

The MUNDLING STICK



the LION
Salt Works
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust: **WINTER 2004**

VOLUME 10 No.4

Comberbach School Raise Funds for the Lion Salt Works

Prefects in Year 6 at Comberbach Primary School saw the local news reports during last summer about the restoration of the Lion Salt Works and thought about how they might help.

Comberbach is only two miles from the Lion Salt Works and previous students had visited to look at what a salt works used to look like. They decided how they might do to help and telephoned the Lion Salt Works Trust when they returned to school in September.

After making contact with the Project Director, Andrew Fielding they invited him to visit the school where he met the Prefects and talked to the whole school during their morning assembly about why the Lion Salt Works was so important. The school was pleased and eager to talk about how they could help and to hear more about what was needed to restore the salt works.

The Prefects – Emma Frith, Amy Carter, Peter Moran, Callum Cheshire, Peter Hyde and Sophie Moores described how they would go about raising money. Each day for two weeks during a slightly extended morning break the Prefects would organise a series of fund-raising events, which the whole school could participate. These would include bring-and-buy sales of old toys and books, raffles, guess-the-name competitions and the sale of cakes and biscuits. They also held running races in the school hall and a special 'dressing down Friday'.

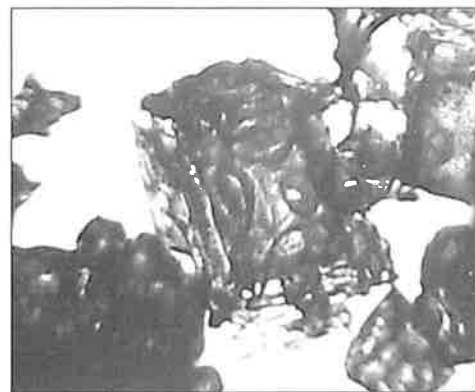
They had to be very well organised and disciplined to manage the setting out the stalls each morning and tidying things away afterwards, so that the hall could be used for other things in the day.

At the end of each session they counted their takings and stored it safely with the school secretary. At the end of the fund-raising they had raised £192. An excellent result.



Andrew Fielding was able to return during the fund-raising week to see what was involved. The Prefects had their photographs taken in front of one of their fundraising stalls, and it was published in the local Northwich newspapers (see above).

The Trust plans to spend the donation on equipment that will enable visitors to look more closely at salt crystals. Hand lenses and microscopes will be bought so that different salt crystals can be compared.



Some of the crystals we make in our demonstrations are irregular and fracture as the brine temperature varies as shown in the picture above. The next newsletter will feature photographs of different salt crystals.

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.

National Lottery's 10th Birthday

A block of salt made at the Lion Salt Works was a mystery object in the recent celebration of the National Lottery in November, 2004. Our object was part of an interactive maze created outside the Tate Modern, London to celebrate the impact of The National Lottery over the last 10 years.

There were only 250 objects chosen for the maze which included rower, Matthew Pinsent's gold medal and a athlete Kelly Holmes' signed running top and shoe from the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. Becky White, Object Co-ordinator explained how individuals of all ages opened and closed trap doors in an attempt to view all 250 objects. (Photograph supplied by B White)



OTHER OFFERS OF HELP

Tactility run by Ann Gardiner has offered to provide free design consultancy for portable and static tactile maps and diagrams for the Lion Salt Works to a value of £3,000. Tactile maps are a stimulating facility for interpreting sites especially for visually impaired visitors. The designs will include a site map, a vertical section diagram of the salt making process as well as a geological section through the salt beds below the site.

Wood preservation materials have been offered at cost by Steven Falder.

The Broken Cross Boat Club have offered to help publish a book for children which has been proposed by John Tackley and illustrated by Bernice Tackley. The book will be based on stories about narrow boats that carried salt between the Lion Salt Works and the Anderton Lift.

A donation of £1,000 has been received from Mr and Mrs Piper and £100 has been donated by members of the Waterways Cruising Association.

Jurade du Sel 8-11 September, 2005

The Trust has been invited to participate in the 25th Annual Festival of Salt held at Salies-de-Béarn, France. Each year the Town Council together with the Jurade du Sel, a fraternal group dedicated to the celebration of salt, organises the Festival of Salt (Heste de la Sau in the local dialect). It was the British Embassy who suggested they contact our Trust.

