

The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: WINTER 2001 / 2002

VOLUME 7 No. 4

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MUG BEFORE?



This small mug, bought by a collector at local antique shop, has connections with the Lion Salt Works. It was brought to the Trust by its new owner seeking further information about it. As yet we have no information about when or where it was made. It has a makers name stamped in the base of, ATKIN. Perhaps it was a one off, perhaps part of a number of pieces.

The mug has a simple strap handle. The rim of the mug is blue, the body is grey with an oatmeal brown foot.

In style it is similar to traditional salt glazed brown and cream glazed beakers some of which have dated inscriptions, usually hand inscribed. The letters on this beaker LION SALT WORKS, MARSTON, NORTHWICH have been impressed into the clay using printers' type.

The Trust is always eager to hear from visitors with connections to the salt works and would be delighted to hear from any one who has seen such a piece before or has information about the maker. Perhaps similar brown salt glazed mugs have inscriptions for other businesses.

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.

COX & SPELLER

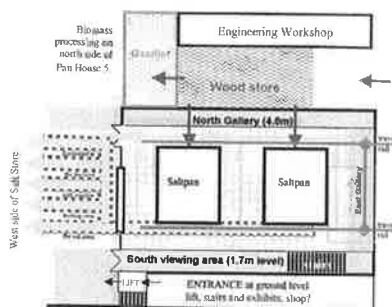


John Cox and Peter Speller have begun working with the Trust to specify how Pan House 5 can be recommissioned to demonstrate the arts of open pan salt making as part of a working museum.

Results of the design concepts will be incorporated into the full design specifications.

The proposals to use biomass fuel in the form of woodchip is a major factor in the design.

The museum and education facilities will include a history of energy uses in salt making through the ages.



First Scale Your Pan

Evaporating a natural or unrefined brine at high temperatures has the effect of depositing a scale over the surface of a salt pan. Over the course of a week this can build up to a significant depth and in time will prevent heat from the fires below heating the brine efficiently.

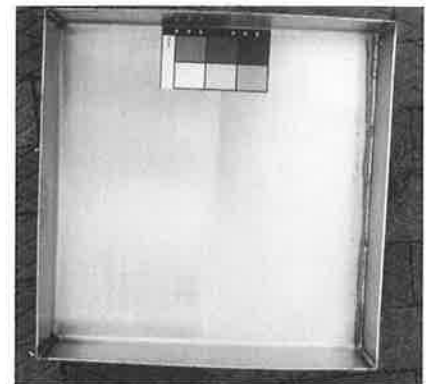
Removing pan scale was a weekly task at salt works carried out with picks and sledge hammers. It was a hard and noisy job as the blows rang out from the pan houses on a Monday morning.

Following picking, the pans were cleaned down and checked over before being coated with a lime wash which helped prevent the new scale products from adhering too firmly to the iron pan plates.

We hope to use a modern stainless material called monel metal. Monel is a steel manufactured with a proportion of nickel which makes it capable of withstanding the harsh corrosive conditions caused by salt, greatly reducing maintenance costs. It is however much more expensive than iron plates and could be damaged by heavy blows from hammers and picks.

We have begun a series of experiments to look at the build up of scale on a small monel pan and to see if a high pressure water jet would be a suitable alternative to picking.

One half of the pan has been specially polished to see if there are differences in adhesion of scale.



COMPARING NORTHWICH & LUNEBURG

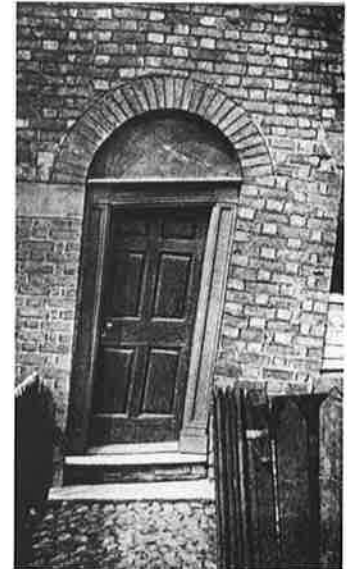
Lüneburg, Germany - Northwich, England



As Northwich knows only too well extensive salt extraction can lead to acute geological problems which can cause great hardship to those living in salt towns.

