

# The MUNDLING STICK



the LION  
Salt Works  
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **SUMMER 2004**

**VOLUME 10 No.3**

## RESTORATION PLANS TO BE UNVEILED

12th November 2004  
– Northwich Memorial Hall



### Comberbach School raise funds

Year 6 Prefects at Comberbach School have set themselves the task of raising money to help the Lion Salt Works.

They will report on their fundraising efforts in our winter newsletter.

### Barclays Bank and Sainsbury's

Staff at Barclays Bank offices at Gadbrook Park and at Sainsbury's, Northwich are also working to help our fundraising efforts.

Details of these will also be in our next newsletter.

Over the year, the Lion Salt Works Trust has been working with a specialist team to complete the design work that will enable the salt works to be renovated. The studies have been funded by the Northwest Development Agency. The work has been extensive and has involved architects, structural engineers, chemical engineers, museum designers, ecologists, environmental experts, planners, quantity surveyors and cost planners.

Supported by

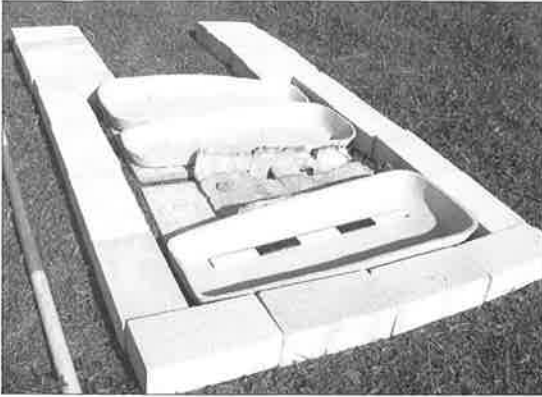


northwest  
development agency

It's a difficult job preparing bids for heritage and environmental funds, especially when the sums involved are in the millions. The Lion Salt Works is increasing in

status, as the unique nature of the site, its history and the rarity of surviving open pan salt making sites is recognised. The Trust will have raised some £300,000 to complete these initial designs which are required as part of a major Heritage Lottery bid. The meeting we have arranged on Friday, 12th November will enable the Trust to describe the work that has been carried out and explain how it will help raise the funding which will be required to complete the restoration. Our participation in the BBC 2 series 'Restoration' this summer certainly increased our profile and will have a major benefit in helping us to find the match funding.

*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.*



## EXPERIMENT WITH CERAMIC SALT PANS

At a Demonstration Day held on Saturday, 25th September an experimental firing was made of four replica ceramic salt pans discovered at Ingoldmells beach, Lincolnshire in 1980. Tom Lane, of Heritage Lincolnshire worked with the Trust and potter Allan Hughes, of Anvil Pottery at Llanrhaeadr to produce a set of pans for the experiment. Our hearth, or oven, was constructed from kiln bricks to enable it to be erected and dismantled in one day. Once the process is fully understood a full size clay hearth may be built.



*Top left - The size of the hearth was built to accommodate four salt pans. An original pan is also shown here.*

*Far left - The pans are supported on clay pillars.*

*Left - Brine is added to the pans.*

*Below - Watching the fire, explaining the process.*



Although made of modern materials the structure was based on excavated evidence. The pans are heated indirectly with hot air generated by a fire in a stoke hole and flue. The mass of the clay in the original structure, and in our case modern refractory fire bricks, retain the heat and protect the ceramic pans from thermal shock. This process seems to be very economic with fuel particularly as the brine does not need to reach boiling point. This is a very exciting research project and we still have many aspects to study. The pans are a very sophisticated shape, which aid the evaporation of the brine. We only had a short first day, as we were uncertain as to how the pans would operate. Only one pillar collapsed but this was quickly repaired and all the pans survived the whole experiment. Thanks are owed to Malcolm Sergeant, Tony Leonard and John Burke for helping on what was a busy and hectic day. I

think we were able to begin to put ourselves into the place of early salt makers, and to understand how they would have made salt with this early industrial unit, almost 2,000 years ago.

The Trust is grateful for the help, advice and experience of Anvil Pottery on the specifics of reproducing early salt making ceramics. Some of the results of this work will be appearing in the forthcoming Trust monograph for our 'SALT 2003' conference and the proceedings of the 2002, CBA 'Brine in Britannia' conference. Further details in our Winter newsletter.