Salies-de-Béarn is a town of 5,000 situated in the south west of France, between Biarritz and Pau, where salt has been extracted for over 1,500 years. Local people with inherited rights used a traditional method of small-scale evaporation in small workshops behind their houses up to the 1840's. Locals who can prove they were born and live in the town are named 'Part-Prenant' which gives them rights to a percentage of profits from salt making. At present the annual production of salt is 1,000 tonnes, but they also have a salt-water spa in the town.

Two races are an important part of the festival. In the '8eme challenge des porteuse de herrades' women carry brine in small stave-built containers on their heads and in the 'Championnat du Monde des porteurs de sameax' a pair of men race with a large brine container slung on a pole from their shoulders (see illustration).

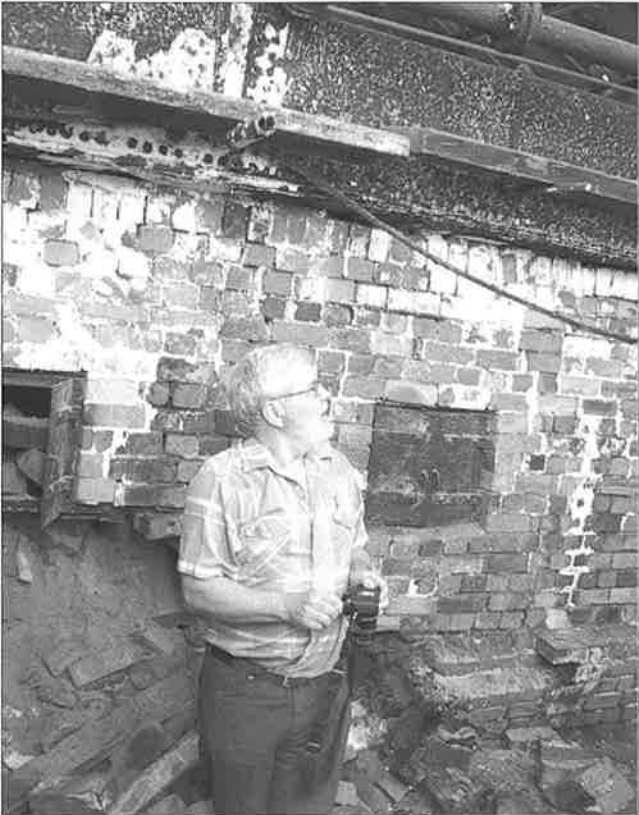


We look forward to participating with delegations from other European salt producing towns and to forging contacts with the historic salt making town of Salies-de-Béarn

If you want to visit Salies-de-Béarn to experience the Fête du Sel, contact the Office de Tourisme, Rue des Bains, 64270 SALIES-DE-BEARN, Pyrenees-Atlantiques, FRANCE. Or email: salies-de-bearn.tourisme@wanado.fr



Left to right: Marina Dancy, second from left, and Tanya Bryukhanova, on the right, in Pan House 3.



Peter Savage standing in front of the furnace of Pan No. 3.

VISITORS TO MARSTON

We are always pleased to receive visitors to the Lion Salt Works. People visit from far and wide. Many have information to give us at the same time as they experience the unique atmosphere of our salt works.

Tania Bryukhanova visited from the Irkutsk Region, Russia whilst staying with Marina Dancy as part of an exchange visit connected with the Girl Guides. Tania is from Usolie-Sibirskoye where there is a salt works. We hope to exchange information with the works during the coming year.

Peter Savage called in with his sister. Peter now lives in Canada but was brought up in the neighbouring village of Wincham by his grandparents. Peter's grandfather worked at the Lion Salt Works and his visit brought back memories of being at the works as a very small boy.

Deitre Ballauf came to the works to discover where his father Albin Ballauf had worked at the end WWII whilst imprisoned at the prisoner of war camp at Marbury. He brought with him a photograph of his father and other prisoners taken on 7th September, 1947 during an outing to Blackpool. We believe that his father actually worked at AJ Thompson's salt works at Wincham as Mr Worall, foreman/manager at the works is photographed with the prisoners. We hope we can find out more about other local Northwich people who are also shown in the photograph. If you can help, please get in touch.



Albin Ballauf fifth from left in second row. Mr Worall at far right of second row.

“Brine in Brittania”

The Lion Salt Works is pleased to be the joint editor and publisher of the proceedings of a day school held in Northwich in September, 2002. “Brine in Brittania” was convened as the winter meeting of the Regional Council for British Archaeology Group – VBA North West. It includes summaries of research in Cheshire and detailed updates on salt making sites in Nantwich and Middlewich. There are accounts of inscriptions found on Cheshire lead salt pans together with practical salt making experiments carried out at the Lion Salt Works and comparisons with excavated sites in Lincolnshire.

