

ASHLAR LODGE A.F.&A.M. 610 G.R.C.

1996-2001

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Note: (For a complete history of Ashlar Lodge the reader is urged to read the various segments of the history found in the steel box in the Lodge's equipment cupboard)

Ashlar Lodge was constituted on June 22nd, 1922 and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1972. A historical booklet that contained a summary of the important events up to that time was published. The speaker on that occasion was Rt. Worshipful Wilfred E. Adams, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Michigan. Also, a highlight was a letter that was received from Col. Edwin Aldrin, the first Mason to set foot on the moon graciously declining our invitation to be the speaker at our 50th anniversary celebration. Ver. Wor. Brother Harry Unwin, secretary at the time, had the letter framed and it is still proudly displayed in the ante room in the year 2001.

The 60th anniversary was celebrated in 1982 when another program booklet was prepared. Two Ashlar members, Bros. Graham Rendall and Wm. Watters, who were in the printing business, prepared a colour brochure which included copies of the original letters and notes pertaining to the formation of the lodge, as well as colour pictures of the presiding officers and the Grand Lodge Brethren. The speaker on the 60th anniversary was Most Wor. Bro. Robert E. Davies, past Grand Master and Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. The anniversary booklet listed 174 brethren as members of Ashlar.

In the years following the 60th anniversary the history was written in three periods i.e. 1973-83, 1984-89, and 1990-95.

A few highlights of each period follows:

1973-83 – improvements to the building which included painting the outside and installing carpet on the stairs. Also, Bro. Henry Muirhead hand crafted an oak lectern for the ante room and a square and compass which are attached to the lodge room walls.

- dues were raised several times from \$12 in 1976 to \$30 in 1983.
- Life memberships were also raised from \$50 in 1972 after 30 years service to \$500 in 1983 if purchased at the time of joining the lodge.
- Membership as at 1983 was 176

1984-1989 – In 1987 Ver. Wor. (2000 –Rt. Wor) Bro. Philip Brown was appointed Grand Director of Ceremonies of Grand Lodge by Most. Wor. Bro. William Pellow.

- dues were raised to \$50 for resident members in 1988 and they remain the same in 2001.
- by December 31/89 membership was 147
- a new furnace and air conditioner were purchased in 1988
- Ashlar suffered a robbery in 1984 and working tools, sword and flags were stolen.
- 23 members died during this period.

1990-1995 – membership declined to 111 by Dec. 31, 1995

- in this period there were only 5 initiations and 6 affiliations.
- interesting meetings were held to keep up interest in Ashlar

- a non profit corporation known as Ashlar Masonic Hall (Byron) Inc was set up to purchase the shares of the Byron Bowling Co. for the approximately 15 years remaining in the 50 year lease. (a complete story of the building is contained in this part of Ashlar's history).
- in the revision of the bylaws in 1991 the June meeting was restored , the installation ceremony was changed from the 1st Monday in December to the second and the offices of Historian and Assistant secretary were included in the slate of officers.

1996-2001

This period in Ashlar's history contained many significant achievements. Although initiations were few and far between there were affiliations that helped to keep up the momentum. In at least two instances Ashlar lodge was helped tremendously when Bro. Norman Kerr and Bro. Ed. Davy affiliated just as Ashlar needed their talents as junior wardens and eventually as Worshipful Masters. Membership declined from 111 as at December 31, 1995 to 102 at December 31, 2000.

The following Masters presided in the years 1996-2001:

1996 – Edward Barber

1997 – Albert Jackson

1998 – Ray Masters

1999 - Norman Kerr

2000 – Edward Davy

2001 – David Sanderson

They were placed in the chair of King Solomon by the following installing Masters:

1996 – Wor. Bro. Douglas Tucker

1997 - “ “ Bruce Dow

1998 - “ “ Murray Dale

1999 - “ “ Robert Kerr (father of Norman)

2000 - Ver. Wor.. Bro. Fred Cotton

2001 - Wor. Bro. Douglas Tucker

INITIATIONS

Sept. 1996 – Michael Steele

June 1997 – Craig Sigurdson

Jan. 1998 – Glen Arthur

March 1998 – John Moorhouse

April 2000 – Ronald Riley

AFFILIATIONS

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- Jan. 1996 – Bro. Jim Landers – Mississauga # 54
- Jan. 1996 – Bro. Chas. MacKay – Liberty #419 Sarnia
- Oct. 1996 – Bro. Norman Kerr – St. Albans #200 – Mt. Forest
- Sept. 1997 – Bro. Edward Davy – Cambridge # 728
- Oct. 1998 – Rt. Wor. Bro. James Steele – Acacia # 580
- Oct. 2000 – Wor. Bro. Don Slater – St. Johns 209a

