

# The MUNDLING STICK



the LION  
Salt Works  
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **SUMMER 2003**

**VOLUME 9 No.2**

## Historic Salt Making

**Salt 2003**

**Saturday 27th September**

An impressive collection of salt experts has been attracted to Northwich in September to discuss the heritage, protection and preservation of former salt making sites.

**Tom Lane** and **Andrew Fielding** will set the UK background before handing over to the overseas speakers. The French site at **Salins-les-Bains** is a World Heritage Site and attracts over 50,000 visitors a year. The **Colorado Salt Works, USA** is in a remote area of South Park, Colorado and is being recorded in advance of recommendations for its long-term preservation.

**Figuera De Foz, Portugal; Salinas de Annana and Salinas de Imon, Spain** will discuss the potential for economic regeneration around salt making sites through specialist marketing and heritage restoration. **Susanne Juelich** of Bochum University, Germany has been studying the use of lead and ceramic salt pans across Northern Europe and finds Cheshire has an unusually high number of lead salt pans compared to other salt making centres.

**John Luzader** of the Living Museums of the West has trained interpreters at the Seaside Museum, Oregon, USA to interpret the Lewis and Clark salt making site of 1805. Continuing on a practical theme the **Laeso Salt Works, Denmark** is a working replica, which has recreated a medieval salt works from archaeological excavations.

**Hear about these impressive sites by booking into the SALT 2003 Conference, at Northwich Memorial Hall. Tickets £15 including buffet lunch.**

**Available by post from the Lion Salt Works Trust.**

## The Romans are Coming

**Salt 2003**

**Sunday 28th September**

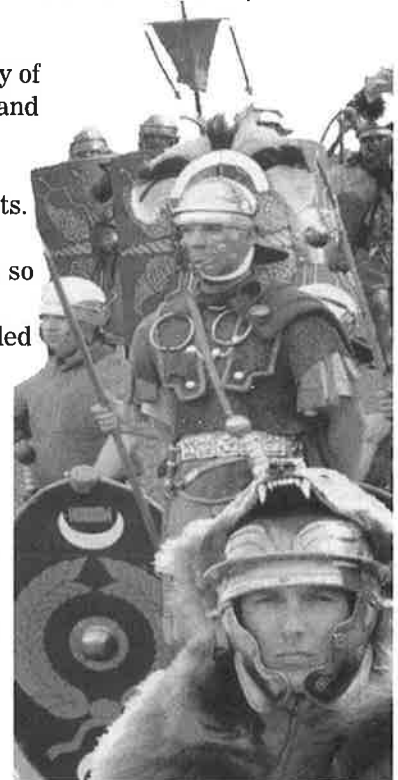
The Conference is supported by a Demonstration Day, which has been funded through a 'Your Heritage' grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Practical salt making with a Roman theme will link with the 2nd Roman Middlewich Festival at Harbutts Field, Middlewich.

Our Roman replica lead salt pan will be in operation by salt makers in period costume. During the day the salt makers will be visited by the centurion from the Ermine Street Guard. Find out if their work is acceptable to the Roman Army.

There will be a variety of supporting activities and marquees featuring local heritage and environmental projects. There is no on site parking at either site, so a free park and ride scheme will be provided with buses also connecting the two events along the former Roman road of King Street. Northwich railway station will be one of the pick up points. Further event details inside.

Supported by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund



*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.*

## Update On-Going Surveys

### Marketing Study

Sue Roberts, Science Co-ordinator for the Cheshire Women's Institute organised a 'Salt Stand' at the Cheshire Show in June. She kindly assisted in the distribution of a questionnaire about the Lion Salt Works and visitor knowledge about block salt. This was a great success and made contact with many former users of block salt. John and Olwen Cox are continuing to investigate how salt that will be made at the Lion Salt Works could be distributed. The work should be completed by mid-August.



### Building Survey

Work to build up imagery of the salt works through laser scanning is now complete following an eleven day survey period. Conventional plans, elevations and sections are now being drawn up in conjunction with standard metric survey data. The survey work by AEDAS and APR will inform further structural and architectural studies.



