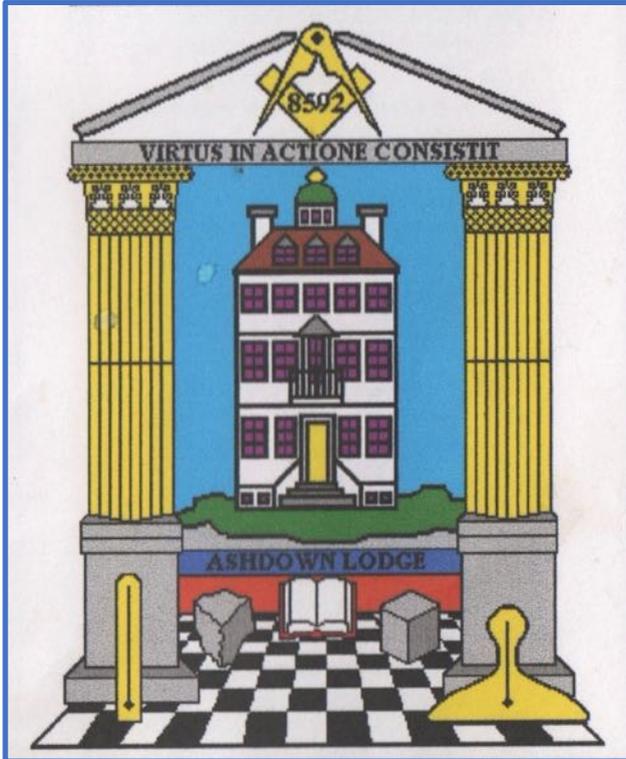


# A History of Ashdown Lodge 8592



1974 - 2024

Contents collated and edited by W. Bro Neil B. Maw  
Commissioned by W. Bro Marcus J. Hilsdon  
Presented to all the brethren of the lodge at the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September  
2024



“Brethren, I am so proud to be the Worshipful Master of the Ashdown Lodge, as we celebrate 50 years since our consecration. This publication is a record of our development, and it is my sincere wish that our lodge continues to thrive for another half century.” Marcus J. Hilsdon

# Ashdown Lodge - Faringdon

No 8592 - Province of Berkshire

1974 - 2024

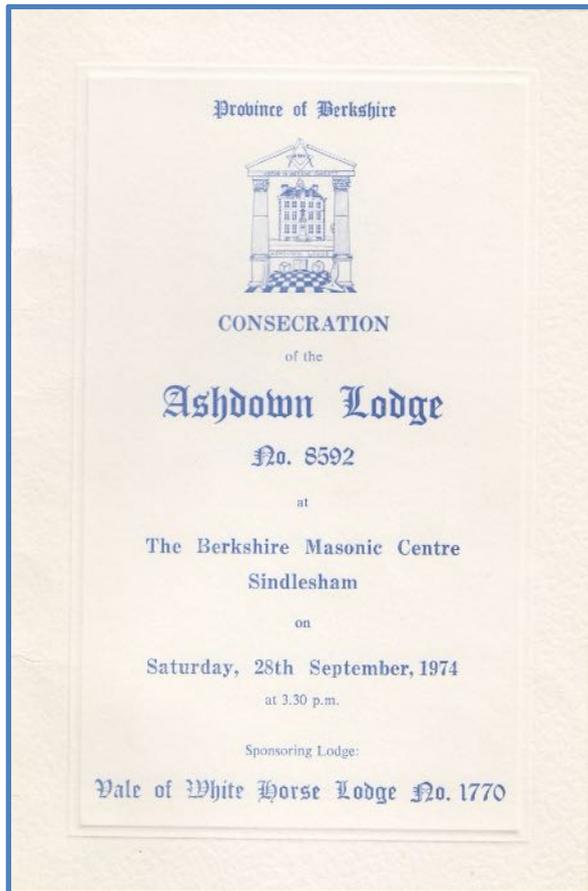
Below - Faringdon Masonic Centre



The Ashdown Lodge was Consecrated on Saturday, 28th September 1974 at The Berkshire Masonic Centre, Sindlesham. The sponsoring, or Mother Lodge, was The Vale of White Horse Lodge No 1770, Faringdon. The first Worshipful Master was John Humphrey Parker-Jervis (Below).

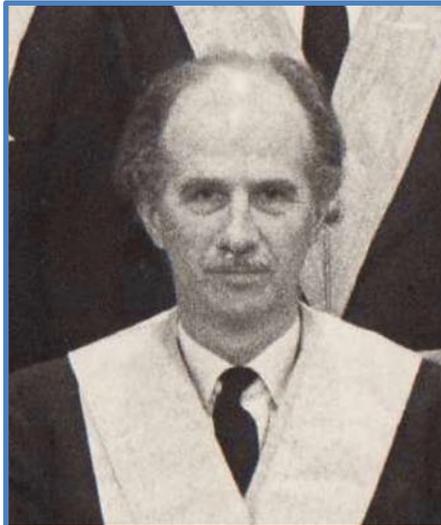
At that time, Freemasonry existed in a society that was much different from what it is today. Those that would admit to being Freemasons were from the more business class of society. The word '*admit*' is relevant because there was an air of secrecy surrounding membership. Many masons were of the opinion that it was a private and somewhat exclusive organisation without realising that such opinion had emanated from the war period ending only 25 years earlier. Before the war of 1939 - 45, freemasonry was more public and processions of masons wearing

regalia was common. But the horrors of a war that had seen the persecution of race and creed, extended also to freemasonry. Therefore, it became a question of personal safety not to admit to being one. In the 1970s there were still many members who could remember those horrors and their reluctance to speak publicly is understandable.



