked by Nick Davies who belongs to more than one rambling club. Nick is unemployed but has helped as a volunteer on site one afternoon each week for a number of years.

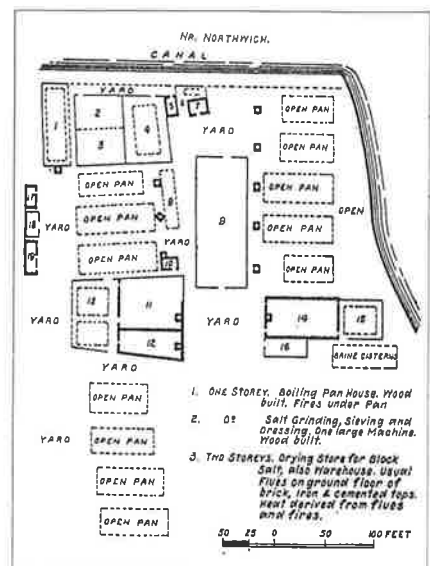
Nick guided two students Andrew Meeten and Mike Jones along the route to show them the variety of the landscape. Andrew and Mike then made sketches of the principal locations before using maps and aerial photographs to produce an artists eye view of the countryside.

Those who have walked the route are impressed by the comparison between Andrew Meeten's illustration of Budworth Mere from one particular stile on the walk and the view itself. Try to find the five sheep placed in the landscape map by Mike Jones.

10,000 copies of the 'Trail' leaflet have been produced by VRBC Tourism Officer, Andrea Peattie. It has been an overwhelming success with serious walkers and casual visitors alike.

Work Experience in Archaeology

DURING August 1993 trial excavation trenches probed the car park area, to the east of the main building complex, seeking to uncover remains of the Thompson's Alliance Salt Works dating back to 1856. This was successful and led to a project with the Trident Trust in 1994 which is continuing this year.



During May, June and July students between 15 and 17 years of age will participate in an archaeological excavation supported by TVEI, EBP and the VR Education Industry Committee together with a grant from the Cheshire County Archaeological Award Scheme.

The work will investigate the extent of the works whose foundations now lie buried beneath the present car parking area and extend into fields to the east of the site.

Results of this years excavation will be outlined in the next newsletter whilst a short summary is being prepared for the local archaeology publication 'Cheshire Past 5'.

To find out more about the work why not visit the site on this years Heritage Open Day which coincides with National Archaeology Day on Sunday 17th September.

Replica 16th Salt Boiling

FOLLOWING discussions with David Millar of Brunner Mond Ltd a project was designed for B-M apprentices to produce a working salt pan based on a design published in 1556.

The description was included in a book written in Latin by Georgius Agricola called *De Re Metallica*. A translation of 1912 by HC&LH Hoover is reprinted in 'Salt in Cheshire' published in 1915 by Calvert.

The apprentices were given copies of Agricola, which include illustrations and a written description and asked to produce a working version which could be self supporting, transportable in a light van and be heated using propane gas.

The practical work was completed under the supervision of Bill Shaw at North Trafford College where the apprentices were completing part of their BTEch and NVQ's.

Support for the project has been given by two other local companies. SHELLGAS has provided gas burners and propane cylinders to heat the brine supplied in an un-refined form by BRITISH SALT.



Practice Salt Making

THERE was some apprehension about the efficiency of the pan when the first practice boiling was carried out at the end of May

The pan had been rivetted and it was uncertain how badly it would leak. The sixteenth century description speaks of sealing joints with ground ox liver mixed with ox blood and ashes. This was a compound we were not keen to manufacture.

Agricola's Advice

If wood is burned the fireplace should be nearly four foot high; but if straw is burned in them, they are six feet high. The cauldrons are rectangular, eight feet long, seven feet wide, and half a foot high, and are made of sheets of iron or

lead, three feet long, and of the same width, all but two digits. These plates are not very thick, so that the water is heated more quickly by the fire, and is boiled away rapidly. The more salty the water is, the sooner it is condensed into salt.

The cauldron is placed on the furnace so that if a dipperful of brine poured into the cauldron should flow into all the corners, the cauldron is rightly set upon the fireplace. Posts with cross-beams support bars from which hang iron hooks which catch into staples fixed to the bottom of the cauldron.

From the beginning to the boiling and skimming is the work of half-an-hour; after this it boils down for another quarter of an hour, after which time it begins to condense into salt.

Technical Illustration students at Mid-Cheshire College have studied the description and compiled a 'blue' print for a full scale replica. A leaflet incorporating all this information is to be written following trials of the proto-type cauldron.

Ancient salt making demonstration

IF you miss the first salt making demonstration at the Cheshire Show the pan will be demonstrated again on National Archaeology Day, Sunday 17th September, at Marston. Call for details.

INDUSTRIAL TOURISM IN VALE ROYAL

THE Lion Salt Works Project is a link within a chain of attractions based on the industrial past of Northwich.

Heritage Bus

The Northwest Roadcar Company will continue to link the historic Northwich attractions of the Lion Salt Works, Anderton Lift, Marbury Park and the Salt Museum.

Their historic 1956 bus will operate during July and August with an hourly service providing a scenic tour of the countryside around Northwich dropping travellers off at each of the sites.

Canal Links

You can travel part of the way along the Trent and Mersey Canal by narrowboat, picking up a ride from the Lion Salt Works or begin your journey at Wincham Wharf or the Anderton Marina.

If you had always wanted to try out steering your own narrowboat - try hiring a day-boat from one of the hire centres.

Jabez Thompson

An Impression of the Past

To be held at the Salt Museum, London Rd, July to September

Whilst excavating the Alliance Salt Works in 1993-4 a number of items relating to Jabez Thompson came to light. Examples of bricks were found to have been collected from buildings now demolished in Wigan, Prescott, Manchester and Wrexham. These examples have enabled decorative bricks to be recognised in local buildings. It is hoped that further information will be uncovered as a result of this exhibition.

Mr Holt, a brick collector from Rossendale, has lent bricks from his collection to the Trust as part of a joint exhibition with The Salt Museum. He is particularly attracted to Jabez Thompson bricks as they were one of the first in his collection

Garden furniture, friezes and busts were manufactured at Thompson's brickworks. Abbot Hall Museum recently purchased a terracotta bust of John Ruskin who is known to have visited Winnington Hall.

A photograph of Jabez Thompson and his wife Sarah has been sent to the Trust by grandson Charles Thompson who lives in Canada. Jabez was buried at Sandiway Church in 1911.

**Jabez Thompson,
BRICK AND DRAINING PIPE
MANUFACTURER,
ROCK AND WHITE SALT PROPRIETOR,
NORTHWICH.**

The Lion Salt Works Trust (tel: 01606 41823)

The objectives of the Lion Salt Works Trust are to advance the education of the public by :

- a) the preservation of features and objects of historical and industrial interest which relate to the traditional practices of open pan salt production.
- b) the re-establishment of the said practices for presentation to the public by the provision of a working museum at the restored Lion Salt Works, Marston, Cheshire together with a reception centre to display related and associated material.
- c) the re-development, in association with other parties, of the derelict land surrounding the Museum for purposes appropriate to the objectives of the Trust.
- d) the organisation of meetings, exhibitions, displays, lectures, publications and other forms of instruction for promoting and developing the public knowledge of and interest in the practice of open pan salt production at the Lion Salt Works and its industrial and social heritage.

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