

The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **WINTER 2002**

VOLUME 8 No. 4



CHRISTMAS 2002 SALT ANGEL

The production of salt blocks for carving was a small part of the Thompsons' block salt market. This Christmas a salt angel was produced for our Christmas decorations. They will become a regular part of our shop decorations.

It is a very safe medium to work, especially for children, as no sharp chisels are required. The Angel was made with only a plastic spoon and an old blunt screwdriver.

The blocks have to be well made for the best carvings with no air pockets and even sized, small crystals. It is best if the salt is not baked completely dry. If this happens the salt can set like concrete and is difficult to scrape. Harder tools are required and the surface can look polished, however this might be an effect looked for in the piece being produced.

If the crystals are too coarse or not packed together properly, sections can fall away or fine details are unachievable; too wet and fine carvings or heavy pieces crumble or turn to slurry and are spoilt.

If a thin carving can be produced the finished sculpture can have a luminous quality as light shines through the crystals.

July, 2004 Community Play Advanced notice and request for help

It seems a long way off but Robert Meadows is preparing to stage a community play in 2004, based on Northwich salt. His last play in the area was at Marbury Park in 2000 and culminated in a dramatic reconstruction of the burning down of Marbury Hall.

Robert and the Lion Salt Works need your help to gather information that can be used in this new play.

It is hoped the project will have three themes and will involve the Lion Salt Works at Marston, Anderton and Marbury and the Salt Museum at Leftwich.

Can you help us put together Something About Local Traditions? Support a Local Thespian; Suggest and List Themes; Sponsor A Loquacious Talker; Suggest Auxiliary Laborious Tasks.

Did you, your relatives, friends or ancestors work in the local salt works, or related industries?

Would you like to be in a local play or help-out in putting one together?

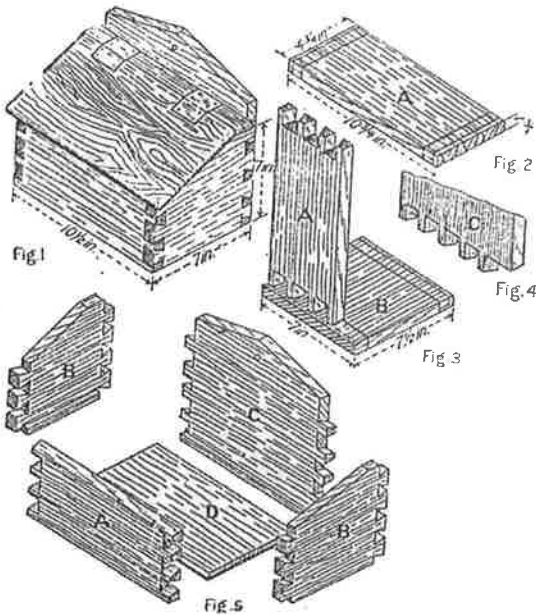
Stories about life in Marston or Wincham, or around the Lion Salt Works would be collected as an oral history project, which could be used as an archive resource for future generations.

More details in the spring but planning starts in January - A community play relies on the community to be involved, so - We need to hear from YOU now!

Give us a call for more information and find out how to get involved.

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.

How to Make: A SALT BOX



Owing to the corrosive effect of salt, the use of nails and metal fastening is avoided as far as possible in making a salt box, which is usually of wood; because of the damp nature of the material the wood should be fairly thick and close grained. Beech is well suited for the work, but ash is often used, and American whitewood can be utilised. A convenient shape, illustrated in Fig. 1, measures 10 ½ in by 7 in at the base, 4 ½ in in front, and 7 in at the back up to the lid. The wood is ¾ in thick, the corners dovetailed.

Commence by planing up the front, A, to 4 ½ in by ¾ in, and cut to 10 ½ in. The sides, B, are the same thickness, and 7 in wide, with a length of 7 ½ in. The back, C, is 10 ½ in by 9 ½ in by ¾ in and the bottom, D, is 9 ½ in by ¾ in and the bottom, D, is 9 ½ in by 6 in by ¾ in. The pieces are set out as in Figs 2,3 and 4; the dovetail pins are cut on the ends of the front piece, A, the distance between the shoulders being 9 in, and then placed on the sides in turn to mark out the exact shape of the sockets, as in Fig 3.

The same is done with the back, C, as in Fig 4 and then a ½ in wide and ½ in deep groove is ploughed up from the bottom edge of each piece to take the bottom piece, D. On the latter, plane a rebate to correspond with the grooves, ¾ in up the edge and ½ in deep, and complete the sides, B, by sawing off the front corner and planing smooth. Mark 1 ½ in down the top of the back each side, saw off the waste and plane down smooth, and then bore a ½ in hole 1 in down in the centre. The parts are now ready to fit together, as in Fig 5, and if the joints are true they can be glued up and left to dry.

