

# Ross Masonic Club



*Supporting Local Freemasons*

## *The Craftsmen*

Week Commencing 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Issue Number Twenty Two

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

A special thank you to all of our contributors to this issue. There are some articles which must have taken a lot of time and effort to send in which is most appreciated. I hope that it has been therapeutic to write as much as it will be enjoyable to read!

This week we include our final 'Aeron's Curiosities' with the answer to last weeks curiosity. We also showcase Glyn who came third in the Provincial Gardening Competition. Dennis poses another 'Would I Know, Did I Know' question.

Patrick and Harry continue the story of their varied careers. We also follow up on the early history of Masonry in Ross in Wye. Thank you to Martin and Geraint for their historical input and images.

All thoughts and suggestions for future articles welcomed.

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

**Keep safe Brethren and keep in contact.**



*Sunset over Coppett Hill Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

# 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



*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.*

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



## Using Social Media?

Anyone using Social Media may find the toolkit of use.

<https://herefordshiremasons.org.uk/members-online-communications-toolkit/>

It is a great resource for those brethren and companions who are not sure about the communication systems/apps/social media etc., that are available for them to keep in touch with family, friends and brethren alike, and may just give them the knowledge and confidence to try one.

It is also available half way down the downloads page on the Provincial Chapter website here

<http://glosandhereroyalarch.com/downloads/>

## Aeron's Curiosities.

A massive thank you to Aeron Lewis who has provided us with many pictures over the last few weeks and tested our imagination in trying to work out what they have been. The answer to the final one is below.

### Last weeks object was.....

Last weeks curiosity was a very old Welsh love spoon, given as a token of love usually their initials are carved on it.





# Glyn's Glorious Garden Gains Gardening Glory



***We have followed Glyn's hard work in his garden this year during many issues of The Craftsmen. His hard work has paid off with a magnificent Third Place in the Provincial Gardening Competition.***

## ***Glyn's Entry says.....***

My favourite spot in the garden is the raised patio area outside my back door. From here I can see the flower beds, vegetable garden and onwards into the Wye Valley landscape.

We spend a lot of time in the garden, especially during lockdown and it serves three purposes.

- Vegetables which make us 80% self-sufficient.
- Flowers that my wife cuts for use in the house, to give to the local church and friends

- Somewhere to relax and enjoy the fruits of our labours and view the surrounding countryside.

In the images you can see the view and our vegetable patch.

## ***Glyn's hard work led to 80% self sufficiency in terms of vegetables.***



## ***VW Bro Graham King Deputy Provincial Grand Master writes on the Provincial Website.***

Many thanks to all those brethren who submitted entries to the Provincial Gardening Competition 2020. When we suggested this competition, we were uncertain as to whether people would respond in any number. However, we have been encouraged by the number of participants and by their efforts. We feel and hope that, if people would like to do this again, we are more than willing to run a similar event next year. We would probably have a different theme as this year's subject was all about what people had

been doing during the Covid 19 Lockdown. I would like you to think about next year and what a possible theme could be. So have a think and contact me with any ideas.

This year we received a total of 19 entries, all of a very good quality and covering many aspects of this summer's unusual circumstances. Covid 19 certainly changed many things and the way we approach daily life. The high standards of each entry certainly set our judges a difficult challenge to select the winners, many hours were spent deliberating and they finally selected the three prize winners.

There were 19 entries from members of the Province included entries our own John Mole and Alastair Ross.

**1st Prize** Bro Peder Nielsen - St Peters Lodge Bromyard

**2nd Prize** W Bro Paul Sabel - Dean Waterfield Lodge Hereford

**3rd Prize** W Bro Glyn Edmunds – Vitruvian Lodge Ross-on-Wye

Further details can be seen on the Provincial website <https://herefordshiremasons.org.uk/provincial-gardening-competition-winners/>

# Patrick Eyre continues to recount his career moves. There's more than one way to earn a living Part 6

It was two and half years before my MD released the funds for me to purchase the demonstrator with which I hoped to increase my customer base.



