



The Craftsmen

Week Commencing 24th August 2020

Issue Number Twenty One

Welcome to the twenty first edition of the Ross Masonic Club Weekly Round-Up.

This week we celebrate our 21st edition of **The Craftsmen**.

A special thank you to all of our contributors over the last few months. Thanks to you we have managed to continue on a weekly basis with varied content. I hope that it has been therapeutic to write as much as it has been enjoyable to read.

Through the newsletter and Zoom calls, we have learnt a lot more about each other so it will be interesting when we can finally sit down to a festive board as the conversations will be far more varied from now on.

This week we include our usual 'Aeron's Curiosities' feature and provide the answers to last week's quiz from David to see how much you really know about Ross on Wye.

Patrick and Harry continue the story of their varied careers. We also follow up on the masonic connections with the building of the Royal Hotel with a feature on the laying of the Foundation Stone. Thank you to Geraint and Martin for their historical input.

All thoughts and suggestions for future articles welcomed.

Please keep your input coming with a special thank you to all those that contributed.



Keep safe Brethren and keep in contact.



Keeping in Contact and Staying Sharp

Facebook



We have set up a Facebook Group for Ross Masonic Club. We currently have 28 members across the Lodges and Chapter. Any members of Lodges or Chapter that meet at Ross Masonic Hall are welcome to join in.

More opportunities to Zoom together



The 'early shift' above and 'later shift' to the right.

If you have not previously joined in, we now have a meeting that starts earlier on a Friday at 7:30pm as well as the 8:45pm meeting for the 9 o'clock toast.

You can come and go during these times as you please.

It's simple to setup and Billy can help with support if you need it.



Would I know the answer?

Did I know the answer?

Don't forget the question in last week's issue from Dennis:

What is the significance of the Square pavement and what does it symbolise?.

You can always check your thoughts by visiting 'Solomon' of course! <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

By Dennis Roberts - Group Leader Information and Guidance Group e-mail: roberts.greeba@btinternet.com

Coffee Break and T@3

This week Aeron Lewis provides us with a curiosity to name and the answer to last week's question.

Last weeks object was.....

Last weeks curiosity was a mould for casting lead shot for a gun or lead shot for fishing.



Aeron's Curiosities - This Week's Question

This week we publish a further picture of a 'curiously wrought' item that Aeron sent in.

Can anyone hazard a guess at what it is and what it is used for?

The answer, as always, in next week's issue.



On this day in history - 24th August

79AD Mount Vesuvius erupts burying Roman Pompeii and Herculaneum, 15,000 die

1215 Pope Innocent III declares the Magna Carta invalid

1690 Job Charnock sets up East India Company HQ camp by Kalikata village (modern Calcutta)

1787 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart completes his violin and piano sonata in A, K526

1831 John Henslow asks Charles Darwin to travel with him on the HMS Beagle

1847 Charlotte Brontë finishes manuscript of "Jane Eyre"

1853 1st potato chips prepared by chef George Crum at Moon's Lake House, near Saratoga Springs, New York (popular legend says he invented though earlier recipes exist)

1891 Thomas Edison patents motion picture camera

1909 Workers start pouring concrete for Panama Canal

1912 District of Alaska becomes an organized incorporated territory of the United States

1932 1st transcontinental non-stop flight by a woman, Amelia Earhart

1949 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) goes into effect

1981 Mark David Chapman is sentenced to 20 yrs to life for John Lennon's murder

1991 Mikhail Gorbachev resigns as head of USSR Communist Party

2004 Future 8-time Olympic gold medal winner Usain Bolt of Jamaica finishes 5th in his 200m heat in 21.05, failing to qualify for the 2nd round at the Athens Olympics

Source - <https://www.onthisday.com/events/august/24>

Patrick Eyre continues to recount his career moves.

For all the seven years I had spent with my previous employer in the ready-mixed concrete business I had been responsible for the purchase of all the equipment required by the firm, after relocating or selling all the plant and trucks I had inherited

I had not been happy with the choice of certain items such as the mixer units fitted to the truck chassis as most of the drums were driven by donkey engines - gearbox and chain. They belonged in the Stone Age.

There were different hydraulic versions available and made in the UK but they were not reliable and a mixer breaking down full of concrete is a nightmare scenario sometimes involving the Fire Brigade being called in to wash it out and on several occasions hiring an explosive expert to spend a week in the drum drilling the concrete, packing the holes with explosives and exploding the concrete into small pieces without damaging the drum.