GRAND LODGE APPOINTMENTS

- 2000 – Ver. Wor. Bro. Larry Carter
- 2000 – Rt. Wor. Bro. Philip Brown

Grand lodge appointments were noteworthy by their absence. Although Ashlar had asked several years before, it was not until Grand Lodge 2000 that Wor. Bro. Larry Carter, treasurer and faithful member of the lodge, was appointed Grand Superintendent of the Works and given the title of Very Worshipful.

At the same time, the Grand Master, Most Wor. Bro. Robt. McKibbon, changed an appointment that was made in 1997 by Most Wor. Bro. Wm. Pellow. At that time Wor. Bro. Phil Brown was appointed Grand Director of Ceremonies and given the rank of Very Worshipful. Most Wor. Bro. McKibbon changed the rank to Rt. Wor. Bro. Philip Brown.

Both of these brethren were presented with their regalia at the November 2000 meeting. The District Deputy Grand Master, Rt. Wor. Bro. Gus Gracey, presented Bro. Carter's regalia while Rt. Wor. Bro. Ross Fuller and Ver. Wor. Bro. Harry Unwin invested Bro. Brown with his. The lodge was called off for a short time so Ver. Wor. Bro. Carter's wife and sister could be present at the ceremony.

Ashlar Lodge has been looking forward to having another District Deputy Grand Master in the near future and at the May, 1996 meeting, Wor. Bro. Douglas Tucker was chosen as Ashlar's next candidate for that position. At that time, also, it was stated that Wor. Bro. Bruce Dow would be his district secretary.

75TH ANNIVERSARY

Ashlar celebrated its 75th anniversary on September 29, 1997. The speaker on that occasion was Most Wor. Bro. C. Edwin Drew who was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario in 1993. The banquet was held in the Community Centre in Komoka with a large turnout of Grand Lodge and Master Masons.

Under the very capable leadership of Wor. Bro. Bruce Dow the event was successful in every aspect but mostly because of the large turnout of Ashlar members.

A historical booklet was again published outlining the outstanding features of the event.

A very generous donation to the lodge at the anniversary was made by Wor. Bro. Murray Dale. It was a beautiful ceramic pavement which Bro. Dale had planned and actually helped to place in the floor just west of the altar. This was dedicated with the traditional corn, wine and oil by former Grand Chaplain, Rt. Wor. Bro. George Morris at the October, 1997 meeting.

FUND RAISING

Ashlar had a very successful lobsterfest dinner in 1996 with a profit of \$1259.60. Although plans were under way for one in 1998 the matter was dropped after it was learned that a deficit of \$654 occurred at the 1997 event and it appeared that the enthusiasm of the brethren for a lobster dinner had lessened somewhat.

In June, 1997, the junior warden, Bro. Norman Kerr, suggested that sausage making was a good money raising project. Since Bro. Kerr had experience in this project and was willing to chair it, Ashlar decided to embrace the idea. This has been a very successful fund raiser for the lodge.

The first sale was held in November, 1997. It was reported in May, 1998, that a profit of \$900 had been obtained with only 2 sessions.

Volunteers helped Bro. Kerr and the first sausage making was done at the Xello Grotto on Boullie St. in London. The 1999 and 2000 sessions took place at St. Anne's Parish Hall where Ver. Wor. Bro. Harry Unwin served soup to the volunteer brethren.

In April 2000, it was decided to purchase a used sausage stuffing machine for \$918 to assist in the work. Despite this purchase there was a profit of \$84.68 in the spring of 2000 and \$744.01 in the fall.

The sausage making project turned out to be a real success, not only by raising funds, but for a good volunteer get together for the lodge officers and members.

BUILDING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Ashlar lodge has always been blessed with willing and capable volunteers who have spent many hours cleaning, painting and doing other necessary repairs around the building.

