

# The MUNDLING STICK



the LION  
Salt Works  
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **WINTER 1997**

**VOLUME 3 No. 4**

## MERSEY BASIN PANEL AT THE LION WORKS

The Mersey Basin Campaign is linking sites throughout the campaign area with information panels.

The panels are designed to promote the network of visitor centres and access points throughout the region strengthening the focus on river and waterside improvements.

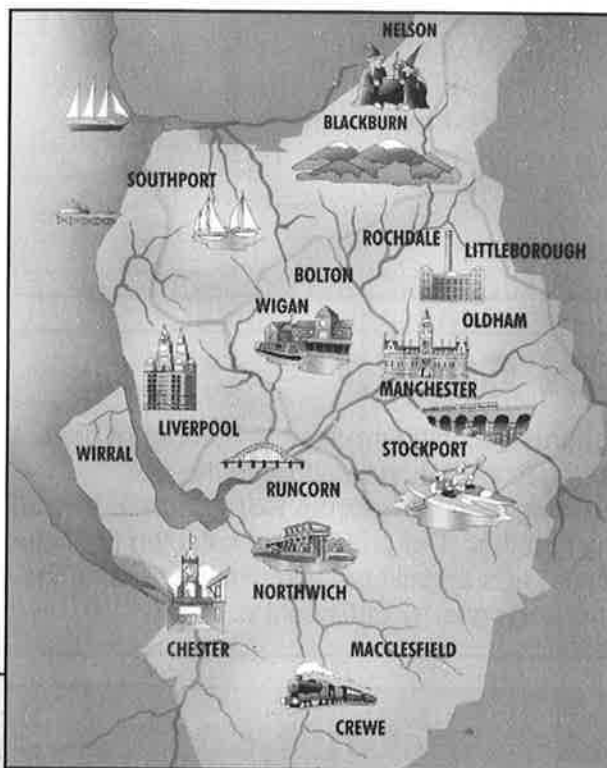
The campaign area is enormous extending from Nelson in the north to the Cheshire Plain in the south. Nowhere within the area is more than a few hundred metres from a brook, stream, river or canal which enters the Mersey estuary.

The operation of salt works in Northwich grew on the development of river transport. As salt making transferred to using coal the River Weaver became the main corridor for transporting both fuel and salt.

The Thompson family were no exception to other salt proprietors and had other interests which involved coal mining. John Thompson was a co-owner of Rushy Park Colliery in St Helens, owned a boat yard at Castle, Northwich (later to become Yarwood's) and also traded as a timber importer. The family built and owned Weaver flats and a fleet of narrow boats.

The Thompson narrowboats on the Trent and Mersey Canal "discharged" coal from collieries at Stoke on Trent and "shipped" salt to customers in Manchester to the north and Shropshire to the south. Salt from Thompson's Alliance, Lion and Sunbeam Works also "shipped" salt via the Anderton Lift to waiting flats and barges to Manchester and Liverpool Docks for export overseas.

The Lion Salt Works Trust is pleased to be part of the Campaign which not only promotes the clean-up of the river and canal network but also encourages the recreational and amenity value of sites such as ours in interpreting the social and economic history of its industrial past.



**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.

## HENRY THOMPSON VISIT SALT WORKS

The last owner of the Lion Salt Works Henry Thompson visited the site during the summer with his nephew Micheal Thompson. Micheal and his wife Tracy, were on a brief holiday to England from their home in Vancouver, Canada and were on route to visit relatives in Yorkshire. It was the first time Tracy had visited England but had heard about the plans to restore the former family works as an industrial museum.



## ON GOING

Progress is being made on a number of projects. **Brown tourism signs** are to be erected in the spring to help direct visitors to the site.

Funding for our **Victorian Northwich in Virtual Reality** computer graphics project is slowly coming together. The project was selected for inclusion within a new brochure produced by Cheshire Visual Arts an initiative established to raise the quality, range and profile of the visual arts, crafts and photography in Cheshire.

## Focus Group Look at Salt

Rosemary Agnew from Manchester Business School lead a focus group in our mobile classroom.

The group consisted of pensioners from Derbyshire who had all used block salt in the past.

The results of this group and three others arranged with groups of different ages and from geographical backgrounds will help the students assess potential of Lion Salt Works Sales.



