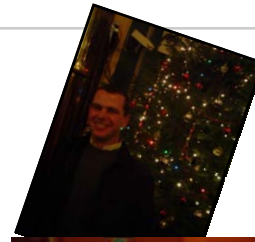




Hard Hitters

Social News

Newsletter Date
Mar 2005



The end of year was celebrated with a Christmas lunch and I think everyone enjoyed themselves. The food was good and the wine and beer flowed, The end of year certificates were given out to the following; James (Conway) one an award for eating all of his meal, as on other social events he has totally whimped out! John's (Kennedy) Award for the most stupid accident on site, this was only won that morning, as he hit his head and his hard hat came down and cut his nose! Andrew's (Swinley) award of space cadet needs no explanation Only to say he was the only person entered and finally Paul (Woods) award of being the site Tart was warmly excepted it took all of our powers to stop his giving an acceptance speech!..... Well done to all.

Remembrance Service



A Remembrance Service was held in St Phillips Cathedral, on the 26 January, firstly I would like to thank all of you who gave up your lunch to attend the service also present were members of the Council and English Heritage.

The service was to remember the two mason who were killed while constructing the Town Hall. It had been 172 years since the deaths of John Heap (88 years old) & William Badger (26 years old) who were killed on the 26th January 1833.

The Dean of Birmingham lead the service and I must admit that the Dean made us feel welcome and his many reference to construction during the service made us feel a little bit more relaxed, even to the point the first hymn had a line about a corner stone.





Pigeon *Columbidae*



Many people see pigeons as rats with tails but we must remember that they are part of our natural wildlife. Why is it that we take a dislike to an animal that

who only acts normal in an abnormal environment that we have created. So lets not think of them as vermin and if we do remember who created the environment they live in!.....

Here follows some facts that might make you think of the humble pigeon in a different light.

Pigeons control their own numbers very effectively and a reduction in the food supply does not mean the birds will die of starvation, it just



Racing Pigeons help greatly to win the two World Wars. They were used as secret message dispatchers who returned to their lofts with messages sent by the troops who attached them to their legs in small cases. Many provided important details about where the allied and enemy forces were.

Pigeons have baffled all scientists. No one quite knows how they find their way home but they think it's possibly linked to the Sun's position and the Earth's magnetic fields at any given time.

The most expensive Racing Pigeon cost over £110,000 and is called Invincible Spirit and was purchased by Louella Pigeon World UK in 1992.

People often say "you never see baby pigeons". This is because a baby pigeon at 4 weeks old looks identical to it's parent. Whilst growing up to this stage, they stay in

means that they will breed less often.

Feral pigeons are descended from Rock Doves and interbreed with racing pigeons and pigeons from domestic pigeon lofts.

Peak breeding season is between March and July but feral pigeons can breed all year round.

Pigeons mate for life and rear their broods together, although if one dies the other will take a new mate. Once the simple nest is built, the female lays an egg and then another a day or so later. The incubation period for common pigeons is 17 to 19 days. The female sits on the egg from late afternoon through the night until about 10AM. The male then takes over and does the day shift. Once the eggs hatch,

their nest and only leave when fully feathered. They start off covered in yellow down and their feathers start to show after 2 weeks in the nest.

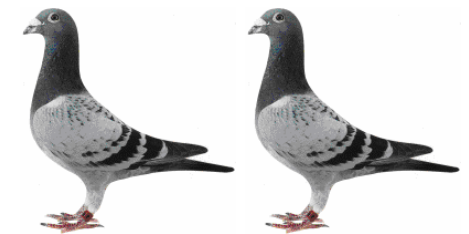
The most heroic recorded feat of a Racing Pigeon was from the late 1800's when a pigeon returned 55 days after being released from Africa to England. It has been estimated that the bird flew in the region of 7000 miles to get back, avoiding the desert where it instinctively knew no food or water would be found.