## Founders and First Officers

W. Bro. J. H. Parker-Jervis -----	W. M.
W. Bro. N. V. Needler -----	Acting I.P.M.
W. Bro. J. Wilson Sharp P.P.G.D. -----	S. W.
W. Bro. K. Johnston -----	J. W.
W. Bro. J. A. Lowe, P.P.G.D. -----	Chaplain
W. Bro. W. Weeks, P.P.G.D. -----	Treasurer
W. Bro. A. P. Beverton, P.P.G.W. -----	Secretary
W. Bro. C. B. Manners -----	D. C.
Bro. L. W. Spence -----	S. D.
Bro. D. Plowright -----	J. D.
W. Bro. J. Hitchcock -----	Asist D. C.
W. Bro. J. Wilson Sharp P.P.G.D. -----	Almoner
Bro. G. Fowler -----	I. G.
Bro. W. Howsrgo -----	Steward
Bro. B. R. Thew -----	Steward
Bro. K. Erbamohi -----	Tyler





The first regular meeting of the Lodge was held on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1974 and it was a busy agenda. At the consecration meeting, four gentlemen had been proposed for Initiation and one as a Joining Member. It was therefore necessary to hold a ballot for all five:

Mr George Henry Packford, a Building Contractor from Woolstone.

Mr James Roger Simpson, a Garage Proprietor from Highworth.

Mr William Jack, a Store Manager from Swindon.

Mr Richard George McQueen, a Steward at the RMCS, Shrivenham.

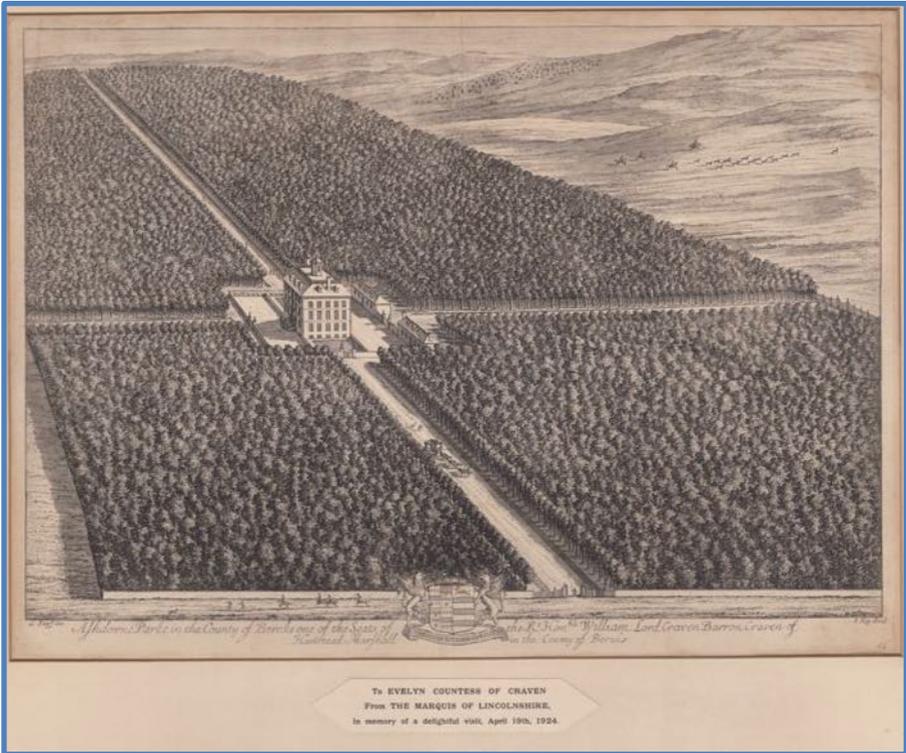
Bro Malcolm Stuart Reid, a Company Representative from Grove, Wantage, as a Joining Member. (Below - still an active member 2024).



The business for the evening as well as the ballot for all five of the above, included the Initiation of Mr George Packford which duly went ahead.

At this meeting Worshipful Brother John Lowe, (Below) Chaplain, reported that he had received an offer of a print of Ashdown House from the Craven family. The print was later received and a scan of the picture is appended below with the accompanying letter from Rupert Craven that was affixed to the back of the large frame. Over the years, the frame had become infected by woodworm and damp was creating bacteria or '*foxing*' on the paper of the letter. It has therefore been moved out of the frame, digitised and safely stored. (Now at Shrivenham Heritage Society Archive, Memorial Hall, Shrivenham with the Lodge Minute Books).





*Althorn Park in the County of Berks one of the Seats of  
Richard Marshall*  *the Rt Hon<sup>ble</sup> William Lord Craven Baron Craven of  
in the County of Berks*

TO EVELYN COUNTESS OF CRAVEN  
FROM THE MARQUIS OF LINCOLNSHIRE,  
IN MEMORY OF A DELIGHTFUL VISIT, APRIL 19th, 1924.

CARRAGE,  
SWORDLY, BETTYHILL,  
SUTHERLAND,  
BY THURSO, CAITHNESS,  
BETTYHILL 244.

## Ashdown House

Built from designs by Webb, nephew  
& pupil of Inigo Jones. The estate  
was acquired by the first prominent  
member of the Craze family, Sir William  
Craze (born c. 1548, died 1618,  
Lord Mayor of London 1610-1611)  
in 1609 & remained in the family until made  
over to the National Trust by my late aunt  
Constance, Countess of Craze, after World War II.

This print was presented to my grandmother  
Evelyn, Countess of Craze, by the Parquis of  
Wincleshire as a memento of a visit  
in 1924 — shortly before she died.