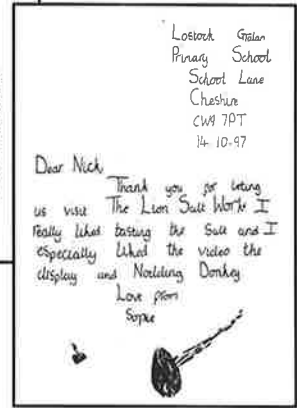
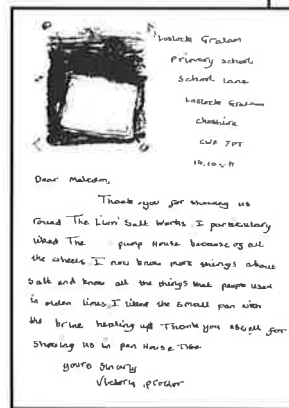
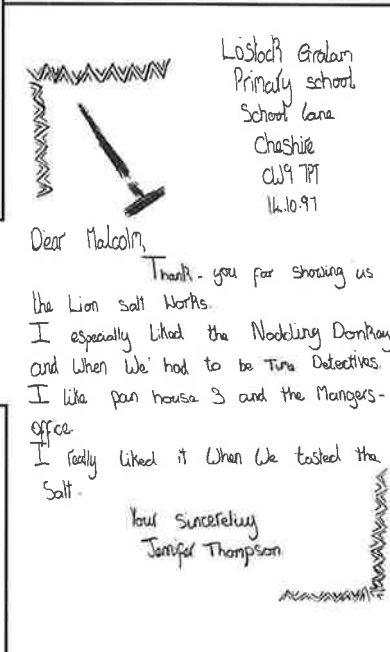
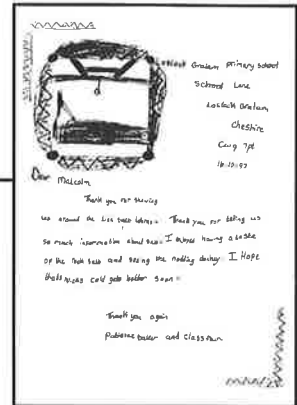
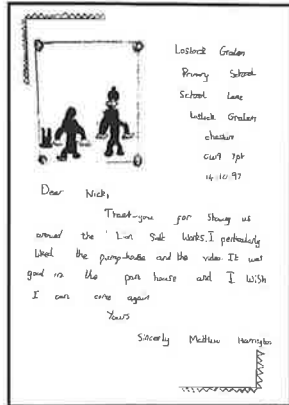
## LOSTOCK GRALAM CP SCHOOL, LEARN ABOUT SALT MAKING

Pupils at Lostock Gralam County Primary School visited the salt works at the beginning of their autumn term. They had learnt about salt making at school and following a trip to the Salt Museum at London Road, Northwich they visited the Lion Salt Works.

The class was met by two of the Lion Salt Works stewards, Nick Davies and Malcom Sargeant who showed them around the boiler house, steam engine, managers office and Pan House No3.

The class split into groups and over the course of the morning made notes and sketches.

The whole class wrote letters to the stewards thanking them for the opportunity to visit the only surviving open pan salt works. A selection are included here.



A nativity scene has been created at the Lion Inn exhibition.

A wintery effect has been created using white salt crystals as snow.

The grotto is made from rock salt obtained from the Salt Union's mine at Winsford and a woodland setting as provided by Dried sedums, teasles and honesty grown over the summer in our own herb garden.

The nativity figures themselves were purchased from the Day Centre at Cheviot Square, Winsford. Members of the centre cast the figures as well as hand painting them. For further information about other figures, chess sets etc telephone Mind on 01606 863305



# DATES for your Diary

spring '98

21st March, 1998

## Science Week - Saltmaking and Salt Glazing

This first demonstration day in 1998 will be part of Science Week promoted by The British Association for the Advancement of Science. A COPUS grant has been awarded to the Trust to help it organise the event. COPUS is the Committee on the Public Understanding of Science. Our event will provide a fusion of arts and science by explaining how salt is used to produce such a unique glaze.

The display will show the whole process from salt making, pot throwing through to the dramatic process of salt-glazing. This is a rare opportunity to see Steve Harrison one of this country's leading salt-glaze potters at work. Steve graduated with a Masters degree from the Royal College of Art in 1993. He builds his own wheels and kilns and makes many of his pottery tools. In September he featured in the *Ceramic Review* and in October his work was commended by Sir Terence Conran at the Chelsea Craft Show and was selected as one of the ten most prominent craft workers at the show by the *Independent on Sunday* newspaper. Steve acts as visiting lecturer to the ceramics department of Manchester Metropolitan University, Alsager Campus.

Undergraduate students from the department will support the event with demonstrations of pottery making. There will be displays of Steven Harrison's work and pieces will be available for sale at a variety of prices.

See a more detailed time table in our Spring '98 newsletter.



PROMOTING SCIENCE  
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

SET UP/98  
**set98\***  
exploring science  
engineering  
and technology  
from 13 March

## OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works exhibition is opened each afternoon between 1.30pm and 4.30pm by our site stewards. We ask for a donation of £1 per adult, 50p per child.

New stewards are required to help at the site, not just to receive visitors but also to help with maintenance of the building and grounds.

If you have a few hours a week please contact Andrew Fielding, Project Director. Call 01606-41823.

**New update due soon on our web site at**  
**<http://www.lionsaltworkstrust.co.uk>**

## TRUSTEES

Richard Hamlett, (Chairman); Lady Rochester; John Szostek, Terry Cresswell, Dr Sandy Todd, Dr Tom Farthing; Cllr Mrs V Frame; Cllr Tony Hooton; Cllr Ron Carey.

## 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. The Lion Salt Works Trust a company Limited by guarantee and a registered charity No. 1020258.