The conveyor in it's folded position on the truck/mixer

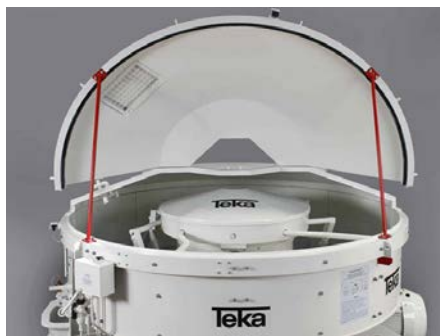
I should mention that the sales structure at Hatfield had 3 divisions: Cranes, Mobile Plant and Concrete. Each had a manager under the MD. I thought that I was still considered to be the new boy in the company's management team and still had to prove himself, despite the fact that the 20 truck-mixer units I had ordered from the factory had been sold before they had arrived in Hatfield from Germany. In that first year I placed orders for 40 more, 25 of which were from one customer alone, to be taken up over a 2 year period.

All were to be mounted on a variety of chassis/cabs supplied by the customer. Most were Leyland with the odd Mercedes and Hino, the latter being a favourite of a customer in Dublin. Most of these chassis/cabs would be sold on to owner/drivers with the ownership of the mixer unit remaining the property of their masters. Most trucks were designed to carry a payload of 6m<sup>3</sup>, requiring a 6 wheeler configuration with an overall legal weight of 24 tons. When loaded they were right on the legal limit and the British Leyland was the lightest and therefore the most popular choice. It was touch and go with the Mercs, or Daimler Benz, as the Germans called them, as they were so much heavier. Some conscientious operators reduced the carrying capacity to 5.5m<sup>3</sup> to stay within the law, the owner/driver taking the hit just to get his hands on a Merc.

*The Craftsmen Newsletter*

The life of the drum would normally be around 5 years. They could be re-bladed inside but by then holes would appear in the skin. The usual procedure was for the owner driver to take on another five-year contract with a completely new vehicle and drum. The ready mixed industry was still growing, it was the quarry owners who had the money to invest securing a home for their own materials, and make them very competitive in the concrete business.

I'd had far less success in selling the actual concrete batching plant in the first two years. Just two in fact which took me to Tanzania to complete the sale of one, and Scotland the other. The lack of interest in the German batching plant is simply the way the ready mixed industry is conducted outside the UK. As in the rest of Europe, the concrete is mixed in the plant before it's loaded into the truck.



Generally, in the UK the dry materials are weighed in batches and the mixing is left to the truck-mixer, plus the skill of the driver who also adds some of the water. These concrete plants are known as dry batch plants and are so much cheaper to manufacture and erect. There are exceptions to this rule with major construction companies usually taking the view that the responsibility of producing quality concrete should be left to the plant operator. I have never taken that view, a fully trained driver will produce concrete to the workability the customer requires and if he wants it really wet that's okay providing he signs for the extra water. Extra water usually means weaker concrete !!

There are many versions of plant mixers depending on the output required. The most popular type is the 2m<sup>3</sup> (5 ton) paddle mixer or the tilting drum version.

Today's concrete plant is highly sophisticated and can be completely computerised



In later years I sold such a plant and a fleet of mixer trucks to a British construction company, building a huge sports facility in Muscat Oman. They complained that it wasn't producing the 100m<sup>3</sup> of concrete per hour they required so I had to go out and sort it. It was scraper plant and the bucket was not filling as it should. I instructed the site fitter to cut a chunk of metal out of the bucket with his acetylene torch and to my relief it worked. If it hadn't I would have been the laughing stock. As it was the manufacturer changed the bucket design, and I was the hero. PHEW !!

In such temperatures crushed ice is used instead of water in the concrete and it requires a huge ice maker as part of the installation, the ice turning to water as soon as it hits the aggregate in the plant mixer. The aggregate being stored on the ground outside in shielded stockpiles, was still too hot to touch. The truck/mixer drum was coated in hessian in order to soak up and retain the cool water being sprayed over the drum from a pump connected to the truck/mixer water tank.

The range of equipment manufactured by the company in the world of concrete production was enormous and one of the ways to show it off to the construction world was at construction plant exhibitions.





This machine would pump concrete up to a vertical height of 40 meters and was typical of what we had to offer to the plant hire sector at such events

It was my pleasure to represent the company on the appropriate stand, the first one was at Haycock nr St Helens and every year at either Munich or Paris.