“Brine in Brittania” Issue 17, Archaeology Northwest, 72 pages - ISBN 0-9527813-4-4. Available from March through the Lion Salt Works, price £10.

Dates for Your Diary

Tuesday, 15th March

Part of 'Science Week 2005'

Salt Making Demonstration

9.00am to 5.00pm

A quantitative experiment recording the use of ceramic salt pans. See panel on right.

Saturday, 23rd April

Cheshire Archaeology Day

An annual summary of major archaeological projects being undertaken in the county.

Andrew Fielding will speak about the Lion Salt Works participation in the BBC 2 series "Restoration" in 2004 and salt making for the Channel 4 Programme "Time Team". Other topics include a report on the excavations at the Roman amphitheatre, Chester; work at Heronbridge, the landscape development of Cheshire and the discovery of a 'salt ship' during excavations in Nantwich. Northwich Memorial Hall.

Tickets available from Cheshire County Council in early February.

6th-10th July

The Salt Tellers

A Community Play to be performed at both the Lion Salt Works and the Anderton Boat Lift.

The individual sites will provide the background to each performance. Each play will be self-contained but there will be themes linking them.

The Lion Salt Works Play will feature salt making. The Anderton Play will feature the carriage of goods on the canal and River Weaver.

These will be promenade performances, suitable clothing and footwear recommended.

Admission by ticket only. On sale soon.

Adults £4.50 Concessions £2.00

Presented by the Weaver Valley Initiative, Lion Salt Works Trust and the Development of the Arts for Northwich. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

October

The Big Draw Day

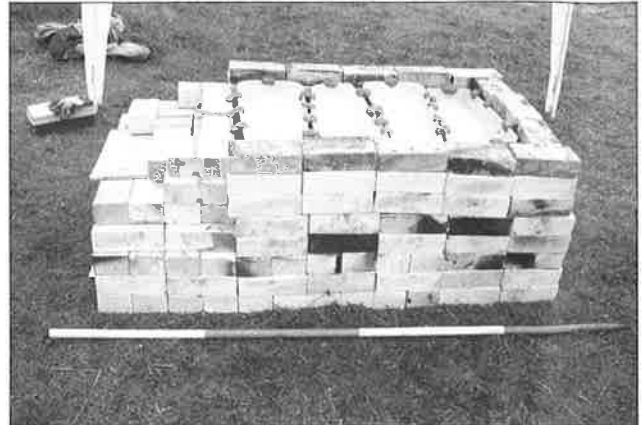
10.00am to 4.00pm

Date to be announced.

Part of a national campaign to encourage people to take up drawing.

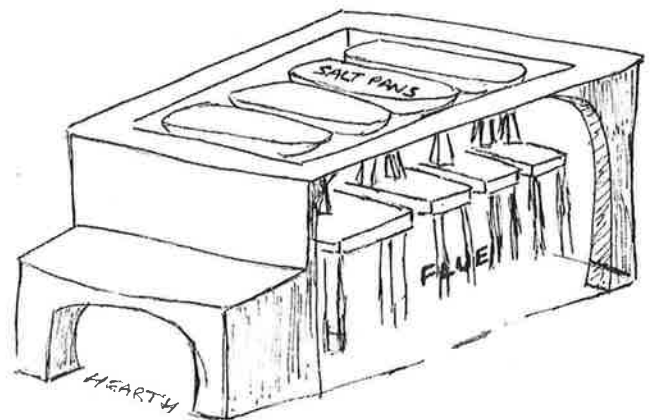
Come along and have a go. Artist materials will be provided for you try out different media and materials and to talk with professional artists.

Experimenting with Ceramic Salt Pans



In 2004 we built a replica of a salt making oven that used ceramic salt pans. The 'oven' was based on archaeological evidence from Lincolnshire. Our replica used fire-bricks rather than a solid clay wall but this allows us to make changes to the design in the light of our observations and experiments.

For Science Week 2005 we will be recording how the oven operates by measuring a variety of temperatures at key points within the structure such as the fire chamber, the interior of the flues, the exhaust gases. The temperature of each salt pan will be recorded and the background air temperature and relative humidity will also be taken throughout the day of the experiment.



OPENING TIMES

The Lion Salt Works is open each afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm. May be closed Friday and Saturday. 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.

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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