A new exhibition at the Deutsches Salzmuseum Lüneburg describes similar problems for the people of Lüneburg.

Wolfgang Zeyn kindly sent the Lion Salt Works a copy of the 64 page museum booklet which accompanied the special exhibition. Though only available in German it is full of photographs which describe the effects of ground movement caused by the local salt deposits. The process of subsidence is not identical to Northwich but the results are familiar.



It has not been difficult to provide comparative photographs from Northwich to appreciate the difficulties faced in Lüneburg.



Der Senkungsteufel rumorte wieder
Lüneburger Landeszeitung 19.09.1981

'The subsidence Devil bustles again'

The Lüneburg salt works closed in 1980 which has reduced the subsidence dramatically but many houses have been pulled down. Local people felt that too many historic buildings were being destroyed by wholesale clearance and established the ALA (Arbeitskreis Lüneburger Altstadt), Initiative for Lüneburg's Old Town, and is still working to help renovate and restore the old town centre.



Reference: *verSALZEN, VERSENKT, fast beSTADTet* (2000) Deutsches Salzmuseum ISBN 3-925476-12-1



WANTED - Pounds, Shillings and Pence

At a time when Europe is preparing to exchange its national currencies for Euros, can you still remember using shillings and pence in the UK? Many of our visitors can. Some can even convert back to our old money which became decimal by changing to Pounds and New Pence in 1971. At that time there was a different mix of decimal coins. The two decimal coins which are no longer in circulation are the New Half Penny Piece and a Two and a Half Penny Piece (equivalent to an old six pence), whilst a Two Pound Coin was added to the currency quite recently.

To our younger visitors however, counting in twelves and twenties is quite a difficult concept to understand, and we won't begin to discuss division, percentages, fractions or guineas!

The higher paid job was lump making which took more skill and experience than making crystal salt or lofting.

However, wages cannot be taken in isolation. One has to know what things cost at the time and these things also vary through time. Each decade had different inflation rates and fluctuations in wages, housing, food and transport.

A wage packet of the 1950's would look quite different to a modern equivalent. Especially if today your wage is paid by bank credit transfer, when you never even see the money you have earned. At the Lion Salt works workers were paid from the manager's office. Here their wages were made up in tins kept on the mantelpiece over the fire. Workers came to the office window on pay day and their wages were tipped out into their hands.

Describing earnings can be long and complicated. To begin with it is always useful to show children what pre-decimal currency looked like. A solid half-crown (2/6, two shillings and six pence) looks like a sizable piece of currency when you can see it and feel how heavy it was.

Do you have any old currency in the back of a draw which you could donate to the Trust? If so, please send it by post or drop it into our exhibition centre.



TWO NEW SALT PIGS

Alison Fisher has provided us with two new salt pig designs for our shop. One has a matte external surface with a bright blue glazed interior, the other has a shiny oatmeal glaze with leaf and flower decoration.

Though of medium height the opening is large enough for easy access to the salt inside. Price £22.



OBITUARY

Jim McCleary, one of the longest serving volunteer stewards, died on 31st December 2001. Jim had taken early retirement from British Rail, latterly as a guard but in his youth had worked on the footplate of steam locomotives. He will be remembered for the care he gave to our steam engine and boiler, his enthusiasm and easy going nature with visitors. We shall miss him greatly.



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.

The Lion Salt Works Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity No. 1020258. VAT registration No. 628998076. The Mundling Stick is written by the Lion Salt Works Project Director and is kindly designed and printed by Vale Royal Borough Council.

OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works is open each afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm. 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.