Very expensive but cheaper than replacing the drum

I spent a lot of time looking at different drive systems and the ZF hydraulic pump, motor and gearbox came out top. The only manufactures of mixer units fitting this system were in Europe and the cheapest ones were made by a German company who had a significant presence in the UK with sales, repair and workshops in England and Scotland.

I had been flown to Germany and France by this company on several occasions to inspect their manufacturing facilities which had left me very impressed. As well as mixer units they made just about everything else that the ready-mixed concrete business required and indeed all construction plant including excavators and tower cranes. A family business made up of very ambitious yet friendly people and when they approached me to join them as their national sales manager selling to the industry I knew so well I didn't hesitate. I won't go into the detail of why I made that decision but it was an easy one to make at the time.

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It was almost a complete change of direction to my career yet one that I knew I could handle. There were many office doors I could walk through and see faces I would know. Most of them would've been competitors in my previous business, but we had also shared a glass or two at black tie dinners and trade functions along with our wives. We could do so again if only to discuss a little business we could actually agree on over lunch.

Although I was still living in Matlock and my new office with my new employer was in Hatfield in Hertfordshire there was no pressure for me to move my home.

My sales area was national if not international and living centrally in the UK would at times be more convenient from a travelling prospective.

As things turned out I usually spent two days a week in the office as 70% of my business was in the South.

I inherited a secretary and a male assistant who knew the business inside out. Also a 3 acre concrete yard and a huge workshop capable of doing just about everything connected with heavy construction equipment. Repairs and rebuilds the norm. They would also mount the Mixer units on the new truck chassis, all of which my assistant would oversee as these had to be mounted in the exact position on the truck to comply with regulation axle weights etc.

The factory management had warned me that there would be an increase in price on their products at the start of the new year but if I placed an order before that for delivery in the new year I could have them at the current price.

I should explain that although we were an arm of the parent company we had to stand alone when it came to profitability and make our purchases from the factory in deutsche-marks, so we were also exposed to the exchange rate on the pound.

A nervous time for me then but an order had to be placed on the factory or there would be no guarantee of anything arriving in the UK at all. I hadn't the courage to make use of their offer because the money had to be found when the order was placed but I did add 20 mixer units to the forward order book for the following year.

The obvious place to start was to contact all the previous customers who had bought from us in the past, and apart from the 12 truckmixer units I had purchased for my previous employer, the only other buyer was in Scotland who bought a dragline concrete batching plan.



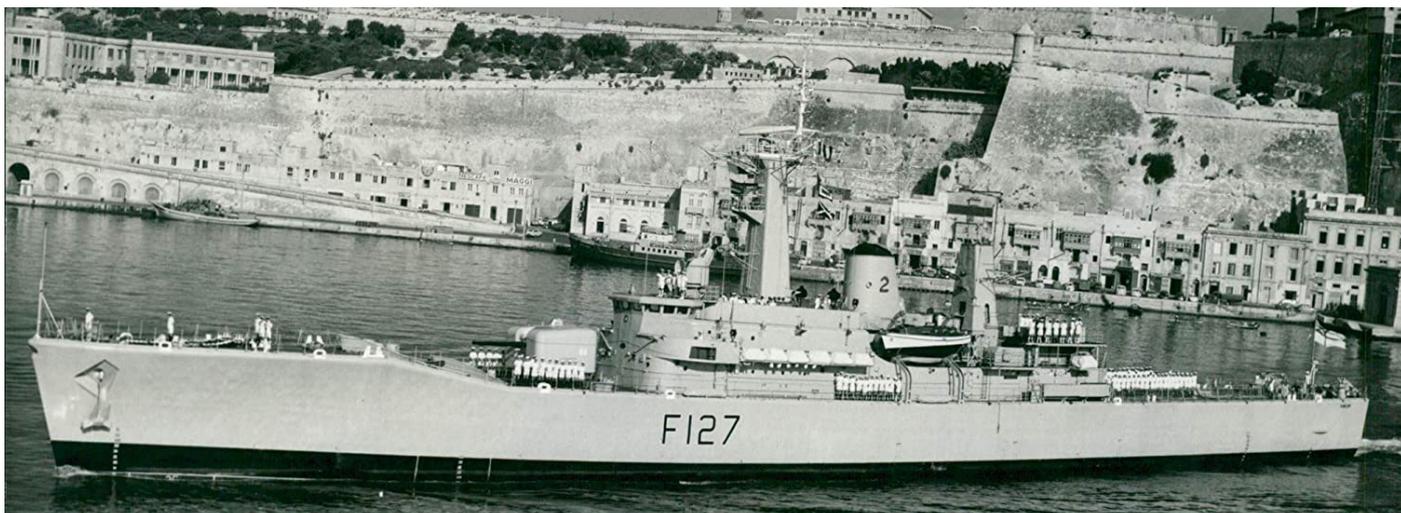
My new employer had a huge range of equipment associated with the ready-mixed concrete industry which couldn't be matched in the UK. There was one particular piece of kit which was a 30 ft conveyor belt that was designed to fit on a truckmixer. There was nothing like it in this country, and I was most anxious to offer it to the industry and saw it as a introductory tool for all the company's concrete equipment.



