

Coastal erosion at the site of Crossscanonby Salt Pans, Allonby Bay, Cumbria

Saltcote No. 7 has been distributed later than normal. This delay has been caused by a variety of circumstances that include:- the editor of Saltcote moving from Cheshire to Cumbria, awaiting the results of a grant application for which we were not successful and by the succession of storms (Ciara, Dennis and Jorge). The delay has, however allowed a different application to be submitted to the Association for Industrial Archaeology for a small research grant, which has been successful.

The storms have revealed a new feature at the Crossscanonby salt pans, Cumbria, whilst covering up other features known to exist there.

Crossscanonby was visited during the Ecosal Atlantis project in 2012 when its vulnerability to coastal erosion was compared to the Roman salt making site at Trebarveth, Cornwall, the seventeenth century site at Port Eynon, Gower, Wales, and two sites in Scotland at Brora, Sutherland and St Monans Salt Works, Fife. Only Crossscanonby and Port Eynon have coastal protection measures in place. The site at Brora has been excavated in advance of almost complete destruction. See more about the discoveries at Crossscanonby and the research grant awarded by the AIA on pages 10 and 11.



Gabions erected to protect the Crossscanonby Salt Pans

THE SMALL POPULATION OF SALT WORKERS



Ecosal-UK is pleased to introduce this new book by Sandrina Cirafici. It was awarded the "Prix coup de cœur du Jury" at the 14th International Mountain Book Festival 2019 in Arolla - Switzerland.

May you experience many surprises and emotions when rubbing shoulders with this Small Population of Salt Workers !

Sandrina Cirafici, *Le petit Peuple des Travailleurs du Sel – The small Population of Salt Workers – Das kleine Volk der Salzarbeiter*, Association Cum Grano Salis, hard cover, 80 pages, in three languages (French, German and English) ISBN 978-2-8399-2545-7. Price CHF 20.- plus shipping costs. Order online at www.sentierdusel.ch

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Please send articles and notes for Saltcote No.8 to Andrew Fielding. See page 16 for contact details.

THE SMALL POPULATION OF SALT WORKERS

Pierre-Yves Pièce, Association Cum Grano Salis, Bex, Switzerland

History highlights the personalities who managed the salt mines and saltworks, such as the eminent scientist Albert de Haller and the famous geologist Jean de Charpentier, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. But what about the unknown labourers working on the exploitation of salt scattered in the rock, without whose labour, salt-cellars, salting tubs... and kings' coffers would not have been filled, nor would the salt have acquired its value of "white gold"? It is the memory of these salt workers, of whom the author has found traces both modest and astonishing discovered in the saltworks archives of Their Excellencies of Bern, that she wants to honour. It is their unusual trades which you are called upon to guess and their daily work which she invites you to share by means of the lifelike reconstructions by the artist Andrea Pyroth, while immersing yourselves in the fascinating history of the "fire born" salt discovery and exploitation in Switzerland.

Enter the world of this Small Population of Salt Workers! Discover the surprising trades in connection with the exploitation of the open-pan salt. Salt that is literally "fire born", extracted by evaporating the waters which have infiltrated the rock incrustated with salt.

Rub shoulders with the miner, the female bellows operator, the brine thrower, the log driver or the smuggler's dog, all brought to life by the artist Andrea Pyroth with her iron and driftwood figurines, which Pierre-Yves Pièce photographed in their working context.

Have fun identifying them while enjoying anecdotes narrated by the archaeologist Sandrina Cirafici. A journey just as playful and as fascinating as the traces of the "white gold" trades...



The name of this Association means "to put one's grain of salt".

Its purpose is to safeguard and preserve historical remains which show the Swiss odyssey of salt, ensuring the continued existence of the Sentier du Sel (a didactic footpath that emphasizes this odyssey), raising public and educational awareness about the value of this heritage, bringing it to life through a variety of activities in the context of national and international events and ongoing historical research. It aims to develop a network about the Sentier du Sel with all Salt Routes and establishing inter-cantonal and international relations with sites linked to the history of salt.

www.cumgranosalis.ch/

 **Le Sentier du Sel** <http://www.sentierdusel.ch/>

The author

Sandrina Cirafici graduated from the University of Lausanne with a Degree in Literature. She trained as an archaeologist and obtained a Diploma in Museology and Cultural Mediation Studies. She headed the Musée historique du Chalais for six years. She is the creator of the Sentier du Sel and the President of the Cum Grano Salis Association.