The past few years we have not only had willing volunteers but very skilled brethren who have carried out many repairs and improvements that would have cost the lodge thousands of dollars if they had to be done by outside contractors. The brethren are Wor. Bro. Ken Turner, Ver. Wor. Bro. Larry Carter and Wor. Bro. Murray Dale.

Some of the projects they have completed are:

1. repaired the roof
2. installed a new exit door and put new siding on the south outside wall of the lodge room
3. repaired the plumbing and lights in the cloak room
4. painted the front entrance, installed new carpet on the stairs.

5. repaired damaged tile on the ceiling of the dry cleaning establishment
6. installed a new furnace adjoining the lodge room so that heat and air conditioning can be controlled at the upstairs level.

In the fall of 2000 discussions were held with Oakridge Lodge 708 who use Ashlar's facilities for their meetings. There was a move by some Oakridge members to move to the downtown Masonic Temple or some other location.

Ashlar's representatives met with a delegation from Oakridge. It is hoped that any disagreements over the facility can be settled to the satisfaction of both parties.

LONG SERVICE PINS

60 years – In March, 1996, Wor. Bro. Reg. Thody, the oldest living Ashlar past Master was presented with his 60 year Masonic pin.

- In July, 2000, approximately 25 Ashlar members went to Reg. And Mardell's home and gave him his "50 years a past Master" decoration as he was Worshipful Master in 1949.

50 years – In February, 1996, Rt. Wor. Bro. Ross Fuller, Ver. Wor. Bro. Rolfe Weekes, Bros. Wm. Hodgman, and. Fred Fox.

- June 1998 – Bro. Wm. McDonald.
- Oct. 1998 – Bro. Robt. Sanderson (presented by his son, David)
- Jan. 2001 - Ver. Wor. Bro. Harry Unwin and Bro. Donald Gray.

25 years – In February, 1996, it was reported that 39 members were eligible to receive a 25 year pin.

- 1998 – 3 more 25 year decorations were presented.

Note: Since some of the recipients of the long service pins lived out of the area it was not possible for all to be present to receive them. Our faithful secretary mailed theirs to them.

SECRETARY

Any Master will tell you that the secretary is his most important ally during his year.

Our secretary, Wor. Bro. Ken Turner, who started this position in 1993, continued to send out the monthly notices and faithfully record the minutes of the meetings. In addition to doing this very well he cleans the lodge premises and helps with repairs. (details covered in other portions of this history).

One thing Ashlar lodge has been noted for is the Memorial service that has been performed the last few years on the annual visit of inspection by the District Deputy. On this occasion Wor. Bro. Turner, who is an excellent singer, leads the service by singing the memorial hymn unaccompanied.

ATTENDANCE

Wor. Bro. Turner keeps a running count of the officers, members and visitors who attend the meetings. An analysis of this data shows the following:

- 1 – as is expected the number of visitors is the highest on District Deputy night ranging from 51 in 1996 to 43 in 2000. (at this date in February the weather can make a big difference in the number of visitors)
- 2 – the second highest number of visitors is in September when the district senior wardens attend.
- 3- Installations also tend to attract visitors, again depending on the weather. In this period they ranged from 13 in 1996, to 54 in 1999, to 7 in 2000 when a heavy snow storm started just about lodge time.
- 4- the attendance of officers remained high with approximately 90% attending every meeting.
- 5- members attendance ranged from 27 on one occasion down to 5 or 6 on others.
- 6- May and June meetings have the lowest attendance.
- 7- Total attendance for the 5 years as recorded in the minutes was as follows:
1996 – 399, 1997 – 346, 1998 – 384, 1999 – 362, 2000 – 412

MASONIC EDUCATION

Ashlar continued to have Masonic education during this time in its history. In addition to going to other lodges in the yearly interlodge Masonic education visits Ashlar also practiced it at home.

Wor. Bro. Murray Dale was very active in this regard as he is mentioned in the minutes several times as follows:

June 1996 – with Ver. Wor. Bro. Harry Unwin showing slides of the London England Grand Lodge building.

Nov. 1996 – gave Masonic education at the regular meeting

Feb. 1998 – was Ashlar's representative on the Grand Lodge Brother to Brother program (this was a program to assist brethren who have not been in lodge for some time to return to a meeting.)

Sept. 1998 – wrote a pamphlet on the responsibility of a sponsor.

Jan. 1999 – placed on another Brother to Brother program whose aim was to visit brethren from other jurisdictions who were hospitalized in London.