The real challenge was to persuade my managing director to allow me to purchase the complete outfit and use it as a demonstrator.

Watch this space!!

Harry's in Hot Water! (Part III) - the further adventures of Harry Holwell - Commander in Chief Plymouth



Having left the Daring I had some home leave and then joined the staff of Commander in Chief Plymouth. This was not particularly onerous. The reason I was drafted to his staff was that I was due take a Ships Divers Course in the January 1969 in Plymouth. In the meantime I had taken driving lessons whilst on two weeks leave taking my test on the last day. I passed and subsequently bought an old Vauxhall Victor car shaped like the Cresta. I used this car backwards and forwards to Plymouth-Exeter. In September of 1968 I met my future wife Susan at a dance in Exeter.

Over the coming months I travelled between the two cities and then in January I started my Ships Divers Course. This took place at Saltash, Plymouth, almost under the Saltash bridge. We dived in dry suits with wool long johns underneath. You needed them I can tell you. We dived off pontoons and these were often covered in snow or ice. Underwater you could not see your hand in front of your eyes. Everything was carried out by feel. There were decommissioned ships nearby and we spent the first month in atrocious visibility working under these ships, jumping off them right up to Carrier size ship and swimming without air tanks for miles. To top this off we would often have to swim across the estuary and run a section of the mudflats. With mud up to your thigh, you would end up lying down and swimming over the mud before swimming back.

In this first month I think they just tried to break you. We lost about half the Course hence my remark what have I got myself into.

After the month, we started going out and carrying out dives in Plymouth Sound. Visibility was often very good. We would carry out night dives on ships in the sound. We would have recreational dives again in the sound, we would take a small barbed spear about a foot long. I remember spearing what I thought was a flatfish covered in sand. Spearing it around the head and its mouth with teeth coming up the spear to almost meet my hand. It was a very large monkfish.

I passed this course and was now earning six shillings a day extra. Shortly after I joined HMS Penelope, a Leander class Frigate. At this time she was the Naval trials ship for futuristic equipment. At the time I joined her she had large pads about 6-8 inches thick, about a metre square, fitted to the complete undersea hull of the ship. This was to dampen the noise given out by the ships individual motors and engines. These pads were later used for both surface ships and submarines. We spent the next months over the winter in Lock Fyne, Scotland. Here we would moor up between buoys. We had scientists onboard. On the outboard of the ship there was a boom on either side of ship which had very sensitive listening devices to pass under the shape of hull below water.

This would gradually pass down each side. Inside the ship all motors and equipment was turned off. As the booms passed along each side individual motors and equipment would be turned on, noise output recorded and then turned off. This was all done to suppress noise output of individual motors within the ship. If there was excessive noise on individual motors they would later work to quieten them. In between bouts of this testing we would sail and do various speed trials then back to the buoys, tie up then dive on the length of the hull to ensure we had lost none of the individual pads on the hull. They were attached with a very strong glue. They were also testing various new glues as well. We did lose pads occasionally. Whilst the testing was ongoing the ships company had to remain silent and walk around in daps.

This work in the Loch was done over winter when there would be no movement of other vessels. We often had to break ice to get in the water. One thing we did learn on these dives was the Loch contained large quantities of King Scollops. On occasion we were known to take hessian sacks down with us and fill them with scollops to feed the company.

Next - marriage and HMS Beagle

The Masonic Connection to the Royal Hotel

Article by Andrew Moore with input from Geraint Bevan and Martin Thorne

Vitruvian Lodge met until 1820 in the King's Head Inn, the former home of the 'Man of Ross', John Kyrle.