The author with her book inside the underground brine reservoir of Sanfins, dug in the 18th century under the site of Salin in the Chablais vaudois and listed as a historic monument.

The artist

Andrea Pyroth is a self-taught artist. Her work has been exhibited in Germany (Hamburg, Aix-la-Chapelle and Berlin) and in various Swiss Galleries. In Switzerland, she has exhibited in the castles of Aigle and Vouvry, as well as in the Musée historique du Chablais. She was awarded 1st prize at the "Vinea" competition in Sierre and the Grand Jury Prize of the National Congress of the Youth Chamber of Commerce in Montreux.



The artist Andrea Pyroth with the boatman, who loads his boat with barrels of salt, which will transit on the Lake Geneva to various ports – a quantity of salt that is not sufficient to supply the whole of Switzerland.

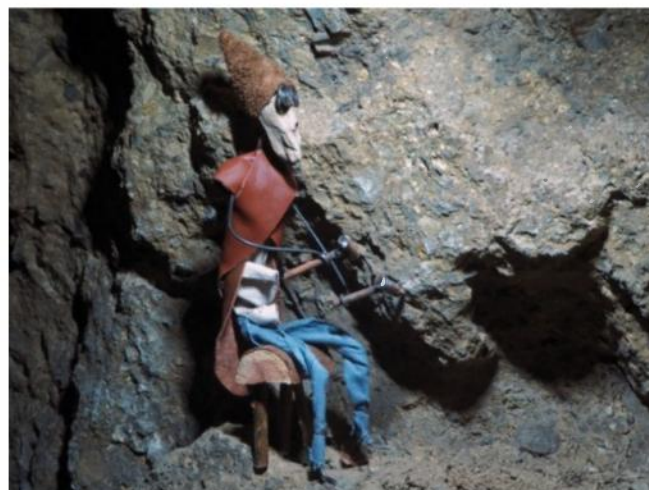
The photographer

Pierre-Yves Pièce is a Computer Science Engineer and holder of a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Culture, Heritage and Tourism from the University of Geneva. He is a Founding Member of the Cum Grano Salis Association and has contributed to the creation of the Sentier du Sel. He is the author of numerous articles on the history of the mines and saltworks in the Canton de Vaud.



Pierre-Yves Pièce photographs the augerer and the boatman.

A rich documentation



The source of inspiration : Johannes Stumpf, Schwytzer Chronika, 1554... and the miner by the artist Andrea Pyroth !



The female bellows operator : her work consists of activating a bellows linked to a wooden pipe, in order to send air to the miner who is suffocating in the scarce and dusty atmosphere of the galleries...



and an old bellows inside the Bex salt mine.



Georg Bauer, *De re metallica*, 1556, Twelfth book : the augerer....



and the same by the artist Andrea Pyroth !



Timber floating from the Trient Gorges to the river Rhône, 1889...



and the log driver by Andrea Pyroth.

An extract from the book

"On my back, I carry two sacks each filled with 2 to 4 kilos of salt, which I have to smuggle across the border. As to the picks with which the smuggler equipped me, they are used to scare away the tax collector!"

I am... the smuggler's dog.



In France, in the 18th century, the proliferation of "large dogs, which are loaded with salt" and that are trained to cross the borders pushes the king to forbid to feed and sell "breeds of mastiffs, used for salt and tobacco fraud". Each dog killed is worth a premium, provided that his right front leg is brought back "to justify its destruction".

In the 19th century, the salt tax collectors slaughtered 40,000 smugglers' dogs in the space of 6 years! As for the Swiss, at the beginning of the 20th century, they used Saint-Bernard dogs to transit into Italy cigarettes, tobacco and salt."