I would meet my best UK customers there - fly them on a free ticket and arrange their hotel accommodation. They would need to be big spenders or potential big spenders to justify the cost !! My MD never forgot to examine my choice of invitations very carefully for a long time after the event.

***In part 7 we will talk about the sales drive involving the Demonstrator***

***A correction to the article on the 'The Masonic Connection to the Royal Hotel' article from last week. Geraint Bevan writes:***

I do need to correct a fact that Vitruvian Lodge never met at the former home of John Kyrle when after his death, the house became the 'King's Arms' as that establishment is reported to have closed in 1805.

In 1802, Lord Nelson is recorded as visiting Ross and staying at the 'Swan and Falcon' as indicated by a blue plaque. At some stage between 1805 and 1813, the Swan and Falcon Inn has been renamed the Swan Inn and King's Arms Hotel as indicated by the second meeting held by Vitruvian on Monday 5th July 1813.

In Pigot's Directory of 1822, it's recorded as 'Swan and Kings Arms':

*The Craftsmen Newsletter*

## Would I know the answer? Did I know the answer?

Before I answer last time's question, I would like to thank Geraint and Martin for picking up the baton concerning the Royal Hotel foundation stone. How many of us realised the effect of Freemasonry within our town, and for so long? We do increase our Masonic knowledge everyday; thank you both.

Last time I asked What is the significance of the Square pavement and what does it symbolise?

Black and white chequered floors have been used in temples since the time of Ancient Greece. As well as being simply decorative, the Mosaic Pavement in a Masonic Lodge has a special meaning for Freemasons. It is one of the most widely recognised Masonic symbols, and is the area on which initiations occur, and it is 'emblematic of human life chequered with good and evil'.

The Mosaic Pavement is an old symbol of the Craft. It is found in the earliest Masonic ritual and is classed as one of the ornaments of the lodge, along with the Tessellated Border and the Blazing Star. In the Entered Apprentice Degree, the Mosaic Pavement represents the floor of King Solomon's Temple. It demonstrates the concept of duality and balance. It denotes the dual quality of everything connected with life and the physical grounding of human nature and this dualism of the opposites governs us until we learn and advance to a condition beyond this up and down existence.

The floor of the Lodge can also be viewed as representing the Earth and the material world, in contrast with the ceiling, which represents the heavens and the spiritual realm. They are opposite poles, one earthly and sensuous, the other ethereal, tenuous and invisible.

The Mosaic Pavement is given prominence among the other Lodge Furniture because every Freemason should be the High Priest of our own personal temple, a place where he and God can meet. It is a symbol of an elementary philosophical truth common to us all.

It is easy for the mosaic pavement to be lost in the flood of information with which new Entered Apprentices are bombarded after their initiation. A deeper examination of this symbolism shows that it demonstrates the ideals at the foundation of our individual growth as Freemasons, our fraternity and even of all human society. If our feet are well balanced, both literally and figuratively, we are able to serve our fraternity better.

For next time, let me pose the question 'What is the significance of the Rough and Smooth Ashlars and what do they 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](mailto:roberts.greeba@btinternet.com)

*Entrance to 'Swan and Falcon' showing the 'Blue Plaque' and the courtyard.*



# Some Aspects Of Early Freemasonry In ROSS-ON-WYE

Article by Martin Thorne - images sourced by Geraint Bevan

## Introduction:

Although a Lodge of Mark Master Masons and a Royal Arch Chapter were started in Ross in the latter half of the 19th century, they were sadly short lived and the only Masonic workings in the town in the latter part of the 18th century and the whole of the 19th, right up to the consecrations of the Kyrle Lodge of MMM in 1968, of Ariconium Lodge in 1979 and of Vitruvian Chapter in 1983, were largely those of Vitruvian Lodge in its two incarnations. In consequence, the early history of Freemasonry in the town inevitably draws on the history of these two Craft Lodges. Nevertheless, it is hoped that all Masons in and around Ross-on-Wye will find something of interest in the early history of Masonry in their town.

Vitruvian Lodge No. 338 is fortunate in possessing all its Minute Books from its consecration in 1813 to the present day and what follows are extracts from those Minute Books, from the summaries of those Minutes produced by WBro Sherred for the Lodge's first century and by Bro O J Scruby for the next 50 years, and from the further research and transcriptions carried out by WBro I G Bevan of Ariconium Lodge. We are truly indebted to these brethren, without whose efforts we would know very little.



