

The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **WINTER 1998**

VOLUME 4 No. 4

WINTER EXHIBITION PREVIEWS SALT GLAZED POTTERY

Steve Harrison : artist potter

In March 1998 the Trust worked with Steve Harrison during Science Week when we made salt for Steve to glaze trial pieces in his portable salt glazing kiln. Our winter exhibition features all of the pieces which were produced and features a short video which shows the pieces being thrown by Steve in his studio and follows the process of salt making and glazing on site.



LIMITED EDITION SALT GLAZED POTS PLANNED FOR YEAR 2000

Following on from the March firing a selection of clay types were selected and Steve was asked to experiment with some prototype shapes and styles which would be unique to the Lion Salt Works.

There are 21 pieces featured in the current exhibition which are intended to form the basis of a limited edition firing in the year 2000.

A sponsor is being sought to underwrite the production costs for the commissioning of a complete kilns worth of pots.

The pieces will be glazed in salt made at the Lion Salt Works and will feature

a lion mark alongside Steve Harrison's own potters mark which features a crown. Each piece will be individually numbered and will be sold with a certificate of authenticity.

It is hoped that the pieces will be used in a travelling exhibition to be taken to the 8th World Salt Symposium in The Hague, Holland.

After the exhibition pieces would be sold to raise funds for the restoration work.



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.

Images of brine pump and derrick add to record of salt works

The International Stationary Steam Engine Society made a field visit to the site in October. The group keeps records of engines all over the country and has been visiting the Lion Salt Works over a number of years to look at the collection of engines, pumps and machines which were used here.

Colin Bowden kindly sent a copy of a photograph he had taken at the site during a visit on 29th September, 1964. It shows the layout around the brine pump with the derrick and a clean water header tank used for top up water for the boiler.



Photograph by Colin Bowden.



The derrick is of interest and it also features in a pencil sketch recently donated to the Trust by Julia Midgely.

The derrick was used to lift the pump rod out of the bore hole in order to service the leather valve at the base of the bore hole. The pump rod was linked in sections and is still on site stored in Pan House No. 5.

The derrick was dismantled a few years ago after the metal fastenings corroded at the top and the vertical poles collapsed.

The structure had been made from the mast of a sailing boat, possibly from one of the family's old Weaver flats. The winch in the pump house used for hauling the railway wagons is said to have come from the barge Nautilus. A number of batons nailed to one side made a rough ladder providing access to the top platform from where each section of pump rod was connected in turn to a wire cable and extracted from the bore hole.

Pencil sketch by Julia Midgely.

Further Genealogy connections with Northwich

The Trust has occasional enquiries from people trying to trace their ancestors who lived in Northwich, particularly if they worked in the salt industry.

In December the Project Director met Mr and Mrs Dobbertin from Illinois, USA, who were seeking information about relatives who had moved from Ireland to Northwich after the potato famine. Census returns show that Mrs Dobbertin's ancestors, the Brannans and McCormicks, lived on Cattle Market, Crum Hill and Cross Street between 1841 and 1871 before emigrating to Wisconsin. By chance one of our current display panels features the Virtual Reality Project initiated with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie UK Trust and they were able to view our trial video presentation which reproduces the views of Crum Hill recorded by Thomas Birtles in 1871. The Brannans



Through the art of printing we have placed Mrs Dobbertin into one of the Birtles' photographs of Crum Hill.

and McCormicks were neighbours of local historian Colin Lynch's ancestors and we hope that we can assist in tracking down further information about their family history.

Of greater coincidence was the discovery that Mrs Dobbertin's brother is a salt glazing potter in the USA and so they were just as fascinated by our collaboration with Steve Harrison.

FURTHER SALT MAKING DEMONSTRATIONS

At the beginning of December the Trust was host to a dozen archaeologists from all over the country as part of the English Heritage Survey of the salt industry. The two day seminar was held as part of the Monument Protection Programme which seeks to record all known salt making sites in England.



Chairman, Richard Hamlett, demonstrates salt making in a lead salt pan to David Cranstone and Neil Rimmington of Cranstone Consultants who are working on the Monument Protection Programme STEP 2 and 3, and to Mr Rout of Middlesborough.

The first report, known as STEP 1, described the geological locations of salt making and the changes in technology and terminology applied to salt making over the years. It was edited by Paul Gilman of Essex County Council with two sections contributed by Andrew Fielding of the Lion Salt Works and Stephen Penney, curator at the Salt Museum, Northwich. The seminar gathered together those who had commented on STEP 1 before moving forward to STEPS 2 and 3 which seek to enhance to known list of sites before making recommendations about protection and preservation in STEPS 4 and 5.

On the first day participants visited the Salt Union rock salt mine at Winsford and The Salt Museum in Northwich before an evening meal and meeting of slides and discussion at the Petty Pool Centre, Sandiway.

DATES for your Diary

Spring '99

Steve Harrison - artist potter Experiments in Salt Glazed Pottery Until 28th February, 1999

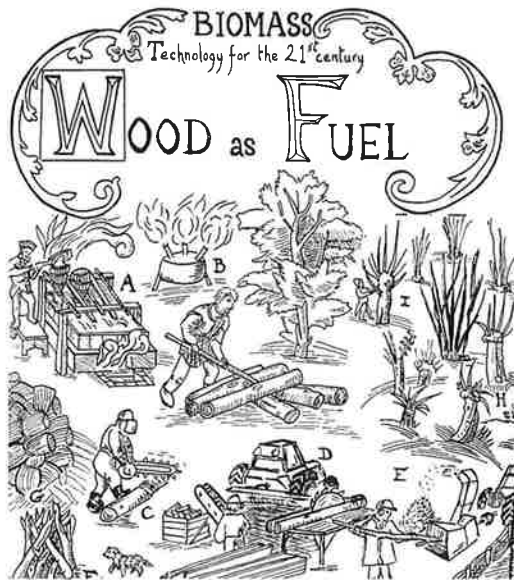
This exhibition continues our work with salt glazed pottery in collaboration with Steve Harrison, one of the country's leading salt glazing potters. The displays include trial pieces manufactured in March '98 as part of Science Week and new exhibition pieces commissioned by Week and new exhibition pieces commissioned by the Trust with the support of a grant from the North West Arts Board. A supporting video shows Steve Harrison at work and the firing of a special kiln demonstrating the salt glazing process. There are a variety of pieces for sale.



Science Week '99 An exhibition of biomass technology

Friday & Saturday
12th-13th March, 1999

This exhibition will look at the use of wood as a modern fuel source. The Lion Salt Works anticipates using wood fuel technology to heat its restored salt pans providing CO₂ neutral heating from a renewable energy source. Compare Roman, medieval and modern uses of managed timber with coal burning nineteenth century salt pans. Demonstrations of forestry processing equipment, charcoal making. Advice and Information from The Mersey Forest, Vale Royal Environment Network. Funded by a Vale Royal Sustainability Grant.



TV Guide

Watch out for schools programme 'Scientific Eye' on Channel 4 to be broadcast in January, 1999 which features the Lion Salt Works as part of a 20 minutes look at topics with a salty theme. Also early in the New Year the salt works will appear in the BBC2 afternoon programme 'The History Hour'.

OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works exhibition is opened each afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Donations : £1 per adult, 50p per child. For further information call 01606-41823. Web site address - <http://lion saltworkstrust.co.uk>

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 covenant form.

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