Subsequently it met in the Lamb Inn, Broad Street until 1824, then in a private house between 1824 and 1829, when it relocated to the Swan Hotel, owned by one of its members, Bro James Barrett.

Perhaps naturally, when Bro Barrett built the Royal Hotel, the Lodge followed him there, in the cellars of which there is a Foundation Stone pictured on the right and below.



You can see from the picture of the Foundation Stone the square and compasses adorned with the letter G.

The date 5837 Anno Lucis (1837 AD), and the Triple Tau in the centre of the square and compasses.



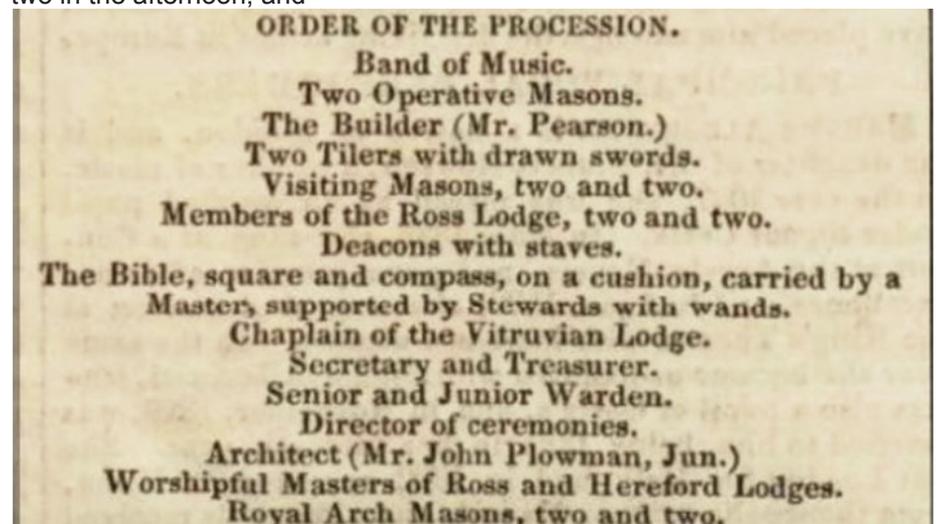
The Royal Hotel overlooking the floods of November 2019.

The following article is the account of the day from a local newspaper.

"On Monday last the Masonic Brethren assembled at Ross for the purpose of laying a foundation stone of the New Hotel about to be erected upon the Prospect, by the spirited proprietor, Mr. Barrett, the present landlord of the Swan Inn. At an early hour this interesting little town presented unusual bustle and activity, and numbers of persons were seen pouring in from all quarters to witness this truly striking ceremony. About 12 o'clock the Brethren opened their lodge at the Swan Inn, in due form and order, and proceeded to make the arrangements of the day. The ceremony of laying the stone was announced to take place at half-past two in the afternoon, and

long before that time every spot that commanded a view of the proceedings was occupied. Seats were provided for the fair sex, who appeared to take a lively interest in the undertakings. The beautiful site of the new building presented a most imposing and animated appearance, occupied as it was by nearly 3000 persons, all of whom appeared to feel the highest gratification in assembling to lay the foundation stone of a building calculated to be not only an ornament but a lasting benefit to the town.

Soon after two o'clock, the procession started from the Swan Inn, in the following order:-



VITRUVIAN LODGE, ROSS.

THE Master and Brethren of this Lodge will Assemble at the SWAN HOTEL, at twelve o'clock, on Monday, the 25th day of September, 1837, for the purpose of proceeding to LAY the FOUNDATION STONE of Brother BARRETT'S "PROSPECT HOTEL."

The neighbouring Brethren are respectfully invited to attend with their proper clothing. The Lodge will be closed at three o'clock.

The article continues.

On arriving at the spot where the stone was to be laid, the Masonic Brethren formed a circle, and the band played "Rule Britannia", while the stone was raised. The necessary arrangements being made, the stone was lowered, the Band playing the old 100th psalm. The Worshipful Master of the Ross Lodge, Brother Farror, having applied the trowel to the stone, next proved its correctness by the square and plumb-rule, after which the Chaplain of the Lodge, the Rev. D. P. Price, stepped forward and invoked the blessing on the undertakings, amid the most profound silence and attention.

Following the Blessing the Masonic duet of "Hail, mysteries glorious science!" was sung by Brothers' Watkins and Walwyn.

