



### INSPECTOR GENERALS' MISSIVE WEEK 40



24<sup>th</sup> December - So, a Tier 4 was introduced for England after all. Buckinghamshire spent a whole day in Tier 3 until new statistics and a virus variant persuaded the powers-that-be of the need for a tighter lockdown. A large number of us are therefore going to have a quieter Christmas tomorrow than we had been planning. We can still “visit” our church celebrations of our Saviour’s birth although I suspect the majority of us will forego a physical presence at such congregations in line with the recent cautionary advice. It was actually a relief to see Brexit coming up in the news instead of the never-ending political and medical arguments. Not such a surprise was the Remoaner’s “told you so” reaction to Dover’s closure and the lorry logjam on the M20 and Manston airport. It seems a Brexit agreement may be arriving shortly but, as always, I shall just wait quietly until it happens.

The latest edition of “First Rising” arrived in my in-box this morning and I find it refreshing that despite us not meeting at the moment, Head Office and the Charities are continuing to do good work without us. There is no doubt our alms donations are currently scarcer and thinner, but I hope all Charity Stewards and Relief Chest Operators are now aware of the QR code and smart-phone App by which we can all make donations direct from our phones. The

rest of us should badger our ChStwds to find out how to continue contributing, either to the on-going Covid-19 fund or to any of the other elements of the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

Stephen Knight was yet again at the head of the answerers to last week’s quiz. I know he will be busy as Provincial Almoner so I am delighted he is able to continue contributing to our missives. That also reminds me to remind each of you, even if you are not in need yourself, to phone your own unit Almoner to see how he is doing.

Here are my answers to last week’s questions:

1. Whatever angles  $x$  and  $y$  are in a triangle, if the sine of one angle is equal to the cosine of another then their sum must be  $90^\circ$  which is 1.5708 radians. However, in an equilateral triangle all angles are  $60^\circ$  so  $\sin(x)$  can never be equal to  $\cos(x)$  and the question as written cannot be answered.
2. SPQR. To the Romans, it meant Senatus Populus Quiritium (or Que?) Romanus. To the retailer, it means Small Profit and Quick Returns.
3. The Bass red triangle was trade-marked officially in the UK in 1876, Lowenbrau claims to have the oldest continuously-used trademark from 1383 and Stella Artois claims their mark has been in use since 1366 – beer has always been popular!
4. Nosocomial infections are defined as presenting at least 48 hours after admission to a hospital; Iatrogenic infections follow a medical or surgical procedure but may not be hospital related.
5. If 3 horses were to dead-heat, the usual procedure would be to divide the amount staked by 3 on the basis that one-third of each horse won while 2/3 lost. At the odds listed, pay out would be £11.67, £18.34 and £5.84 – each punter getting his reduced stake back as well as the odds return.
6. On a Scrabble board - both words have a value of 19. One might have to add V,A,C,C,I, -S to the word “nation” and Q,U,A,R,A,N to the word “tine” as we only have 7 letters to play with!

7. A Shackleton had 2 sets of 3-bladed propellers on each of 4 engines giving a total of 24 blades.
8. 1% compound interest doubles an initial deposit in 70 years (and 7% in  $\sim 10\frac{1}{4}$  years).
9. Methyl Orange paper turns red for acid and yellow for alkali (and orange-ish for neutral pH).
10. Sir Toby Belcher and Maria forged love letters purporting to be from Olivia and Malvolio is arrogant enough to believe them genuine.

Here are this week's research subjects:

1. What could be thought wrong in Peter Bruegel the Elder's painting of the Census at Bethlehem?
2. What were the names of the 3 wise men from the East?
3. Did Leonardo DaVinci ever paint a picture called "The Epiphany"?
4. What are the only 2 songs that have been Christmas number one singles twice?
5. What linked Sir Isaac Newton, Lew Grade, Kenny Everett and Humphrey Bogart?
6. In December, as we pass the Winter solstice, does it get "lighter-earlier" first or "darker-later"?
7. Why do Eastern Christian churches celebrate the birth of Jesus on 7<sup>th</sup> January?
8. In our calendar year, which months never start on the same day of the week as any other month?
9. What links Charlemagne, William the Conqueror and Boleslaw II?
10. What did Cassini do on Christmas Eve 2004?

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all – I intend to regard losing the company of family, friends and neighbours this Christmas as an investment in the future – staying safe now means there will be more of us around to celebrate properly next year.

Maintain the mantra - Hands, Face, Space. Take plenty of exercise and Keep Phoning Around.

Stay Safe

Peter Harborne 33°

Inspector General

Buckinghamshire