CARRAGE,  
SWORDLY, BETTYHILL,  
SUTHERLAND,  
BY THURSO, CAITHNESS,  
BETTYHILL 244.

Since then it has been in the  
possession of my parents & then myself  
I have much pleasure in presenting it  
to Ashdown Lodge No. 8592 with every  
good wish for the future of the lodge.

Robert J. E. Craze

11, Navy Lodge No. 2612

29 October 1974



**FOUNDERS & MEMBERS FOLLOWING THE CONSECRATION,**  
**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 1974,**

**BACK ROW L-R:** W.G. McHowsego – STWD, M.S. REID – M.M, G.H. PACKFORD – F.C, B.R. THEW – STWD, W. JACK – E.A. & J.R. SIMPSON – F.C.  
**CENTRE ROW L-R:** N.V.B. NEEDLER – I.P.M, L.W. SPENCE – S.D, C.B. MANNERS – D.C, A.P.M. BEVERTON – SEC, D. PLOWRIGHT – J.D,  
 G. FOWLER – I.G, K. ERBSEHL – TYLER & A.J. HITCHCOCK – ASST. D.C.

**FRONT ROW L-R:** J.A. LOWE – CHAPLAIN, J.W. SHARP – S.W, J.H. PARKER-JERVIS – W.M, K. JOHNSTON – J.W. & W.G. WEEKS – TREASURER.

(RED TEXT DENOTES THE ORIGINAL 15 FOUNDER MEMBERS)

After the first meeting the brethren retired to the Salutation Hotel for dinner. The building that once was the hotel still stands on the corner of Market Place and Church Street but has now been converted into residential flats (see below – photo courtesy of Mick Lobb).



At this time the Installation month was September, therefore the Minutes recorded that at the meeting held in January 1975, Brothers George Packford and James Simpson were both Passed to the Second Degree. The Tracing Board that evening was explained by W. Bro Cecil Manners. Also, at this time the lodge did not meet in the month of February but did meet in March and April. It is also worthy of note that the meeting day was the third Friday in the regular meeting months.

The first Installation meeting was held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1975. The brethren stood to order in memory of W. Bro J. Shain, an

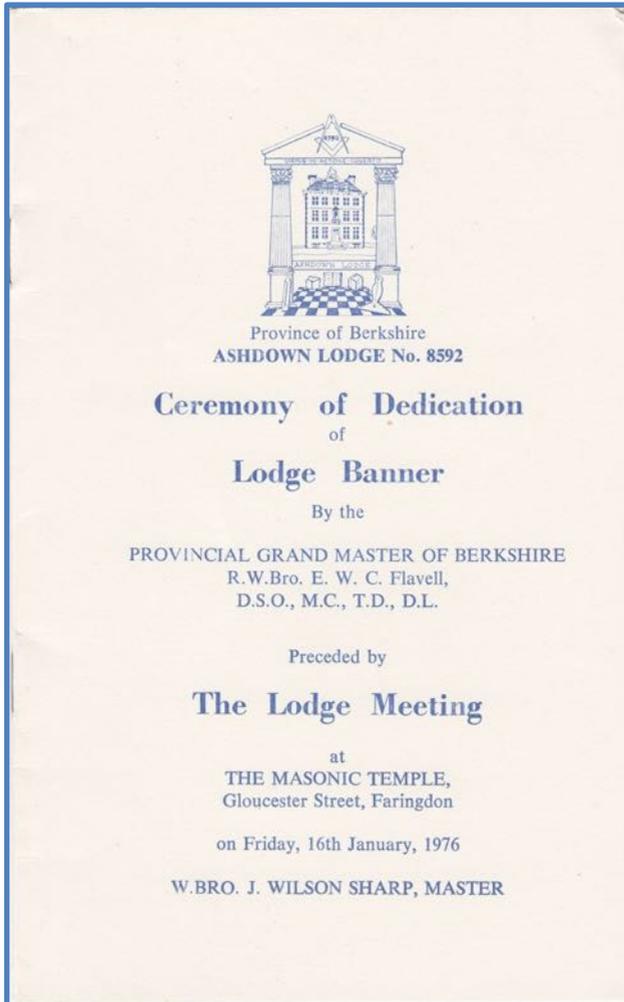
Honorary Member of the lodge who had acted as D.C. at the consecration meeting. Installed in the chair was W. Bro Wilson Sharp, an experienced mason. It was at this meeting that the ballot box that is still used today was donated and presented by W. Bro Gordon Fowler. The dinner for that meeting was held at the Corn Exchange rather than the Salutation and there were 58 brethren present, 37 of which were visitors. The cost of the dinner that evening was £2.25 per person.

The following meeting in October 1975 was a busy one in that two brethren were passed to the second degree, Bros William Jack and Richard McQueen. There was also a ballot for three candidates, David Williams from Wantage, Don Allen from Shrivenham and Peter Nunn from Longcott. It was common among lodges at this time to, once a year, read out the lodge by-laws. The minutes noted that it was an extract or selection from the by-laws rather than the whole book. This practice is no longer carried out.

In November the agenda was still a busy one with a double initiation. David Williams and Don Allen were brought into the lodge to begin their long association with Freemasonry. Both brethren have now passed to the Grand Lodge above.

In January of the new year, the agenda was even busier with two brethren being passed to the Second Degree. This was followed by the Ceremony of Dedication of the Lodge Banner. The Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro E.W.C. Flavell, took the Worshipful Master's chair and proceeded with the ceremony. The dinner that evening was held at the Corn Exchange in view of the large numbers attending which on that night was 76. The minutes of the

following meeting in March provided the information that W. Bro Alf Beverton's wife had made the lodge banner.



