

# The MUNDLING STICK



LION  
Salt Works  
TRUST

Newsletter of the Lion Salt Works Trust

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41  
years

after it first came to the attention of Vale Royal Borough Council, and 28 years after it closed as a going concern, the Lion Salt Works re-opened to the public on 5th June 2015. A project costing nearly ten million pounds, has seen the restoration of the listed and scheduled buildings, the rebuilding of pan house 5 as a visitor centre and conference centre, and the installation of state of the art museum displays telling the story of the Works.

Since it was established in 1993, the Lion Salt Works Trust has been a partner in the restoration campaign, working first with Vale Royal Borough Council, and, since 2009, with Cheshire West and Chester Council. During those many difficult years, the Trust has received the support of organisations and individuals too numerous to mention, without whose help in fundraising and keeping the project alive, the restoration might never have been achieved.

The re-opening of the Works is far from the end of the story. There is still much to be done on site, the Trust intends to play a significant role in helping to run the museum, and it has a long term ambition to begin making salt again in the traditional manner.

This edition of The Mundling Stick is intended to mark the end of the main restoration project. The next few years promise to be even more exciting, the Trust is reconsidering its role in the future, and we are hoping that our old friends and supporters will join us in helping to take the project forward.

# A VISIT TO THE LION SALT WORKS

If you haven't seen the Lion Salt Works since the restoration began in earnest 5 years ago you will be amazed to find how much has changed. A visit begins in Pan House 5. This was the newest of the original pan houses and the one which was in the most precarious condition. With the help of a large grant from the European Manage+ Programme it has been rebuilt and now forms the main visitor reception area and coffee bar, and a first class conference facility.



From here the tour moves to the Red Lion Inn where there are exhibits describing the history of salt making, and a reconstruction of the manager's office. Visitors meet the owner of the works who recruits them as new employees. Entering pan house 1 the visitor is met by a blast of hot air from the furnace, and climbs up to the level of the pan which is wreathed in steam. An audio-visual display explains the salt making process.



The drying galleries come next, where the visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the scale and complexity of the structural restoration which has been achieved. Next come the storage and packing areas where the story continues by means of an array of displays and inter-active exhibits.



The tour finishes in the first floor storage and loading area, overlooking the canal, where dramatic photographs show the impact on the local landscape of brine extraction. The opportunity is also taken here to tell the story of our unique local landscape, the Northwich Community Woodlands, an area now restored as part of the Mersey Forest, and providing a rich variety of habitats and enormous scope for outdoor recreation.

A visit to the Salt Works would not be complete without a tour of the Butterfly Garden, and for the children there is a fully equipped play area designed in consultation with the children of our local primary school.

At the end of your visit, those in need of further refreshment or a substantial meal can be sure of a warm welcome at the Salt Barge Inn opposite our gates.





# The MUNDLING STICK

## THE TRUST AND THE FUTURE

The Trust intends to maintain its role as a key partner, working alongside Cheshire West and Chester to continue the development of the site. Because of our status as a charity, we are able to access a variety of sources of funding which will help with some of the remaining restoration tasks.

We have recently secured a grant of £20,000 from the Association for Industrial Archaeology towards the cost of restoring our railway salt van. This is currently in the workshops at Llangollen Railway, and is due to return to its position near the entrance to the site later on in the summer.



The Trust has extensive links with the local community and envisages using its contacts with local industry to help with the restoration of the 'brine extraction train' which includes the horizontal engine, the 'nodding donkey' and the brine storage tank by the canal.



Trust volunteers have long experience of demonstrating the processes of evaporating brine to make salt, we will be continuing these

demonstrations as part of the visitor experience in the new museum.



In the longer term we have an aspiration to re-commence salt making at a commercial scale. Our counterparts at Laeso in Denmark have shown what can be done and we see no reason why their success cannot be replicated at Marston. Over the years the Lion Salt Works has benefitted from the interest and support of salt making sites and other historical industrial monuments around the world. We are proud that the Salt Works has the status of an 'Anchor Point' on the European Route of Industrial Heritage ( ERIH ).



An important part of the work of the Trust in the future will be to represent the project on ERIH and other similar organizations, to renew and develop our international network of contacts and supporters, and to promote academic research. Closely associated with the Trust is the Cheshire and Peak District Branch of Butterfly Conservation, which has created our butterfly garden. The group meets regularly to work on the garden and is always keen to welcome new supporters. The Lion Salt Works web pages ( Google Lion Salt Works ) give details of how you can volunteer to support the project in many different ways. If you are particularly interested in the Trust's work and aspirations the web page provides the mechanism to get involved.

# WHO'S WHO & HOW IS IT ORGANIZED?

## CESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER

The Council owns and manages the site. Key people, their roles and contact numbers are :

Lorna Kernahan  
Community and Learning Officer  
Contact for volunteering on site.  
Lorna.Kernahan@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Kathryn Ravenscroft  
Team Leader Lion Salt Works  
Kathryn.ravenscroft@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

## THE LION SALT WORKS TRUST

The Trust is a key partner in the running and future development of the site. Current trustees have a range of backgrounds including local industry, banking, and local government. It meets formally four times a year, but works through sub groups on particular topics. There is a group of volunteers who support the Trust, and they attend the Trust's meetings.

Nick Hunt Chairman  
ngkhunt@yahoo.co.uk

Martin Boyett Vice Chairman  
boyettmp@boyns.net

Fiona Crane Company Secretary  
Elsie Barber Treasurer

## KEEPING UP TO DATE

As part of a review of its future role, the Trust is considering whether to re-introduce the Mundling Stick as a regular publication. In the mean time, the best source of information is the Cheshire West and Chester web site ( [westcheshiremuseums.co.uk](http://westcheshiremuseums.co.uk) or Google Lion Salt Works ). Here you will find full information on the project and pages specific to the activities of the Trust.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There are endless opportunities to become involved in helping to run the site and helping to continue its development. The web site lists a wide range of possibilities, either specifically involved with the Lion Salt Works or with Weaver Hall Museum and other County sites. If your interests are particularly with the work of the Trust, the initial point of contact is the same. The web site includes contact details and application forms.

## VISITING THE SALT WORKS

### Opening times

Salt Works 10.30am – 5pm

Play Area and Butterfly Garden 9am – 5pm

Closed all Mondays except bank holiday Mondays. Closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

## ENTRANCE CHARGES

Adult £ 6.25

Concession £ 5.50

Child £ 4.00

Family 2 Adults + 2 Children £16.40

Family 1 Adult + 3 Children £14.00

Concession Family 2 Adults + 2 Children  
£15.20

Concession Family 1 Adult + 3 Children  
£14.00

Adult Annual Pass £18.00

Family Annual Pass ( 2+2 or 1+3 ) £50.00

## PARKING

Free car and coach parking on site

## CAFÉ AND OTHER FACILITIES

There is a café serving light refreshments and a shop selling books and gifts.