

Ancient Order of Foresters
Court Maxwell No. 759
Seaton Ross

Seaton Ross during the mid 19th century formed two friendly societies, the first was the Ancient Free Gardeners, Rose of Roscommon lodge No 263 (1st June 1839) as written about in the June 2005 Seaton Ross Times and the second was the Ancient order of Foresters, Court Maxwell no. 759 formed in late June early July 1839.

The Ancient Order of Foresters commenced in 1834 but its order known as the 'Foresters' started much earlier in the 18th century. Like the order of the free gardeners, its aim was to support its members who through illness or accident could not work or in the event of death provide funds for funeral expenses. Subscriptions were made by its members. Long before the state system was introduced to provide welfare for the sick and needy, a friendly society provided the financial assistance for the needy to fall back on.

Court Maxwell, No 759 of the Ancient Order of Foresters received what was known as a Dispensation, a large formal document, measuring some 20" by 18", authorising its existence as a constituent Court, or branch of the Order, from the Executive Council of the Order in late June/early July 1839.

The original meeting place was The Black Horse Inn, South End, Seaton Ross, where the landlord was John Walker who was also one of the village blacksmiths. By 1840, a membership of 26 had been established, the members attending Court meetings on alternate Tuesday's. At these meetings individual contributions for the sickness benefit and funeral funds were paid over to the Secretary. An anniversary date of 7th July was set for the annual celebration of the Courts founding to be held.

Unfortunately the Court only lasted four years until 1843. It would appear that a dispute arose between the Court Maxwell 759 and the Hull District members (On its foundation, the Court became a component of the Hull and East Riding District. The dispute appeared before the Executive Council and sadly was not resolved resulting in the Court disbanding. So ended, another short period of a friendly society in Seaton Ross. Mutual aid was no longer represented and everyone became reliant on their own means with only relief available for the very poor from the church.

Malcolm Young

DON'T FORGET
SUNDAY MAY 21ST IS THE BIG BREAKFAST
SUNDAY JULY 2ND IS THE FEAST DAY