The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1976 record the admission of the first Hopgood into the lodge. This would be the start of many of the same Hopgood family with several members

still active today. Bro Given Harold William Hopgood was initiated into Norman Gate Lodge No 8116 in January 1975 and was proposed as a joining member by W. Bro John Lowe and seconded by H.W.G. Millard.

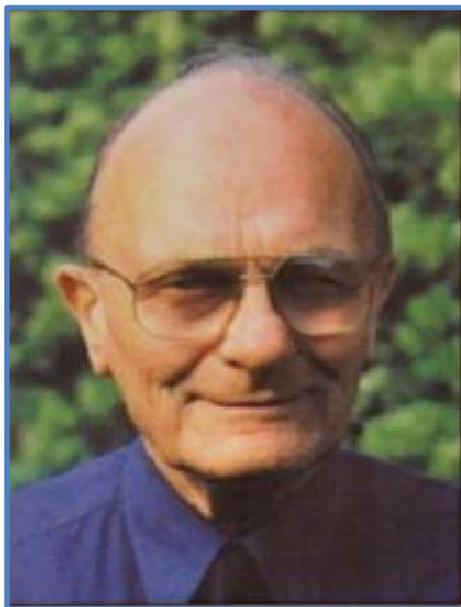
W. Bro Ken Johnston became the third Worshipful Master at the Installation of Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September 1976. From the minutes of this meeting, we learn that the sum of £25 was given to W. Bro Alf Beverton to assist him in the purchase of his Grand Lodge clothing upon his being appointed to the same. The cost of the dinner at the Corn Exchange that evening had crept up to £2.50.

At the first meeting in 1977, Mr Montague James Lee was initiated on the 21<sup>st</sup> January. Monty, as he became known, was a tall, well-spoken character. He was a Flying Instructor by profession and became the Master of the lodge in 1986. He died suddenly in 1990 and his wife donated his state-of-the-art electronic organ to the lodge. It has been used continuously since then and even though very outdated is still in use up to the time of printing (2024).

Two more Hopgoods were brought into the lodge at the March meeting of 1977, Ronald Alfred and Keith who were Initiated together at the same meeting. This was the first double ceremony performed by the lodge. The latter went on to be Master in 1987 and is still a past master to date. At the meeting the following month, the Secretary, W. Bro Alf Beverton, placed several items on the Agenda in order to alter the by-laws. From this we learn that the annual subscription for membership would become £12 as from 1<sup>st</sup> September 1977. But for the future, the day of the Regular meetings would be changed from Friday to the third Thursday of September, October, November, Installation in January, not meet

in February then meet in March and April. These changes would be effective from 1979. (And the reason why Lawrence William Spence appears twice on the Masters board).

Admitted into the lodge as a Joining Member in September 1978, was W. Bro Alec Chambers, a Past Master of the Mother Lodge 1770. Alec was born in 1925 which meant that at that time he was a mere 53 years of age. He became Master of Ashdown in 2014, which meant that, much to his mischievous satisfaction, his name was then appended to all three boards in the Masonic Centre, 1770, 8592 and 1770 Chapter. A veteran RAF Engineer, Alec was active during the Berlin Airlift in 1946 and stories of his exploits are legendary to those who had the privilege to hear them. But sadly, he passed away peacefully, with his daughter by his side, to the Grand Lodge Above (GLA) on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2024, aged 99 years.



As a Past Master of the Vale of White Horse Lodge 1770, and a Founder Member of Ashdown Lodge, the Installation of W. Bro Dennis Plowright on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1979, was always going to be a popular meeting. A glance at the Attendance Register confirmed this entirely (see below).

**Regular Meeting of Ashdown Lodge No. 3502**  
 Held at Ashdown Hall, Ashdown, Oxfordshire, on Monday 18th January 1979  
 (Attendance Register for the evening of 18-19 Jan 1979 - 1770-1771)

**OFFICERS:**  
 W.M. [Signature]  
 P.M. [Signature]  
 Secy [Signature]  
 Treas [Signature]  
 M.O. [Signature]  
 J.P. [Signature]  
 J.S. [Signature]  
 J.C. [Signature]  
 J.M. [Signature]  
 J.W. [Signature]  
 J.E. [Signature]  
 J.R. [Signature]  
 J.L. [Signature]  
 J.K. [Signature]  
 J.H. [Signature]  
 J.G. [Signature]  
 J.F. [Signature]  
 J.D. [Signature]  
 J.C. [Signature]  
 J.B. [Signature]  
 J.A. [Signature]

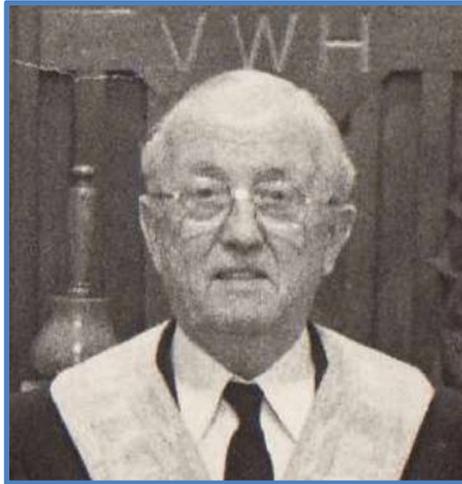
**PAST MASTERS:**  
 [List of names and signatures]