Entrance to 'Swan and Falcon'

## Vitruvian Lodge No. 314 – consecrated on 3 May 1764:

It is well established that Vitruvian Lodge as we now know it was founded in 1813, shortly before the creation of the United Grand Lodge of England. What is perhaps less well known is that an earlier Vitruvian Lodge was consecrated in Ross on 3 May 1764. Robert Freke Gould's 1879 booklet, entitled 'The Four Old Lodges, founders of Modern Freemasonry, and their Descendants' contains lists of the so-called 'Modern' Lodges constituted under the Premier Grand Lodge of England from 1717 to 1812, in which List No 14 covering the years 1756-1769 names Vertruvian (sic) Lodge No. 314 as meeting at the Swan & Falcon in Ross, Herefordshire, with 3 May 1764 identified as its date of consecration. This is followed by List No. 15 for the years 1770-1780 which names Vitruvian (sic) Lodge still meeting in Ross but now re-numbered 254 in accordance with the general re-numbering of 'Modern' Lodges that occurred in 1770, and by List No. 16 in which Lodge. No. 254 is conspicuous by its absence.

This exactly tallies with John Lane's excellent 'Masonic Records 1717-1894', where Vitruvian Lodge No. 314 is listed as meeting at the King's Head, Ross in 1764, having been consecrated on 3 May that year; subsequently meeting at the Swan & Falcon with its number changed to 254 in 1770, but with the added comment that the Lodge was "Erased 9 April 1773".

John Lane's Records also detail Vitruvian Lodge as having been reconstituted in 1813, starting as Lodge No. 637 before being re-numbered No. 644 in 1814 (following the Union of the Ancients and Moderns in 1813), then No. 423 in 1832 and finally No. 338 in 1863.

## Vitruvian Lodge No 338 – its earliest days and an irregular consecration?

The Lodge's Minute Book 1 contains the records of five meetings before its consecration on 6 August 1813, at which three new Masons were initiated, although these three are not listed in the Minutes as Founder Members. Clearly, therefore, the Lodge was initiating new members before its consecration.

This may be explained by the fact that the Herefordshire Provincial Year Book gives the date of 31 December 1812 as the date Vitruvian Lodge received its Warrant, although no record of such a Warrant has been found, despite exhaustive enquiries in both Herefordshire and in Grand Lodge. WBro A W Williams, former Provincial Grand Secretary, suggests in his 'History of Craft Freemasonry in Herefordshire 1727-2000' that an application for a Warrant might have been sent to Grand Lodge but never processed. This suggestion is supported by the Lodge Treasurer's Accounts for the period which record a payment of £4.4.0 having been paid to the Grand Secretary for a Warrant on 3 July 1813, by the initiations carried out before the consecration meeting, as referred to above, and by the fact that Grand Lodge subsequently produced a 'Warrant of Confirmation' dated 31 December 1821 without charge to the Lodge. This is the Warrant still on display in the Temple.

The Consecration Ceremony itself extended over two days. On 6 August 1813, Provincial Grand Lodge met in Ross 'by order of VWBro Earl DGM', assisted by WBro Thompson SGW and WBro Tinks JGW, when Rev Bro Richard Underwood was installed as Deputy Provincial Grand Master by VWBro Earl and Bro Tristram as Master of Vitruvian Lodge.



# Some Aspects Of Early Freemasonry In ROSS-ON-WYE

## Article by Martin Thorne PPrSGW

Then on 7 August, Vitruvian Lodge was opened, and Bro Tristram inducted as its first Master by the new Deputy PGM, after the Ancient Charges and Regulations had been read to him. He then invested his Wardens and Officers. Most of the details of the meeting on 7 August 1813 differ little from current practice but the absence of a traceable Warrant, valid at that date, and some aspects of the whole procedure have caused some to question the authority under which the Lodge was established.