Fall – 2000 - wrote a pamphlet on the Masonic Apron.

BENEVOLENCE

In January, 2000, an Ashlar brother approached the lodge asking for financial assistance for the very high medical costs for his son who is suffering from multiple sclerosis.

A committee investigated the request and gave a very favourable report. His brethren were then canvassed and they responded immediately.

At the February 2000 meeting the lodge passed the following motion:

- a. to establish a Benevolent Fund
- b. to contribute \$1000 from the lodge general fund
- c. to donate the \$1000 and funds received up to June 1st to the application for benevolence that is currently under discussion.

The Grand Lodge Benevolent Committee, who will not respond until the local lodge has helped, was then contacted.

At the March 2000 meeting, Rt. Wor. Bro. W.J. Anderson, president of the London Benevolent Association, spoke to the lodge. The association was founded in 1871 and, besides giving financial aid to Masons, it owns a plot in Woodland Cemetery. As of that date the membership was 17 lodges. The cost of membership is 15 cents per member.

At the same meeting it was reported that donations for Ashlar's benevolence had been received from 8 London lodges, Grand Lodge and the Masonic Foundation of Ontario.

Ashlar joined the London Benevolent Association in April 2000.

The response to Ashlar's request for help was overwhelming. The member's son went to Nebraska, USA, for bone marrow tests, which, unfortunately, were not successful.

In the meantime, funds kept coming in from Grand Lodge, other lodges and some different sources. The total amount delivered to the brother was \$30,937.

Unfortunately, this was not enough to cover all the costs but it was a tremendous help to this very appreciative brother and his family.

FRATERNAL ACTIVITIES

In this period Ashlar lodge continued to do all the extra things they have always done but added a few new ideas.

The things that the lodge has done for many years and continues to do well are the yearly church services, Ladies nights, Past Masters dinners and poinsettias delivered to Ashlar widows at Christmas time.

Some of the newer things are a golf tournament, blood and suds, sponsoring a Beaver Colony, a Christmas dinner for members and their wives, support for a member who became a Presbyterian minister, a display cabinet and discussion of a chair lift for the lodge.

1. Golf tournament – This was suggested by Wor. Bro. Robt. Brewster in 1998. Three successful tournaments were held in June at the Pine Knot Golf Club with an average attendance of 25 golfers.
2. blood and suds – It was decided to increase the interest in giving blood by having a night when Ashlar members would give blood and then go to a neighbourhood restaurant for fellowship and conversation. This was started in 1996 and continues in 2001.
3. Beaver Colony – In April 1997, Bro. Fred Peters suggested that it would be good public relations if the lodge sponsored a Beaver colony. In June the lodge approved the idea and in October, parents, leaders and 12 Beavers

toured the lodge premises. The sponsorship continued through 1998 but in September, 1999, it was reported that the Beaver colony had disbanded.

- 4 Christmas Dinner - In December, 1999 and 2000 a Christmas dinner was held for members and their wives as a new venture. Approximately 25 persons attended these dinners. Although the Past Masters continue to hold their own dinner in November this could be a very good thing for all members especially those who are not officers.
- 5 Ministers support - Bro. Jim Redpath, who was junior Deacon at the time, decided he would like to become a Presbyterian minister. The brethren gave him their full support during his training and in February, 1999, 12 Ashlar members attended his induction service into the full time ministry at Knox Presbyterian church at Fingal. His other charge is St. Johns in Port Stanley. Because of this he found it necessary to give up his officers position.
- 6 Display Cabinet - Bro. Fred Kingsmill, a very prominent Mason in the London area, donated a display cabinet to Ashlar lodge so that lodge artifacts and memorabilia can be displayed in the ante room. The cabinet is so heavy it took a number of members to bring it to the lodge and then get it upstairs to the lodge room. It attracts a great deal of attention from our visitors.
7. Discussion re a chair lift. On two occasions it was reported that the Committee of General Purposes had discussed obtaining a chair lift for the lodge. Some older and even some younger Masons are having difficulty climbing stairs and may not attend for this reason. No doubt this will be investigated more thoroughly in the future.

SANDERSON LEGACY

Although some of this part of the history was written in the 1995-91 episode it bears repeating because of its uniqueness to Ashlar lodge.