**MEMBERS:**  
 [List of names and signatures]

**VISITORS:**

No.	Name	Lodge	No.	Rank	Invited by
1	Mr. A. W. [Name]	[Lodge]	5252	W.M.	[Name]
2	Mr. J. [Name]	[Lodge]	5202	W.M.	[Name]
3	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	5112	W.M.	[Name]
4	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	5102	W.M.	[Name]
5	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	5012	W.M.	[Name]
6	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4912	W.M.	[Name]
7	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4812	W.M.	[Name]
8	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4712	W.M.	[Name]
9	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4612	W.M.	[Name]
10	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4512	W.M.	[Name]
11	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4412	W.M.	[Name]
12	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4312	W.M.	[Name]
13	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4212	W.M.	[Name]
14	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4112	W.M.	[Name]
15	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	4012	W.M.	[Name]
16	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3912	W.M.	[Name]
17	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3812	W.M.	[Name]
18	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3712	W.M.	[Name]
19	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3612	W.M.	[Name]
20	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3512	W.M.	[Name]
21	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3412	W.M.	[Name]
22	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3312	W.M.	[Name]
23	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3212	W.M.	[Name]
24	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3112	W.M.	[Name]
25	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	3012	W.M.	[Name]
26	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2912	W.M.	[Name]
27	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2812	W.M.	[Name]
28	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2712	W.M.	[Name]
29	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2612	W.M.	[Name]
30	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2512	W.M.	[Name]
31	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2412	W.M.	[Name]
32	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2312	W.M.	[Name]
33	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2212	W.M.	[Name]
34	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2112	W.M.	[Name]
35	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	2012	W.M.	[Name]
36	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1912	W.M.	[Name]
37	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1812	W.M.	[Name]
38	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1712	W.M.	[Name]
39	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1612	W.M.	[Name]
40	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1512	W.M.	[Name]
41	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1412	W.M.	[Name]
42	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1312	W.M.	[Name]
43	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1212	W.M.	[Name]
44	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1112	W.M.	[Name]
45	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	1012	W.M.	[Name]
46	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	912	W.M.	[Name]
47	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	812	W.M.	[Name]
48	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	712	W.M.	[Name]
49	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	612	W.M.	[Name]
50	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	512	W.M.	[Name]
51	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	412	W.M.	[Name]
52	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	312	W.M.	[Name]
53	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	212	W.M.	[Name]
54	Mr. [Name]	[Lodge]	112	W.M.	[Name]

It was a big meeting and that evening after the ceremony, the dinner was held at the Salutation Hotel at a cost of £3.50 per person. Dennis Plowright (Below) lived to be 103 years of age.



With all that is going on with the lodge building at Gloucester Street today in 2023/4, it's interesting to read on the agenda for the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1979 that Ashdown Lodge should consider donating £250 to the Vale Lodge towards the cost of the new heating in the Temple. This would be referring to the seven electric filament heaters that consume a huge amount of electricity at great cost today.

At the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> November, the start time was listed as 5.45 pm instead of the usual 6 o'clock. This was to allow a little more time to carry out the ceremony of passing to the second degree for Bro Derek Woolford and then Initiate Peter Knowland. Bro Woolford was a Butcher who ran a shop in the high street in Shrivenham and Bro Knowland ran a BMW car dealership in Newbury. Both have now passed to the GLA.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April the following year, two more Hopgoods came into the lodge. And like their relatives three years previously, they

too were Initiated together on the same evening. Allan Gordon and Malcolm were proposed by their father Bro Given Hopgood and seconded by W. Bro John Lowe. The Working Tools that evening was presented by Bro Keith Hopgood. They were also Passed together at the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> April 1980 when the Working Tools were presented by Bro Ben Hopgood. And what must be quite unique, they were both Raised to the degree of a Master Mason at the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1981. The Working Tools on that occasion were presented by W. Bro John Lowe.

Trying to reduce lodge expenditure, the Secretary W. Bro Alf Beverton, (Below) in August 1980, sent out the Summons' for the meetings of September, October and November as one. He noted that, *'the Agenda for the September meeting is given below, Agendas for the other two meetings will be available in the lodge on the evening. As you know, this is an attempt to contain the heavy postal charges ...'* This was in the days when all correspondence had to be sent to members by post. The rapid advancement in technology is remarkable when in the 1980s, sending messages by the push of a button that could be received instantly was unheard of. It is probably fair to say now that all lodges send correspondence by electronic mail.



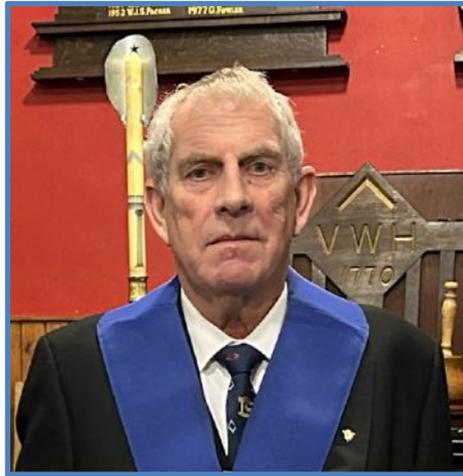
At the Installation meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1981, before the reigning master W. Bro Gordon Fowler installed his successor, he thanked the Master Elect, Bro Kurt Erbsmehl and Bro David Williams for their generous gift to the lodge of new Collars for the WM and Wardens.

An item on the agenda dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 1981 proposed that the annual lodge subscription should be raised to £15.

The Master Elect on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1982 was W. Bro Malcolm Reid. It was noted that dinner would be held at the Faringdon Community Centre and that the cost would be £6.50 per member.

Henry Bishop (Below) was Initiated at the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> April 1983, Proposed by Bob Andrews and Seconded by Kurt Erbsmehl. W. Bro Bishop went on to become a Grand Lodge officer and is still

very active today. W. Bro Bob Andrews Initiated the author of this book at the meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> April 1985.



