

# The MUNDLING STICK



the LION  
Salt Works  
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **WINTER 1999**

**VOLUME 5 No. 4**

*Happy New Year*



*Table salt made by John Hudson. Based on a sixteenth century salt figurine defining one's position at table 'above' or 'below' the salt.*

## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2000

The last Lion Salt Works newsletter of the year is also the last of the millennium but we look forward to a long and successful future for the site beyond year 2000.

The story of salt making at the site began with John Thompson junior digging a brine shaft in the coal yard of the Red Lion Hotel in 1894. We don't know how the salt works celebrated year 1900 though Henry Ingram Thompson had just taken over the works following the death of his father in 1899.

Our newsletter in Spring, 1999 looked at the work ahead, and this issue can report some good news about successful grant applications with support coming to the project from a variety of sources. The Trust would like to thank all who have contributed over the years, both as individuals and businesses, and look forward to your positive support bearing fruit over coming months and years.

Our work to date has laid down a foundation for the project to build on for the future. Over the early months of the New Year practical work will begin on landscaping improvements around the site and new displays will open before Easter. After this we shall be concentrating on completing grant applications to major funding bodies to fulfil our target of restoring the site as a working industrial museum of national and international importance.

We hope you will be able to visit, to see our new exhibitions, watch salt being made in our replica salt pans during demonstration days and see the progress being made towards restoration work.

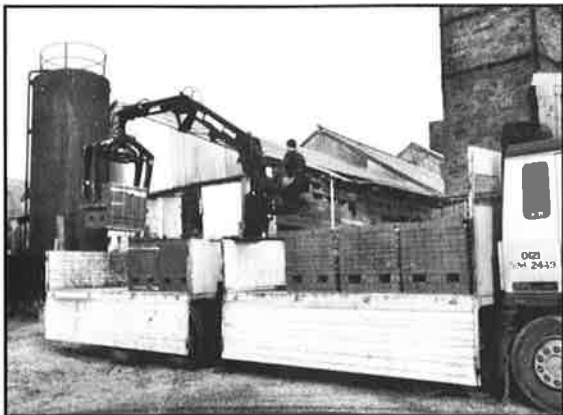
**mundling stick** *n.*—tool used to pack salt crystals into the wooden tubs when making lump salt. This newsletter will likewise try to cram in all the latest information about the conservation and restoration of the Lion Salt Works.

## NORTH WEST WATER LANDCARE

### *A project making use of Landfill Tax Rebate*

The Trust is delighted with a grant from NW Water donated through their *Landcare Scheme* established to distribute landfill tax contributions. The successful application targets environmental landscaping improvements around the main complex of Pan Houses.

The Landcare Scheme not only contributes £20,000 to the Trust but also includes the required third party contribution of 10% and the administration fee of 2% payable to ENTRUST who administer landfill tax credits.



*Delivery of brick paviours.*



*Clearing the site of gravel.*



*Fitting the final pieces of the puzzle.*

The Spring, 2000 newsletter will report on the completion of many of these proposals. Some will take time to mature and develop but will improve the appearance of the works and enhance future demonstrations and events which will be held at the site.

The design proposals have been drawn up with the assistance of Martin Thornhill and Melanie Seacombe from VRBC Community Partnerships Division.

The work will include the removal of a waste spoil mound comprising ash and cinders which has been an eye sore for many years. The cinders will be partly used to raise the floor of the salt store which now suffers from a slight flooding problem.

The majority of the work will be focused on landscaping to improve the setting of the site and improve visitor facilities. Our **herb garden** will be replanted and enhanced with a trellis and pergola. The **grass areas** will be improved by mowing practices to encourage the abundance of **wild flowers**, which this year included orchids, colonising the poor ash soils. To the south of the site a screen planting of **coppice tree species** will provide a growing link with our plans to introduce biomass heating to the restored salt pans. A variety of different species, ancient and modern, will be planted to show different growth habits and as they mature the coppiced stems will be put to practical use on the site for hurdles, baskets and fuel.

A selection of **nest boxes** will also be erected around the site. We know that blackbirds, sparrows, collard doves, starlings and swallows build nest each year around the site and would also like to encourage the robins, tits and wrens our other common species.



*The team take time off to inspect their work.*

**MANCHESTER AIRPORT  
COMMUNITY GRANT**

**£5,000**

The Trust was pleased to be awarded a grant of £5,000 this autumn from the Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund.

The fund was established by the airport company as a community based initiative to promote, enhance, improve, protect and conserve the natural and built environment in areas affected by the activities of Manchester Airport.

Projects have to be located inside a defined boundary extending around the airport.