In December, 2000, Wor. Bro. David Sanderson was installed as the Worshipful Master of the lodge for the year 2001. He is the first member of the 3rd generation of the Sanderson family to join Ashlar.

1st GENERATION

There were 4 brothers of his grandfather's family who were members of Ashlar.

1. Wor. Bro. Ninian T. Sanderson – the first junior deacon of Ashlar, Master in 1928 and secretary of the lodge for 10 years.
2. Wor. Bro. David Sanderson, (David's grandfather); joined in 1922 and was Master in 1940.
3. Bro. John Sanderson – first world war pilot who also joined in 1922 but later moved to the west coast.
4. Bro. Colonel Thomas Sanderson, first and second world war veteran who joined Leamington lodge in 1920 and then affiliated with Ashlar in 1934 when he returned to London.

2nd GENERATION

1. Bro. Robert Sanderson, David's father and son of David's grandfather, joined

Ashlar on September 22, 1947. After graduation from the University of Guelph he lived in Leamington all his working life. He became a regular lodge attender when he retired in London.

2. Wor. Bro. Jack Sanderson , Robert's brother and David's uncle – joined Ashlar, April 26, 1954. He was Worshipful Master in 1965
3. Ver. Wor. Bro. R. Jay Sanderson, son of N.T. and David's second cousin – joined Ashlar in 1961 and later affiliated with Oakridge 708 where he was Wor. Master in 1967 and appointed a Grand Steward in 1976.
4. Wor. Bro. Ninian W. Sanderson, son of Col. Thomas and also David's second cousin, joined Oakridge Lodge 708 where he was Worshipful Master in 1965

3rd GENERATION

David Paul Sanderson, son of Robert, was initiated in June, 1995, passed to the second degree by a goodly number of friends and relatives, and received his third degree in October, 1995. He progressed rapidly through the chairs, became junior Warden in 1999 and Worshipful Master in 2001.

The Masonic relatives of Wor. Bro. Sanderson who participated in conferring his second degree and attended on many occasions on his journey to the Master's chair are:

- 1- Wor. Bro. David Bentley - St. Pauls Lodge 107 – Lambeth
- 2- Wor. Bro. Robert Bentley - “ “
- 3- Rt. Wor. Bro. Frank Small - “ “
- 4- Wor. Bro. Jack Hodgins - Henderson Lodge 388 – Ilderton

When Bro. Robert Sanderson presented his son with a gavel at the installation he mentioned that were and had been about 20 Masons in the Sanderson extended family.

In addition to the above there were many friends of the Sanderson family who attended many of the meetings.

Ashlar lodge can be very proud of having this 3rd generation Sanderson Mason as its worshipful Master in 2001.

FATHER AND SON

One other unusual event in this period was the attendance of three father and sons on one night.

This was in December, 1998, when Wor. Bro. Robert Kerr from St. Albans Lodge 200, Mt. Forest, installed his son Wor. Bro. Norman Kerr in the Master's chair. The other two fathers and sons present that night were Bro. Robert Sanderson and his son David, junior warden , and Rt. Wor. Bro. James Steele and his son Michael Steele , junior Deacon.

DEATHS

	Date of Initiation	Died
Richard Johnston	Jan. 28, 1952	Aug.24, 1993
Kenneth Klinkman	May 6, 1963	Dec. 10, 1996 – P.M. Glenrose, 628, Elmira
Robt. Soper	Apr. 13, 1949	Oct. 27, 1997 – Master, 1977
John Dickinson	Mar. 16, 1961	Oct. 16, 1997
Richard Lea	Jan. 28, 1959	Jan. 24, 1998
Thomas Sutcliffe	June. 25, 1962	Feb. 12, 1998
Robt. Elford	Nov. 20, 1950	Feb. 27, 1998
Leslie Bengough	Jan. 23, 1950	May 4, 1998
George Dickson	Feb. 18, 1957	May 15, 1998
Fred Fox	Jan. 17, 1946	Jan. 11, 1999
Chas McCulley aff. June, 1992	April 24, 1953	April 3, 1999
Wm. McDonald aff. Dec. 1953	June 3, 1947	May 1, 1999
Kenneth McDonald	Feb.28, 1949	July 19, 2000
Gordon Butters	Jan. 11, 1960	Sept. 27, 2000

This history researched and written by Rt. Worshipful Bro. Ross C. Fuller.
January 2001