At January 1986 there were 58 members of the Lodge. The list produced at that time included 10 honorary members who were Provincial Officers and had officiated at the consecration. The number of subscribing members therefore was 48.

At the beginning of 1986 there were changes made by UGLE to the ritual. It was felt that the wording in the obligations taken by candidates was no longer appropriate, coming from an earlier historical age that included somewhat harsh and brutal consequences for any member revealing masonic secrets. The penalties were always intended to be symbolic and there is no recorded instance of them ever being carried out, but it seems prudent that they are now consigned to history. It is recorded that there were several demonstrations by lodge officers of the ritual alterations.

At the return to lodge after the summer break of 1985, the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September 1985, recorded that dinner had been arranged at the Crown Hotel rather than the Salutation. This is in the Market Place, Faringdon, and is an old Coaching Inn. (Below).



At the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> March 1987, two brethren were proposed for Initiation. Firstly, the Hopgood family wanted to bring in Mr Ian R.G. Hopgood, and W. Bro Monty Lee proposed to bring in Mr Ernst-Otto C.P. Dahm. Mr Ian Hopgood would go on to greater masonic acclaim – more below. Mr Ernst-Otto Dahm lived in Spain and would fly himself into Oxford Airport for the meetings, the connection being that W. Bro Monty Lee ran a flying school at that airport.

At the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> March 1988, a Notice of Motion was given to raise the Lodge subscription to £20 per member. There was also some financial juggling of the figures to alter the financial year from September to January 1<sup>st</sup>. It can also be noted here that

conversations were taking place about the starting times of lodge meetings. It was a time of change for the working man and younger members of the lodge were finding it more difficult to get to lodge at 6pm. Although only a small change, the usual starting time (other than at Installation) was altered to 6.15pm. Also at this meeting, W. Bro Noel Needler was congratulated on his appointment as a Grand Lodge Officer. (Below).



Cushions for the principal officer's chairs were donated by W. Bro Peter Knowland and W. Bro Don Whittle of the Vale of White Horse Lodge. They were thanked at the meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> September 1988.

It's interesting to note that it was the summons of 20<sup>th</sup> November 1986 that a change to the layout of it was made to include the Treasurer's details as well as the Secretary. At the time it was W. Bro Malcolm Reid and W. Bro Frank Pearce respectively.

At the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> September 1990, after the lodge was opened, the brethren stood in memory of W. Bro Monty Lee who had recently passed to the Grand Lodge Above. It was after this meeting that the venue for the lodge dinner was changed from the Crown Hotel to the Corn Exchange.

The condition of the Masonic Hall building, being a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel built in 1830 was in poor condition and in need of renovation. Plans were made in 1991 to make substantial alterations to the building and the brethren of Ashdown Lodge, Vale of White Horse and Chapter were asked make pledges of financial support for the project. However, it was discovered that the scale of the plans would involve much more finance than could be raised by the brethren. It was therefore decided to abandon the project for the time being.

Henry Bishop was Installed in the chair in 1992 and because the SW, John Wilson Sharpe was unable to continue to the chair for the second time, W. Bro Bishop remained in office as WM for a further year.

The meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 1995 was a White Table when the ladies came to dinner and there was a Video shown on the Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys.

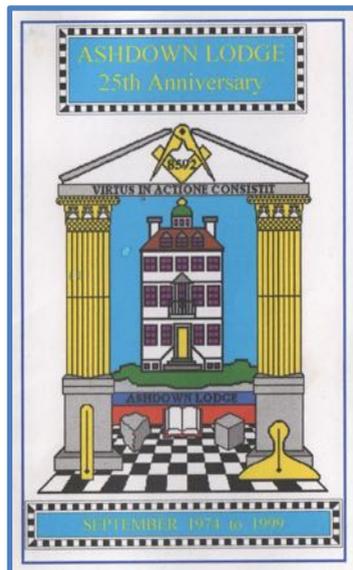
Nick Smith was installed on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 1997. Behind the scenes there was a certain amount of controversy with the appointments that he had made to his list of officers. This resulted in two resignations that were read out at the Installation meeting of W. Bros David Williams and Kirt Erbsmehl, the latter being a Founder Member of the lodge.

At the meeting of March 1997, a Notice of Motion was given to change the lodge meeting months to the third Thursday of September, October, November, January, February and March as of 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1998. It was voted upon and passed at the meeting of April 1997 and remains in force to this day.

The Installation of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1998 recorded what was to be the largest gathering of masons at an Ashdown meeting with 108 brethren assembled. (105 sat down to dinner). It also set another record for the largest number of the Hopgood family at one meeting. The photo below shows from left to right: *Winston, Allan, Richard, Ben, Ian* (newly Installed WM), *Given, Malcolm, Keith*, representing three generations. From his Initiation on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1987 into Craft Masonry, Ian Richard Given Hopgood was Exalted into Royal Arch Masonry on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1992. He then went on to become the Grand Superintendent in and over Berkshire on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (his birthday) at Sindlesham. Having completed his term of office he received the active office of Grand Sword Bearer (2023) and his prefix is now Very Worshipful Brother. (See below).



The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lodge was marked by the printing of a booklet. (See below). A Service of Thanksgiving was carried out at the meeting of September 1999, a copy of which is in the Minute book. The ceremony that evening was the Passing of Bro Ian Bennett, with W. Bros Kirt Erbsmehl taking the chair of WM and Dennis Plowright explaining the Tracing Board. A team from Provincial Grand Lodge also attended and the Minutes from the Consecration meeting was read out.