The MASTER of the Hereford Lodge (Mr. Vale,) then addressed the Brethren and concourse in nearly the following terms: "Brethren and friends!

"The situation I have the honour to hold masonically, calls upon me to address a few observations on the interesting occasion which has called us together; but these remarks must, of necessity, be brief; for I possess not the confidence requisite to address so large an assembly, nor am I so vain as to suppose that I ought to occupy your valuable time even if I had the ability to do so. But as many, perhaps all of you, have heard different opinions and various conjectures on Masonry, and its professors, in your intercourse with the world, it may not be improper to inform you that whatever notions those who are ignorant of our mysteries, may form of the nature of our institution, be assured the brethren who have experienced the solemnities attendant on their initiation, and after progress, will readily affirm, they are such as may deservedly employ the thoughts, and profitably engage the attention of the best and ablest of men.

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- While Masonry conciliates men of every country, sect and opinion, and promotes true friendship among those who would otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance, it may be considered a school where the best instructions are given, and most successfully conveyed. There is no other contention in Masonry than who can work best, and who can best agree, for work each must, speculative as well as operative, if he hopes to become a real master, and useful proficient in this sublime science. Though the secrets of Masonry are hidden from the world, I may be permitted to state, without breach of faith, that the Sacred Volume is the pure and inexhaustible fountain from which all Masonic knowledge must be gained.

Here we learn that the great Architect of the Universe is our Supreme Master; here we trace the existence of Freemasonry from the remotest periods of antiquity, and here also we discover what wisdom has contrived, strength supported, and beauty adorned our admirable structure. Freemasonry may therefore nor improperly be called the daughter of heaven, as the only means of attaining the knowledge of her sublime mysteries, are by integrity, diligence and ability, together with the uniform practice of all the religious, moral and social duties.

Be assured that Masonry is of itself a beautiful system of morality veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols, a system so perfect in all its bearings, that if its dictates be strictly acted upon in our career through this world,

An advert from the local paper for the Masonic Ball held at the Royal Hotel in 1854.

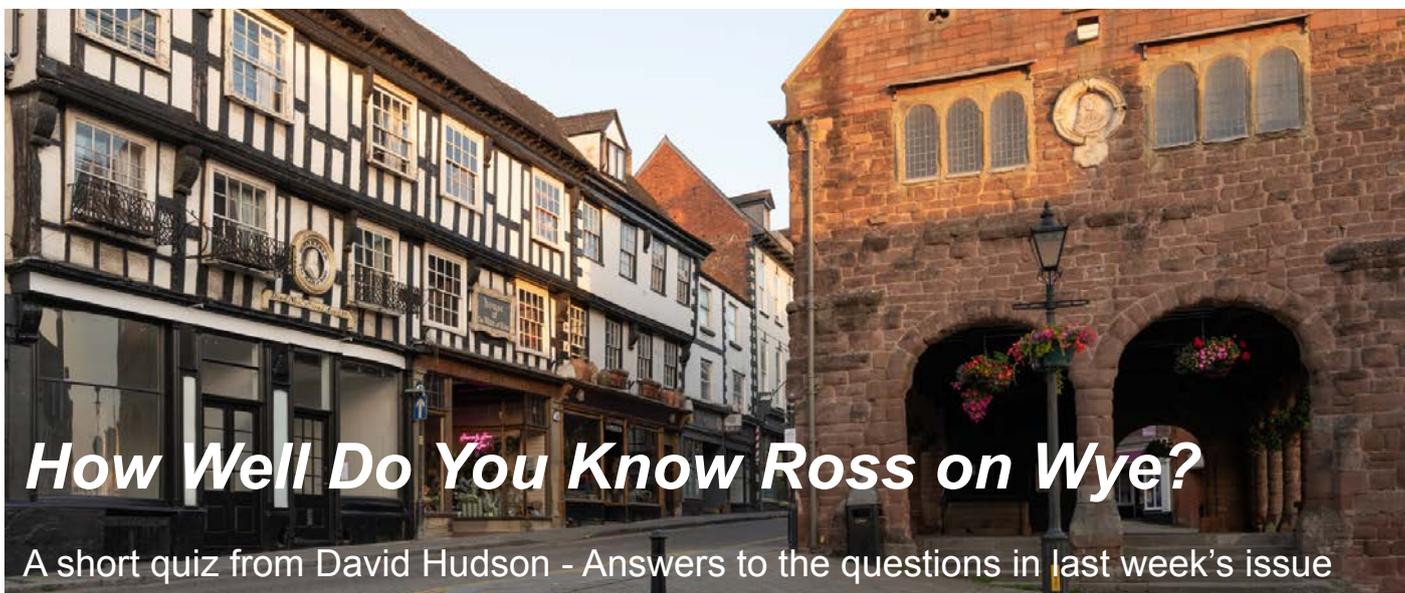
we may rest on a well-grounded hope, that in after life we may be permitted to enter that heavenly lodge where hope shall be changed into vision, faith into fruition, and charity shall never fail. The Masonic Fraternity has ever been characterised for its loyalty and devotion to all in authority, and that has been forcibly illustrated by the patronage and support which it has received from royal hands. Be assured that loyalty is still our boast; as we pride ourselves on our gallantry and devotion to the fairest portion of God's creation, our youthful Queen may rely living in our hearts and affection of every Mason. Permit me, to thank you for the patient attention you have given me; and believe me I sincerely hope that lives of all around me may be as enchanting as the prospect before us, and as unclouded as the broad blue sky above us. May the great Architect of the universe favour the progress of the work this day begun! - May no accident occur in its erection; and when it is completed, may it reward the enterprise of its projector, be of utility and comfort to the wayfarer, an honour to your town, and ever prove the abode of peace and virtue!"