Most recently, in 1969, an enquiry via the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 – the Premier Lodge of Masonic Research – elicited a response from the Librarian and Curator at Freemasons Hall which stated that 'there was certainly some irregularity in the Constitution of Vitruvian Lodge – there is no record here of the original warrant, if any. The London Brethren were expected to produce it, but never did, and one wonders if they had any authority to Consecrate, and that on the day after they installed the M. Elect.'

This letter goes on to state that 'None of the Brethren ... were Grand Officers' and ends with the conclusion that the letter's author is 'not surprised at the irregularity in connection with the Vitruvian Warrant [as] for some years after the Union in 1813 things were somewhat "hay-wire" in the Grand Secretaries' Office'.

On the other hand, a significant attendee at the Consecration Meeting on 7 August 1813 was Bro Peter Gilkes. He was a member of the Lodge of Reconciliation formed after the Union of the two former Grand Lodges and became a prominent teacher of the Emulation ritual followed by Vitruvian Lodge and his presence tends to give authority to the proceedings carried out that day. Moreover, whatever the truth is behind any alleged irregularity, Grand Lodge issued a Warrant of Confirmation following a Petition from the Lodge in 1821, a Centenary Warrant on 6 August 1913 and a Bi-Centenary Warrant on 6 August 2013.



### Ancient or Modern origins:

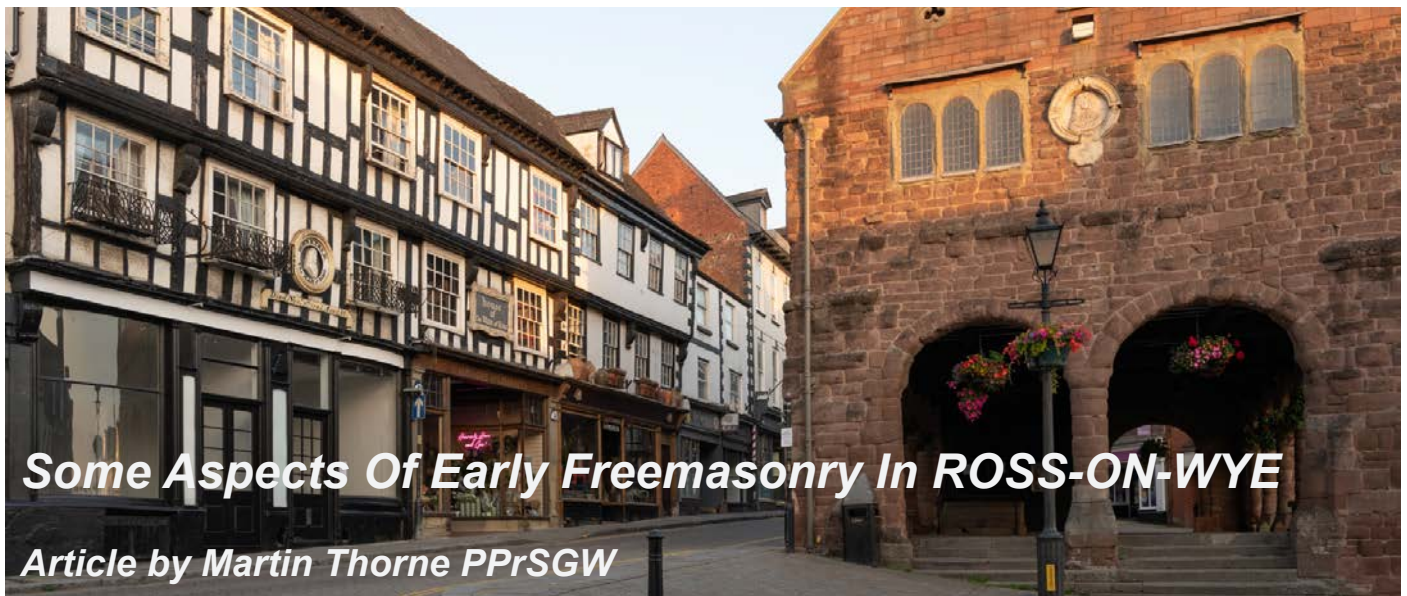
It will be remembered that, in 1812, two Grand Lodges were working in England with considerable rivalry between them, to the advantage of neither. These were the Premier Grand Lodge founded in 1717 and the Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, founded in 1751.