BRITISH SALT

### Woodfuel Supply Chain

Eppplus were helped by DEFRA to design, print and distribute a flier at the Cheshire Show to raise the profile of biomass. There is obviously a lot of potential for woodchip in Cheshire and the Trust will have no difficulty in acquiring sufficient sources for its needs to heat new salt pans at Lion. The study will continue to review the potential for a central warehouse for woodchip from where other potential users could also draw down this renewable fuel. Cox and Speller will complete the study to select burners and a gasifier to suite the needs of the Trust. Additional advice is being provided by the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth. The grant for this work is provided by Cheshire Rural Recovery Fund.



### Conservation Plan

A grant has been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable the production of a Conservation Plan. The work is to be carried out by the Chester branch of Donald Insall Associates, The Moreton Partnership and Ecology First. The Trust will be providing details about the archaeological and historic background to the site and the process of open pan salt making. The study will use drawings produced through the building survey detailed above and should be completed by December.



Supported by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund



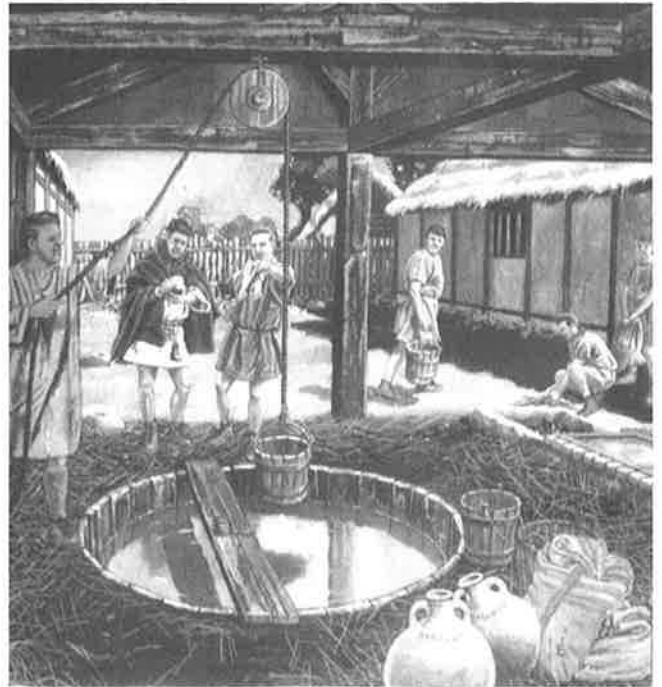
## SALT 2003 Demonstration Day

Archaeology is slowly revealing information about salt making processes in Britain. Recent excavations show a variety of processes in different regions. It has not been possible to excavate complete sites. So there are still many unanswered questions.

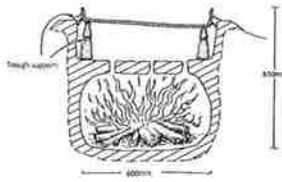
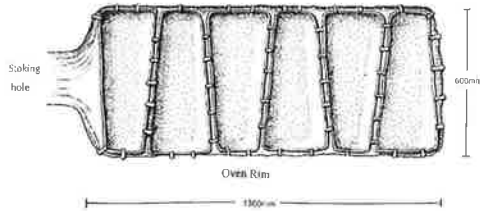
Our Demonstration Day will reconstruct a Roman salt hearth and lead salt pan because Cheshire has a large concentration of lead pans. Recent publications by Tim Strickland (*Roman Middlewich Project*) and Derek Hurst (*Worcestershire Archaeology Service*) have indicated how sites at Middlewich and Droitwich may have looked.

Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund is also enabling us to work with Dr Michael Nevell (University of Manchester Archaeology Unit) and Julian Baum, (*Take 27*), to produce an animated virtual film of a salt making site incorporating lay out and features from last years excavations at Nantwich. The results will be shown for the first time at SALT 2003.

Other parts of the country had different traditions. In Lincolnshire a set of Iron Age or Roman ceramic salt pans was found at Ingoldmells Beach which may be late. Tom Lane (Heritage Lincolnshire) is working with us to produce replicas of these pans for the Demonstration Day. A direct comparison between ceramic and lead evaporating containers will be an interesting sight.