Three cheers were then given by the Brethren, which was enthusiastically responded to by the immense concourse assembled. The band then played the national anthem, after which the procession marched back in order to their Lodge.

Previous to leaving, however, the Brethren made a handsome collection on the foundation stone for the workmen, in order that they might more fully participate in the pleasures of the day.

About 4 o'clock the Masonic Brethren, together with many other gentlemen, sat down to a sumptuous dinner at the Swan, provided with that good taste and first-rate excellence for which Mr. Barrett has been uniformly distinguished."

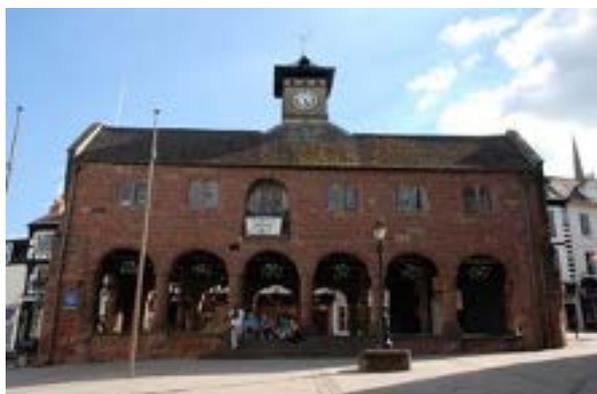
A MASONIC BALL
WILL BE HELD AT BARRETT'S ROYAL HOTEL, ROSS, ON FRIDAY, THE 20th DAY OF JANUARY, 1854.
PATRONS.
The Rev. JOSEPH BOWLES, D.D. Provincial Grand Master for Herefordshire.
Colonel KPMYS TYNTE, Provincial Grand for Monmouthshire.
H. WESTBROOK, Esq. Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Herefordshire.
JOHN ROLLS, Esq. Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Monmouthshire.
ALEXANDER ROLLS, Esq. P.M. and Provincial Grand Registrar.
SIR ROBERT PRICE, Bart. M.P.
STEWARDS.
GEORGE SCARSBROOK, Esq. Provincial Grand Secretary for Herefordshire. | W. H. VALE, Esq. Provincial Grand Senior Warden for Herefordshire.
TOM BROOK, Esq. Grand Steward St. Alban's. | D. DEW, Esq. Vitruvian Lodge.
JAMES P. KING, Esq. Monmouth Lodge. | THOMAS PHELPS, Esq. P.M. Vitruvian Lodge.
JAMES FISHER, Esq. Vitruvian Lodge. | THOMAS SWIFT, Esq. P.M. Monmouth.
LADIES' TICKETS 7s., GENTLEMEN'S TICKETS 10s. each, may be had of the STEWARDS or at the HOTEL.
Major and Brethren's celebrated Quadrille Band is engaged.
MASTER OF THE CEREMONIES, MR. C. F. QUINTIN.



How Well Do You Know Ross on Wye?

A short quiz from David Hudson - Answers to the questions in last week's issue

Question 1 - When was Ross granted the right to hold a market?