These two Grand Lodges finally came together in December 1813 and drew lots to determine who should have the honour of naming one of its Lodges as Lodge No. 1 under the new United Grand Lodge of England. The 'Ancients' won this draw, subsequently taking mostly odd numbers for their Lodges, with the 'Moderns', i.e. the former Premier Grand Lodge, taking the even numbers.

From all this, we can say with certainty that Vitruvian Lodge No. 637, re-numbered 634 in 1814, originated under the auspices of the Premier Grand Lodge, as presumably did its Mother Lodge, Palladian Lodge No. 120 in Hereford, which was numbered 196 in 1814.

### The Lodge By-Laws:

The earliest known reference to the Lodge By-Laws comes in September 1813 when they were read and subsequently signed by the members. This would not merit any particular mention but for the fact that the Lodge was presented in 1956 with 25 pages of handwritten manuscript which purport to be the 'Bye Laws of the Vitruvian Lodge'. What makes these 25 manuscript pages unique and historically important is that each of these pages is watermarked 1814, while a comparison of the handwriting on them with the handwriting in our Minute Book 1 leaves no possible doubt but that these 25 manuscript sheets were written by Bro Francisco Knowles, the first Secretary of Vitruvian Lodge in 1813 and are or are mostly likely to be a verbatim copy of those 'Bye Laws' first agreed by the Brethren of Vitruvian Lodge in 1813. It is also interesting to note that, although apparently written over 200 years ago, they were sent to the Lodge Secretary under cover of a letter dated 27 July 1956, by the Secretary of Ionic Lodge No. 3997, E.C., previously meeting in Egypt but now defunct. According to this letter, these manuscript pages had been in the charge of the District Grand Lodge of Egypt and the Sudan 'for a good many years', although no knowledge was known of how they came to be there.



## Some Aspects Of Early Freemasonry In ROSS-ON-WYE

Article by Martin Thorne PPrSGW

### The Holy Royal Arch and Bowles Chapter No. 338:

Royal Arch Masonry appears to have been active in Herefordshire from the earliest days of Vitruvian Lodge with five of its founder members designated as 'RAM', while the Lodge By-Laws, referred to above, specify the necessary 'Qualifications for Royal Arch'. Subsequently in 1839, certificates were signed for four of its members to be exalted in Palladian Chapter which, presumably, is where the five founder members had been exalted - that Chapter having been attached to Palladian Lodge since 1791.

A proposal to establish a Chapter in Ross was approved by the Lodge in 1869 and the Bowles Chapter No. 338 was granted its Charter in November that year but, unfortunately, although it exalted five new members in 1870, it does not seem to have met in subsequent years and its Charter was returned in 1880, when it was erased from the roll. Efforts were made to revive the Bowles Chapter in 1885 but nothing came of those efforts until Vitruvian Chapter No. 338 was consecrated nearly 100 years later.

### Mark Master Masons and the Kyrle Lodge No. 1439:

The present incarnation of the Kyrle Lodge of Mark Master Masons was, of course, consecrated in 1968 but records show that a predecessor of the same name had been consecrated in the Corn Exchange, Ross, in 1899. However, that Lodge seems only to have had a limited life as is suggested by a letter received in 1913 from a Mark Lodge in Bristol enquiring if the Kyrle Mark Lodge would sell its furniture to them. Although that request was refused, the establishment of a Mark Lodge in Ross lay dormant for the next 55 years, with members of Vitruvian Lodge who wished to become Mark Masons having to pursue that interest in the St Ethelbert's Lodge of Mark Master Masons in Hereford.

### Bro O J Scruby – Vitruvian Lodge's one and only Serving Brother?

Finally, although not really part of the early history of Freemasonry in Ross, mention needs to be made of Bro Scruby, who compiled the History of Vitruvian Lodge from 1913–1963. He was initiated into Vitruvian Lodge by special Dispensation from the then PGM, as a 'serving brother' in accordance with Rule 170 of the Book of Constitutions, in 1954. The import of this is that a serving brother is somewhat equivalent to an honorary member, not listed as a subscribing member of the Lodge in the Provincial Year Book but named in its list of Lodge Officers if, as Bro Scruby was for 23 years, he is appointed Lodge Tyler. As far as is known, he is the only Serving Brother to have been initiated into the Lodge and may also prove to be unique in this respect.