The original excavation report on which the experiments were based is included in Tom Lane and Elaine Morris's book, A Millenium of Salt Making : Prehistoric and Romano-British Salt Production in the Fenland. Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Report Series No.4 (2001) ISBN 0 948639 32 6.

## ANCIENT ARTS

How would you boil water or cook food if you didn't have a cooking pot? Or if you were travelling light and couldn't carry heavy cooking equipment? David Chapman showed us on the 25th September. He specialises in recreating ancient arts through his business 'Ancient Arts', based at Roewen, Llangelyrin in the Conway Valley. You can book a course to learn how to make stone axes, flint arrowheads and spears or even have a go at prehistoric cave painting. One of his other skills is to boil water in leather cooking pots. He uses two methods. The first is described by the classical author Herodotus who wrote about using leather hides suspended over a fire from stakes. We used a small leather sheet to heat brine and

made a small amount of salt very successfully. Perhaps ancient hunter-gatherers did the same thing on the sea shore without leaving any archaeological record. The second process involved heating stones and dropping them into leather pots to boil water. Many archaeological sites are found with heat-shattered stones called 'pot-boilers'. The food you are trying to cook is held inside a separate, water filled bag to keep the food clean.

Many visitors had seen the process described by the explorer and TV presenter Ray Mears, but were fascinated to see it been demonstrated in front of them.

You can find out more about Ancient arts on [www.ancient-arts.org](http://www.ancient-arts.org) Tel: 01492 576864.



## ROMAN TOURS

Paul Harston who runs Roman Tours Ltd in Chester helped the Trust in the summer by travelling around the North West with Project Director, Andrew Fielding distributing gifts of salt and bread in support of votes for the BBC 2 'Restoration' programme. He was delighted at having the opportunity to bring his troops to the salt works and demonstrate their skills.

Children were able to try on Roman clothes and armour and the camp kitchen which provided lunch for the Roman soldiers fitted in with the general food theme for the day.

Roman Tours Ltd are available for private hire and can be contacted on [www.roman-tours-chester.co.uk](http://www.roman-tours-chester.co.uk) Tel: 07941 530720.

Our salt making day was supported by a grant from the HLF, Local Heritage Initiative and the Development of the Arts for Northwich. It was held as part of a number of themed Roman events held in Northwich, conceived by Brian Curzon and coordinated by Nick Hughes.



## Dates for Your Diary

**Saturday, 16th  
October**

### **The Big Draw Day 10am to 4pm**

Part of a national campaign to encourage people to take up drawing.

Come along and have a go. Artist materials will be provided for you try out different media and materials and to talk with professional artists.

Guidance and advice from local artists Richard Carman, Julia Midgely and Anne-Marie Rickus.

Richard has appeared on the Channel 4 series 'Watercolour Challenge' and more recently had a five part series 'A Brush with the Mersey' on Granada TV in July.

Staff from Barclays Bank at Gadbrook Park, Northwich will be helping on the day by arranging a raffle. Prizes will include vouchers for artist materials available from the Northwich Art Shop. They will also be offering face painting.

Come along and make your contribution to a 'portrait' record of the salt works or add a section to a large roll of paper as it unrolls during the day.

Organised by the Cheshire Rural Touring Network.

**Friday, 12th November**

### **Lion Salt Works Restoration Plans Unveiled Northwich Memorial Hall**

Doors open 5.30pm. Presentation begins 6.00pm.

Come along to hear about how the salt works can be restored. What are the problems? What are the solutions? How can we make salt again? What will be environmentally sustainable about the restoration plans?

### **The British Isles: A Natural History BBC 1 begins September**

Look out for the programme where presenter Alan Titchmarsh visits the Winsford rock salt mine and looks at the brine tolerant plants of Cheshire.



The Campaign for Drawing  
[www.drawingpower.org.uk](http://www.drawingpower.org.uk)

## Three artists – Three styles Come along and have a go.



*Roman Salt Making* – Richard Carman



*Lumpman* – Julia Midgely



*Edinburgh Throng* – Anne-Marie Rickus

## 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.

## 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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