The Installation of 2002 required a dispensation to alter the date by one week later to the 24<sup>th</sup> of January. It was at that meeting that a new chest of Working Tools was presented to the lodge by W. Bro Neil B. Maw, an acting provincial officer at the time, and the

newly installed Worshipful Master that evening, W. Bro Marcus J. Hilsdon. The tools are now used by Ashdown and Vale of White Horse.

In September 2004, a message was received by the Almoner from the Trustees of the Berkshire Masonic Charity, to the effect that a donation would be sent to any hospice that assists or cares for a brother up the point of death.

At the Installation in January 2005, the brethren stood to order in memory of those who lost their lives in the Asian Tsunami Disaster that had occurred the month previous.

W. Bro Victor Brown (below) was Initiated on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008. He was the uncle of Bros Malcolm and Ian Bennett and through a spinal operation when he was age 44 that left him paralysed, was confined to a wheelchair. Much planning took place as to how the ceremony should be conducted to cater for his limited mobility. It was a memorable occasion and Bro Brown enjoyed the ceremony and his welcome into the Lodge and Freemasonry. He was Passed at the October meeting and Raised on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Vic became a dedicated Freemason and hardly missed a ceremony or LoI and was most proud to become WM in 2017. At the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting of 2023 he was appointed PPrAGDC. Sadly, after suffering a period of poor health, he passed to the GLA on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



At the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009 there was a lecture given by W. Bro John Avery, the Prov Grand Orator, entitled Free and of mature age and the Middle Chamber – The Intellectual Faculty.

Because the Corn Exchange building was closed for renovations, the dinner instead was held at the Catholic Church Hall, located to the rear of main church in Marlborough Street, Faringdon. Whereas alcohol could be consumed on the premises it was not licenced to sell it, so the brethren were asked to bring their own beverages. Dinners were resumed at the Corn Exchange in September after the summer break of 2011.

At the October meeting of 2011 a tribute was made for W. Bro Dennis Plowright who passed to the GLA on 27<sup>th</sup> July. He was a Founder Member and had reached the age of 103. Mobility issues had made it difficult for him to attend lodge in the recent months.

At the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013, W. Bro Nick Smith (Below) presented the lodge with a new Past Master's Collar and Jewel that he had refurbished.



Terry O'Brien was admitted into the Lodge as a Joining member. He was a Past Master of the Arthur Williams Lodge No 3052 & Buttercross Lodge No 7240. He was an actor by profession and had appeared in many BBC plays. A most interesting character and he became a much-respected member of the lodge. His health and eyesight deteriorated and sadly he passed to the GLA on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

At the March meeting of 2014, the Almoner informed the brethren that Ann Weeks the widow of Founding Member, Bill Weeks was ill but now more comfortable in her present accommodation. By September of that year, she had been in hospital and would need

an orthopaedic bed. The lodge helped with the cost of the bed by donating £500.

Due to a problem at the Corn Exchange, the Lodge dinner was held at the Bowl's Club just over the road after the October meeting of 2014. It was a one-off occasion and dining arrangements returned to normal subsequently.

At the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the Provincial Orator attended the lodge and gave two talks, one called '*The Journey Begins*' and the other '*King Solomon, Man of Wisdom or Folly?*'

Much emphasis was being placed on screening for Prostate Cancer. Although the PSA blood testing is not a definitive indication for the disease, medical advice suggested that it was adequate to indicate if a person should be tested further. Many lodges around the country began to hold regular PSA testing sessions and still do today.

Because W. Bro Craig Godwin was the WM of the Country Sports Lodge 9810, it would have been a breach of the BOC for him to be installed at the meeting of Ashdown Lodge on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Subsequently, a Dispensation was applied for to Grand Lodge and granted. The document is delightfully pompous, and a copy may be seen below of the certificate and himself.

## United Grand Lodge of England

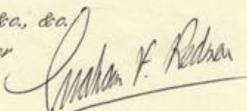
To the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren of  
Ashdown Lodge No. 8592

Whereas you have represented to the Most Worshipful The Grand Master that for the reasons stated in your application you are desirous of installing as Master of your Lodge Brother **Craig Frank Godwin** who is at present Master of the **Berkshire Country Sports Lodge No. 9810** and is not qualified except by Dispensation to be Master of another Lodge And whereas you have requested the Most Worshipful The Grand Master to grant a **Dispensation** to enable you so to do and the Most Worshipful The Grand Master having considered your application has been pleased to accede to your request You are accordingly hereby authorised to install the said Brother as Master of your Lodge, provided he shall have been duly elected in conformity with the Laws of the Craft and the By Laws of your Lodge.

You are to cause this Dispensation to be read in your Lodge before the Installation and recorded on the Minutes.

Given at Freemasons' Hall, London  
this 4<sup>th</sup> day of January A.L. 6019 A.D. 2019

By Command of His Royal Highness  
the Duke of Kent, K.G., &c., &c., &c., &c.  
Most Worshipful Grand Master

  
Deputy Grand Secretary  
for Grand Secretary



Mentioned in the Minutes of the meeting of September 2017, was the event that took place at the farm of Charity Steward, W. Bro Alan Cottrell. A Clay Pigeon Shoot, Pig Roast and Barn dance raised the huge sum of £5000 that would go to the 2023 Festival.

The meeting due to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was all set to go as normal and the Summons had been sent out, but it was not to be – the Pandemic of 2020 – everything went into Lockdown. There were to be no more meetings until authorised to do so from Grand Lodge. Ashdown was not due to meet again anyway until September of that year. The emergency was caused by the virus that that became known as Covid 19, a very contagious virus that destroyed lungs. The very young were not affected; to the elderly it was deadly and in the early stages, the death toll was high among that age group. In the Autumn of 2020, some brethren did meet at the lodge room under stringent safety measures, but it was

voluntary only (See below). A second flair-up of the virus caused Grand Lodge to cancel all meetings again until the summer of 2021.