The foregoing details are very much a precis of fuller information held on file which can readily be passed electronically to any member who is interested.

Sunset over Coppett Hill Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020





# *Harry's in Hot Water! (Part IV)*

## *The further adventures of Harry Holwell Marriage and a new ship - HMS Beagle*

In 1970 I received my next draft and this was to a Naval Survey ship. These ships are responsible for surveying the oceans of the world and making new charts. This is a branch of the navy which is the only one that makes a profit. I was due to join at the end of June 1970. In the meantime I was due to get married to Sue. I left the ship on 12th June, had my stag night that same night and then married the following day. We travelled to Pitlochry, Scotland for our honeymoon. We only spent a week away then we moved to Chatham. This was a complete new start for us as we had been living in Exeter. We had rented a flat unseen through contacts at the bank where Sue worked. We moved in and started our married life in Chatham.



After a week I joined the Beagle. We had a crew of 38 onboard. We also worked with an identical sister ship HMS Bulldog. This was a sidestep in my naval career. Long term I had no intention of remaining in the Navy. I always intended becoming a Police Officer but this was governed by age in my younger years. For now I was joining a survey ship with a view to becoming a survey recorder. When naval charts are made they are drawn by hand. The survey ships at the time worked their exact location on the sea by setting up radio triangulation stations at three different points on shore sending out signals to the ships receiving computer. The position of the ship at exact timings relative to the seabed was thereby established. The ship knowing it's exact position would steam along lines noting the depths at exact points. Also, at given distances, a lead on automated lead line with tallow in its end would be dropped to the seabed and rewound to ascertain the makeup of the seabed i.e. sand, shale etc. This would all be gathered and transcribed on the new chart being made. On completion the new chart would go to the Chief Hydrographer of the Navy at Taunton and new charts would then be made and sold.

HMS Beagle was a coastal survey ship of 800 tons. She was flat bottomed for inshore survey. Although only very small she was extremely seaworthy and we sailed the world in her. In rough weather she was like a cork being tossed around. Not good if you suffered with seasickness. Having joined the ship we spent about a month finishing off a short refit, we then sailed in August 1970. For the next six months we moved to Dover. This was to carry out a survey of the English channel. This was due to the fact that at this time tankers and merchant craft were getting bigger. As a result of this a number had been damaged under the waterline due to striking uncharted obstructions on the seabed, things like wrecks or pinnacles of rock. Bear in mind a lot of the charts used at this time dated back to the 1700/1800s.

We worked 24 hrs a day Monday to Saturday lunchtime. If not on duty we could go home. Back on Sunday night to sail at 0600hrs Monday morning. Whilst surveying the ship would fly two black balls at the masthead, one above the other. This indicated that the ship was unable to readily manoeuvre and, by rule of the sea, had right of way to any other shipping. In the channel, which was a very busy shipping lane, this was or could be a lifesaver for the ship. Nevertheless we had several very near misses. One of these was exceptionally close and a large cargo craft missed us by mere metres. Some of these ships would not have lookouts or indeed very few company if any on the bridge. We would have on occasion to take evasive action at the last moment.

Whilst carrying out this survey in the channel, if we came across uncharted pinnacles or wrecks, a note would be made of the position and we would return later at slack tide to dive on them. This was to establish their closest point i.e. the mast of a wreck to the surface of the sea. This would give you only a short time to carry out this work before the tide changed. The current up and down the channel was such as to make diving impossible otherwise. During this period of time we were kept very busy. Almost daily we would put down two smallish launches. These had the same positioning equipment as the mothership. They would go inshore and survey the small bays and inlets where the mothership could not go. They would have a crew of three or four and we would take it in turns to man them. We finished our part in this survey the following January at its end to return to Chatham for leave and a maintenance before sailing for Africa and the Indian Ocean.

March came around very fast and then I had to say farewell to my wife who was now a clerical officer in Chatham dockyard. We sailed for Gambia in Africa, where we were to carry out a short survey of the approaches to Bathurst. En-route we stopped at Jersey. A civic reception was held there for us. This was because the predecessor of the present Beagle was the ship that liberated Jersey after the war. We spent a very pleasant few days there before sailing on to distant foreign shores.