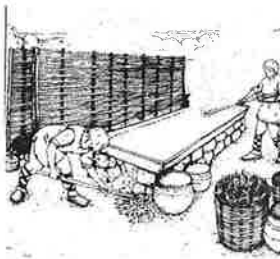


Tim Strickland (2001) *Roman Middlewich: A story of Roman and Briton in Mid-Cheshire*. ill 101, p76 £5.00. ISBN 0-9541186-0-X. Painting by Graham Sumner p37 depicts an officer making records and tallies of salt being made.



Ingoldmells Beach salt pans from Lane and Morris (2000) *A Millennium of Salt Making: Prehistoric and Roman - British Salt Production in the Fenland*. Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series No.4 pp506 ISBN 0-948639-32-6

(left) Ed. JD Hurst (1997) *A Multi-Period Salt Production Site at Droitwich: Excavations at Upwich*. CBA Research Report 107. ISBN 1-872414-78-8.



(right) Filming salt boiling in a replica lead salt pan at the Lion Salt Works for Channel 4 schools programme *Scientific Eye*.



Salt making is not a very complicated operation, but like all processes requires the right lay out, tools and procedures. It is a time consuming activity, which requires attention to both fire and brine. Some of these aspects are not easy to convey in a written publication without it sounding like a training manual. Practical reconstructions play a valuable role in understanding the day-to-day processes involved. Preparation of the hearth, gathering the firewood and copious quantities of brine are required. The more organised the site the easier the operation. Space for drying and storing the salt is also needed before it can be sent to customers.

**STOP PRESS.....**

Salt from Lion Salt Works helped win Gold Medals for the 'Garden from the Desert' by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan at the Chelsea Flower Show and 'Cheshire Life' by the Cheshire Area of NAFAS at the RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park. Vale Royal Borough Council also won gold and Best in Show at Tatton Park for 'Salt of the Earth'.

**What Else?**

Meet potter John Hudson. See how he makes salt kits, table salts and salt ladies. Maker of our Kitson Salt Kit raffle prize.

What was 'The Dungeon'? What is its connection to salt making. Find out from the **Garston Industrial Archaeology Society**.

The **River Weaver Initiative** has been working with **Comberbach School** to discover the links between their local area, the River Weaver, Trent and Mersey Canal and salt making. Visit their exhibition.

**Wincham CP School** has a nodding donkey as their school logo. See what project work they have been doing on salt.

Relax with a local **Great Budworth Ice Cream** or visit **The Salt Barge** for lunch and a drink.

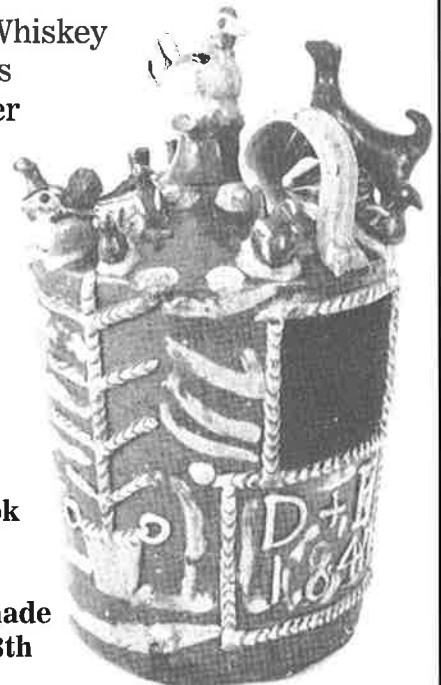
Lots of other things to find out about local heritage and environmental projects. Meet the Vale Royal mascot **Wilbur Wyvern**. Have your face painted to look like a lion.

**Salt Tellers - Community Play 2004**  
Find out about the **SALT TELLERS**. Would you like to join the team to present a community play based around salt making? Come and meet Robert Meadows.

**SALT 2003 Raffle**

**Kitson Salt Kit**

- \* Bottle of Whiskey
- \* Chocolates
- \* Many other prizes.



Tickets  
50p each  
£2.50 per book

On sale now  
draw to be made  
on Sunday 28th  
September