The grant is to be used to provide landscaping, environmental enhancement and disabled access as part of our winter programme of site improvements.

The first phase of work began at the end of November when a team of trainees from the Vale Royal Training Centre began work on laying brick pavements and a ramp to improve access to our exhibitions at the former Lion Inn.



**MORE ENTRUST GRANTS FUND  
BUILDING SURVEYS**

Two further grants have been made through ENTRUST, the body supervising the donation of funds available through landfill operators to help charitable bodies registered as Environmental Bodies.

Brunner Mond have contributed £2,500 and ICI Chemicals and Polymers £2,000. The ICI contribution was made available with a third party contribution of £223 being made by Vale Royal Borough Council.

Under the rules of the landfill tax credits the Trust has been required to pay an administration fee of 2% to ENTRUST on these grants which pays towards on-going supervision of the scheme.

Landfill credits made from local salt and chemical companies have been used to fund our consultancy costs investigating the structural conditions of the main Pan House complex which will be used to determine the work required to carry out the restoration work.

Investigations have been continued by Richard Johnson of the Brian Clancy Partnership based in Altrincham. The latest studies have been looked at aspects of the more recent buildings, Pan Houses 4 and 5. The reports will be presented to a panel of experts from English Heritage whose input will be vital as we strive to determine the delicate balance between methods of repair, conservation and rebuilding.



**DELIVERY OF JABEZ BRICK PANELS**

Mervin Broad made a delivery of 1,000 Jabez Thompson bricks during October as work continued for the Muir Housing Group and Vale Royal Borough Council to redevelop Bridge House, Northwich. The bricks formed a light weight sound and fire-proofing between internal partitions strengthened by the use of diagonal boarding. Each brick is stamped JABEZ THOMPSONS PATENT BRICKWOOD NORTHWICH.

Following reports in the local Northwich newspapers describing the discovery of the Thompson bricks the Trust was contacted by Mr White, now living in



Shropshire, whose father had bought the old Thompson brickworks at Witton and operated it as the Northwich Brick and Terra-cotta Company until 1936. Mr White has promised to sift through his fathers papers and pass on information about the last days of the works.

## DATES for your Diary Spring 2000

### February 21st National Nestbox Week

Making and erection of nesting boxes around the site as part of our environmental improvements.

### March Coppice planting - Date to be arranged.

If you would like to help with the planting of our coppice woodland please call for details in the new year. Come back in future years and help harvest this renewable product for fuel, hurdles or baskets.

### EASTER Opening of new displays.

Events and salt boiling demonstrations to be announced

**Closed over Christmas and New Year and the exhibitions will be partially closed at the beginning of April to enable work to be completed to install our new exhibition panels.**

### 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](http://lion_saltworkstrust.co.uk)

Contact Project Director Andrew Fielding if you would like to help with the project.

## AQUILA ENERGY FUND PREPARATIONS FOR SALT 2000

Preparations are well advanced for a limited edition firing of pots glazed with salt made at the Lion Salt Work. Steve Harrison visited the Lion Works in spring, 1998 and has helped to develop a range of pots unique to the salt works but which are also a part of his own individual style.

The cost of this special firing are to be funded by Aquila Energy who are developing a gas storage site at British Salt's Walsingham brine field. So, the salt used in the glaze of the Lion pots will have originated from unrefined Cheshire brine.

The specially fired pieces will be the centra feature of our exhibition at the 8th World Salt Symposium, SALT 2000, to be held in The Hague, Holland next May.

There will be over 200 pieces varying in size and style and will be available for sale later in the year. Prices can only be determined after the kiln is opened as each firing is unpredictable.

The firing will be the last in Steve's current kiln, a time when the glazes can be rich and deep, but when there is an increased risk that the walls or roof of the kiln will fragment.

Each pot will have a Lion stamp alongside Steve's potters mark and a date stamp as well as an individual number imprinted on the base of each piece relating back to the record of the firing. A certificate will be provided describing the special circumstances of the production. If you would like to indicate your interest in buying a special Lion Salt Works salt glazed pot please let us know. A list of pieces and prices will be sent to you when the collection is catalogued. Prices will range from £25 to around £750.



AQUILA ENERGY



### NEW DISPLAY PANELS

Pam Bradley, Head of Communications at Vale Royal Borough Council and Graphic Designer, Carl Rodgers, are working with the Project Officer to redesign our exhibition panels and displays and produce a guide book to the site and the restoration project. All the displays will be located on the ground floor of the Red Lion Inn to enable easy access for all. More news in our Spring newsletter.

### 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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