Also in;

776 BC: Homing pigeons used to announce the outcome of the Olympic Games to the Athenians.

1918 AD: British Air Force used over 20,000 homing pigeons during WW I

both parents feed the young squabs. The first food is pigeon milk or crop milk, a cheesy substance that appears in the crops of the parents at hatching time and is fed for a week or so. Then the adults start regurgitating partially digested grains for the young. By the time the squabs are ready to fly, about 4 weeks, the father is doing most of the feeding. The squabs are fed for another week to 10 days after they are free-flying.



1981 AD: Pigeons used to transmit negatives of drawings from Sunnyvale to a test station 40 km (25 mi) away.

So as you can see Pigeons are a lot more than Rats with wings- anyway what's so wrong with RATS? Next time maybe.



After a request from the wall, to know more about the stone that we are working I contacted the British Geological Survey and below is the answer I received. I was later contacted from the Geological Survey with a request from them. They would like a piece of Aber stone for their collection. Although they have many samples of stones from quarries they find it difficult to obtain samples from buildings and we at stonewest were happy to supply them a sample from the Town Hall for their collection.

Anglesey or Penmon Marble



The fossiliferous limestone used in the construction of Birmingham Town Hall comes from the Carboniferous Limestone coastal quarries at Penmon on the north east tip of Anglesey, just north of Beaumaris. The same limestones were used in Beaumaris and Caernarvon castles. Although the original quarries are long closed there is still active quarrying of the limestone in the area for crushed rock aggregate. Today the limestone forms part of the Loggerheads Limestone Formation of Asbian age. The very large, thick-walled, almost circular fossils several Centimeters across are the two shells that make up the animals known as brachiopods - they are named Gigantoproductus. They are similar to modern, very large cockle shells, although these are lamellibranchs or molluscs not brachiopods which are much rarer today. Brachiopods lived in a sub-tropical to tropical sea at the time (320 million years ago). Generally it is thought they preferred the muddy lagoonal area behind a reef where the protected environment meant they could grow to quite large sizes. The reef was colonised by corals similar to those seen in modern reefs. It is likely that during storms fragments of the reef corals would be broken off and washed into the lagoon behind the reef where the Gigantoproductids were living. Hence the mixture of fossil types. The animals of these tropical Carboniferous reefs and lagoons have been studied in great detail over the years and there are some very elaborate reconstructions made of their living environment.

Dr Graham Lott

British Geological Survey





if in doubt give it a clout

Last months Quiz

Last months Quiz was won by Matt Faber, well done Matt, who new the monument shown here is at the Lickey Hills and the connection with the town Hall is that it is also built from Aber stone.

“The monument was erected, by the Worcestershire Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry. To mark their lasting gratitude to the honoured memory of their beloved and lamented Colonel Commandant and the county at Large, to commerate the disinterested solid and efficient public services and to coming to imitation the exemplary private virtues of other ached sixth Earl of Plymouth.” Well that what it says.



Since the beginning of the project a great deal of effort from all in vouved to make sure that the work in hand is completed to the highest standard. When it was mentioned that hair was used in the original mortar, the guys were more than willing to help!.....



This Months Quiz

Can you answer this Question

Who escaped a mob at the Town Hall dressed in a policeman’s uniform?

First correct answer wins!

Social nights coming up include Bowling on Wednesday 15th March, followed by a night out at the Dogs in April and a summer Beno!.....

News from the Boards

Well that’s the end of another “Hard Hitters”. As some of may know I am of to Uganda for three weeks in May. I worked there for two years as a VSO as a building instructor. I have been asked to help build and ofanange in the two weeks that I am there!.. I will also help with making lime kilns and other approate materials that can be sourced locally.

The next issue will cover my time in Uganda.



but before we go, let's welcome Rohan to Stonewest, although he has been at the Town Hall longer than everyone (apart from myself). Rohan started in May 2004 and has been a reliable and committed member of the team, after months of negotiation with Hays we have finally been able to put Rohan on the books.

Anyway welcome Rohan

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