In the meantime the lid is prepared, one piece being 11 ½ in by 6 ½ in by ¾ in, and the other 11 ½ in by 1 in by ¾ in. The front edge of the large piece and both ends of both pieces should be rounded and finished smooth with glass paper. The glued box can now be trimmed at the ends and cleaned up with a sharp smoothing plane, the top edge of the front being planed to the slope of the sides, and the narrow portion of the lid screwed on from the back. Its lower edge in front must be planed down ½ in, so that the sloping lid can be fitted. The top edge of the latter is now bevelled sufficiently to fit, and then attached with stout leather hinges, 2 in long and 1 ½ in wide. A neater job is made by cutting recesses 1 ½ in from the ends to take the leather, which should be secured with ½ in round headed screws.

The outside of the box should be sized and varnished; the inside is left plain, so that it can be washed out when necessary. On account of the action of salt on metal it is not advisable to use plain butt joints or to nail or screw the box together. The work can be simplified by screwing on a

If you didn't use a salt pig in the kitchen then a salt box was just as handy. Hanging on the wall by the fire, or kitchen stove, the salt would be handy and dry. Many designs and decorations can be found. Some times they are confused with candle boxes.

A Local Salt Box

Mrs Precious visited in the summer with her grandmother's salt box as she would like to fill it with Thompson salt when production starts up again.

Her grandmother lived in Nantwich and her mother remembered it being used in the kitchen filled with block salt. Rather than breaking the block down, her grandmother simply placed a block in the box, even if it meant the lid would not close. When she needed salt she used a sharp knife to shave crystals directly from the block.





Ollershaw Lane

This copy of an old photograph shows Ollershaw Lane looking north towards the Lion Salt Works. The chimney of Pan House No. 1 can be seen by the side of the road just before the hump back bridge over the canal. The salt store with its curved roof can be seen on the left hand side of the road.

The photograph was brought by Mr Yarwood together with images of Marston School, church and Marston Hall Mine. The former railway line to the mine can be seen in the middle distance where the level crossing gates were located.



The History of the Lion Salt Works Guillotine

Mr Houghton visited in the summer and was able to provide some information about the guillotine used at the works to cut iron plates and angle iron for the manufacture of salt pans.

He recognised the machine as having come from his father's smithy known as William Poole's Smithy, located near the present Regal Cinema off London Road, Northwich.

His father used the cutting shears all his life and Mr Houghton used them himself as a child (something which would be considered very unsafe today).

We believe they were brought to the works by local haulier Lynch.

It is believed the shearing and punching machine is of a type designed by Richard Roberts of Manchester.

Henry Thompson recalls that the earlier version used at the works was manually turned not driven by steam engine from a line shaft. So, this was seen as a great improvement though it was not a new machine when brought to Lion.

Roberts' design is included in a book published by C Holtsapffel, London (1846). *Turning and Mechanical Manipulation. Vol.2. The Principles of Construction, Action and Application of Cutting Tools used by hand; and also of Machines Derived from Hand Tools.* p920-922.



Ron Spencer used to work at the Lion Salt Works. He keeps in touch with our project through his newsletter. He emailed recently -

Hi Andrew,

Would it be possible to give a mention in "The Mundling Stick" to the School/Workplace Internet Site www.friendsreunited.co.uk as I have included our Works on the Workplace area within the site, whereby past workmates can identify themselves to others ... also as a link back to our Magazine !!! maybe worth the effort ... Regards again from 'Downunder' Ron Spencer ... 1953/4

My Home Page URL.

www.scouser22.homestead.com/PAGE4.html

Dates for Your Diary

Historic Salt Making Weekend Sat-Sun 27th-28th September 2003

Two day programme focusing on historic salt making.

Saturday 27th September 2003 - Conference

Northwich Memorial Hall

Chargeable event. Numbers limited. An opportunity to hear about historic salt sites in Europe and America. Reconstructions, restoration projects, heritage sites. Full programme to be announced in the Spring.

Contributions already promised from:

- * Colorado Salt Works, USA
- * Lewis Clark Saltworks (1805-1806); Seaside Historic Museums in Oregon, USA (top)
- * Salinas de Imon and La Olmeda, Spain
- * Figueirada Foz, Portugal
- * Salinas de Anana, Spain (middle)

Sunday 28th September - Demonstration Day

Lion Salt Works

Free Event. Parking restrictions on site, park and ride facilities to be arranged.

Practical demonstrations of salt making over wood fires (bottom). Working reconstructions of a Roman lead salt pan and a sixteenth century iron pan. Also replica of ceramic salt pans excavated from Essex should also be in use. Potter, John Hudson will be on site to demonstrate the making of salt kits and table salts.

Associated displays, marquees etc.

More details in our Spring newsletter.



Salt Pigs from Hassal Green, Cheshire

These friendly round salt pigs are made at The Potters Barn on the Trent and Mersey Canal. They are in crisp white with bold flowery patterns, or in smooth blue. Matching cruet sets for fine salt, pepper and vinegar. A superb addition to our stock of salt pigs.

OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works tries to 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. To help open the exhibition please contact Andrew Fielding, Project Director.

Volunteers for Friday and Saturday urgently needed.

Web site address -

<http://lionsaltworkstrust.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 Gift Aid form.

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