Answer - One of the oldest buildings in Ross-on-Wye, the Market House, was built between 1650 and 1654 replacing the older, probably wooden Booth Hall. It has its origins in the 12th century when King Stephen granted Ross the right to hold a market in the area.

Question 2 - The Alton Court Brewery Company produced beers and ales in the town from 1846 until 1956, when it was taken over and closed by the Stroud Brewery Company (shame). Where was the brewery, and who is now the occupier of the largest part of the site?



Answer - Its address was Station Road. Sainsbury's now occupies a large part of the site.

Question 3 - The Ross on Wye station running-in board reminded passengers to change for which town?

Answer - Monmouth. The railway line between Gloucester and Hereford was originally built as broad gauge, then changed to standard gauge. Although only single track for most of the way, and restricted to 32m.p.h. it was regularly used by excursions and also as a diversionary route for expresses from the South West and South Wales to Manchester and Liverpool. Ross on Wye was the junction station for the Wye Valley Line through Lydbrook and Symonds Yat to Monmouth.

Question 4 - The highest point in the area is Chase Hill. How high is it?

Answer - 203 metres Ordnance Datum. The highest point is in the open field that approximately covers the area of an Iron Age Hill Fort occupied in the 4th and 5th centuries BC. It is believed to be on the site of an earlier Neolithic meeting place. Unfortunately, there is no public access.

Question 5 - For what commodities was the Roman station of Ariconium principally known?

Answer - Iron and iron goods.

About ½ a mile from the village of Weston under Penyard is the site of the Roman station of Ariconium. Until the beginning of the 18th century the actual size of Ariconium was unknown. The accepted site for Ariconium now lies on Bury Hill near Bollitree, about three miles east of Ross and one mile north of the road that leads to Gloucester.

The site is 350-400ft above sea level and has good views over the hills of Penyard, the Forest of Dean and the plains of Gloucestershire. The slope towards Weston under Penyard on the west is called Cinder Hill, and the ground here has turned up numerous scoriae (lumps of metal slag). Ariconium appears to have been an area of intensive iron working and possesses smelting furnaces and forges, using iron ore mined in the Forest of Dean.

Question 6 - During the Second World War, who were evacuated to Rudhall and Moraston House?

Answer - The Chelsea Pensioners. Twenty-Two died whilst located there. Their commander, names, ages and Regiments are recorded on a delightfully simple memorial in the North West Corner of St. Mary's Churchyard.



Question 7 - How many people died in Ross as a result of the plague of 1637?



Answer - 315. They were buried in St Mary's Churchyard without coffins. They are commemorated by a cross in the South East corner of the churchyard. So, you think COVID-19 is bad!

Question 8 - The Thomas Blake Memorial Gardens were opened in 1907, providing a link from Wye Street to the riverside.

Who was Thomas Blake?



Answer - Thomas Blake (9 November 1825 – 31 March 1901) was an English Liberal politician. Blake was the youngest son of William Blake, of Ross on Wye. He was chairman of the Ross School Board, to which he was elected four times. Blake stood for parliament unsuccessfully in Herefordshire at the 1868. He was elected as Member of Parliament (MP) for Leominster at a by-election in February 1876, and held the seat until his defeat in 1880. He was elected on 4 December 1885 at the general election as MP for the new Forest of Dean constituency, and was re-elected in 2 July 1886, but resigned from the House of Commons on 15 July 1887. Blake improved the water supply to the town, provided a library and leisure facilities. Blake died at the age of 75. Blake married firstly Susan Ellen Gordon in 1844. He married secondly Anne Kay in 1874.

Question 9 - Who was the benefactor whose endowment provided for the restoration of the Blue Coat Charity School? The school was afterwards known by his name.



Answer - Walter Scott (1716 – 1786); a master plasterer. The school is in Old Gloucester Road, one of the finest buildings in the town. Scott has an impressive white memorial tomb near the east entrance of St Mary's Church.

Question 10 - William Gilpin is often regarded as the founder of the tourism industry. It was 250 years ago in 1770 that he took the first step by taking a boat trip along the River Wye, then writing a seminal bestselling book 'Observations of the River Wye'.

But who first organised the boat trips?

Answer - The Reverent John Egerton (1721-1787), Rector of Ross (1745 – 1771) Bishop of Durham (1771 – 1787), organised boat trips along the Wye between Ross and Chepstow.

