

LITTLE BUDWORTH W.I. OCTOBER NEWS

President Beryl Worrall welcomed members and visitors to our October meeting.

The following forthcoming events were discussed; our visit to see the Buddy Holly story on the 16th November, the Autumn Fair on the 19th November, when the W.I. will be running the tombola stalls, Christmas Carols at Tarvin Church on the 12th December and on the 14th December members and guests will be having Christmas dinner at Vale Royal Golf Club, Whitegate.

Carol Mason gave a short but very interesting report on the Autumn Council meeting of the Cheshire Federation she attended in Winsford, where Angela Rippon was the guest speaker. Val Tough also gave her report on the PAL meeting she had recently attended.

Beryl then introduced our speaker Peter Solan, whose talk was entitled The Lion Salt Works. Peter started his illustrated presentation by telling us that the Lion Salt Works, near Northwich had won a National Heritage Lottery Award. It was the only existing White Salt mine in the world and it did not close until 1986. In 1890, 500,000 tons of salt was being produced in Cheshire, which is an amazing amount. So why was there so much salt in Cheshire? It comes down to the fact that millions of years ago when Great Britain was connected up to mainland Europe, this land mass moved position and ended up very close to the equator and Cheshire as it is now known had been an inland sea but the baking heat of the sun evaporated the water and left the salt. This was covered up by soil, gravel, sand and marl and then many, many years later the land mass moved again towards the equator and then moved back again and a second salt bed was formed before the land mass moved into its present position.

Salt was moved by barge on the Trent and Mersey Canal and on the River Weaver, the fact that these waterways were 50 feet different in height was solved by using the Anderton Boat Lift.

Rock salt was mined in huge underground chambers and when they were no longer worked they were opened to the public and dances were held in the illuminated chambers. In 1894 brine was found in the Adelaide mines at the Lion Salt Works and was manufactured there for the next 40 years, before the mines flooded. Brine is where the open pan salt is boiled and then dried in Stove Houses. In total there were 90 disused salt mines and 250 mine shafts around the Northwich area, all of them are now filled in. Large salt crystals were used to preserve meat and fish and the smaller crystals used in making butter. A salt worker's life was very hard, working 12 hour shifts and in very hot conditions but on the whole they seemed to be very fit and healthy.

This talk was informative, very interesting and in far more depth than is possible to report here, so a visit to the Museum at the Lion Salt Works is a must.

He was thanked by Diane Robinson and the evening was rounded off with refreshments served by Glenys Jones and Gwen Hassell.

Our next meeting will be our A.G.M. on the 9th November at 7.30pm and after the business part of the evening is dealt with there will be a social time and a buffet. For visitors this is a great opportunity to come along and see what the W.I. has to offer you.