The first meeting to go ahead with normality was held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021. A Proclamation was made and that W. Bro Andrew Rayson (Below) was declared as WM for the remainder of the year. He had missed out on his entire previous year, so it was only right that he was able to salvage as much as he could for the second half of 2022. Bros Leighton Clack was invested as SW, Darren Bond as JW & re-appointed W. Bro Ian Bennett as Tyler. The ceremony of Passing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree was carried out for Bro Tom Harris.



The first appearance of a QR code on the Lodge Summons took place in March 2022. This enabled any brother with a smart phone to donate money to masonic charity in any sudden moment of benevolence. It was perhaps designed to provide another means of dropping spare cash into the top pocket of Bro Charity Steward's jacket.

After an initial training period for lodge secretaries, the Hermes computer system was launched for the Province of Berkshire on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022. It was designed to make secretarial work simpler and remove time consuming activities such as Rule 158 BOC checks to other provinces when a brother joins or is initiated. Although there were numerous anomalies encountered in the period after launch, the system works well and is easy to use. (Personal opinion of Neil B. Maw, Secretary at 2024).

The brethren of the Ashdown Lodge joined the whole of the people of the United Kingdom in mourning the passing of Her

Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, aged 96 years. She had reigned for 70 years and nearly all the brethren had known no other monarch.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Berkshire has encouraged all lodges to consider assisting other lodges when they have no candidates for ceremonies. On the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the brethren of Ashdown carried out a second degree for Hungerford Lodge, No 4748, by Passing their Bro Luke Soulby. It was a pleasant evening and attended by several visitors from that lodge.

During the years of 2023 and 2024, the lodge building at Gloucester Street, Faringdon has undergone significant refurbishment. The first stage being the lobby and toilet areas was carried out through the summer months of 2023. It became a bigger task than expected when dry rot was discovered in several sections. That work was completed by the start of the new masonic season in September. Work on the temple area was carried out during the late summer months of 2024, following a close examination of the roof timbers. The fitting of a lowered suspended ceiling and a modern heating system has since been completed. A portion of this work was paid for by a large legacy from the late W. Bro Brian Barnes – much missed by the brethren of all Faringdon lodges.

## Worshipful Masters of Ashdown Lodge 8592

J. Parker Jervis	1974
J. Wilson Sharp	1975
K. Johnston	1976
L.W. Spence	1977
L.W. Spence	1978
D. Plowright	1979
G. Fowler	1980
K. Erbsmehl	1981
M.S. Read	1982
D.W. Williams	1983
D.E. Allen	1984
R. Andrews	1985
M.J. Lee	1986
K. Hopgood	1987
P.H. Knowland	1988
A.P. Beverton	1989
N.V.B. Needler	1990
M. Hopgood	1991
H. Bishop	1992
H. Bishop	1993
N.B. Maw	1994
A.G. Hopgood	1995
J.L. Parr	1996
N.W. Smith	1997
I.R.G. Hopgood	1998
S.J. Devlin	1999

J.W. Hignett	2000
J.R. Wilkinson	2001
M.J. Hilsdon	2002
A.J. Cottrell	2003
S.L. Ostrowski	2004
R. Sutton	2005
P.J. Payne	2006
M.T. Bennett	2007
I. Bennett	2008
M.J. Morris	2009
N.M. McLaughlin	2010
N.W. Smith	2011
M.D. Wilcox	2012
N.B. Maw	2013
A.E.F. Chambers	2014
C.J.H. Henderson	2015
M.S. Reid	2016
V.E.S. Brown	2017
I. Yapp	2018
C.F. Godwin	2019
A.M. Rayson	2020
A.M. Rayson	2021
L.R. Clack	2022
D. Bond	2023
M.J. Hilsdon	2024

### **Treasurers of the Lodge**

William G. Weeks	1974 - 1985
Malcolm S. Reid	1986 - 1989
Malcolm Hopgood	2000 - 2004
Stephen J. Devlin	2005 - 2010
Ian R.G. Hopgood	2011 - 2021
Andrew Rayson	2022 -

### **Secretaries of the Lodge**

Alfred P. Beverton	1974 - 1980
Francis E. Pearce	1981 - 1994
Keith Hopgood	1995 - 2003
Nicholas W. Smith	2004 - 2004
Henry Bishop	2005 - 2012
Allan Hopgood	2013 - 2021
Neil B. Maw	2022 -

Subscribing Members who have Passed to  
the Grand Lodge above.

B.R. Thew	1/9/1978
R.A. Pearson	9/11/1981
Richard G. McQueen	25/10/1983
George H. Packford	6/5/1989
John H. Parker-Jervis	22/10/1989
Montague J. Lee	7/7/1990
Cecil B. Manners	17/4/1992
Alfred P. Beverton	30/1/1993
William G. Weeks	22/7/1993
Charles W. Brookson	14/8/1994
John A. Lowe	24/5/1995
John Wilson Sharpe	14/11/1999
Peter H. Knowland	30/12/1999
Michael W. Bailey	16/12/2000
Dennis Glyn Woods	14/9/2001
Noel V.B. Needler	10/5/2003
Given H.W. Hopgood	12/8/2006
Francis E. Pearce	25/9/2006
Charles A. Worthington	7/12/2006
Dennis Plowright	27/7/2011
Carl J.N. Hjul	29/1/2012
Geoffrey W.A. Pearce	23/3/2017
Terry P.B. O'Brien	29/5/2021
Victor E. S. Brown	27/3/2024
Alec E.F. Chambers	15/6/2024

## Past Masters

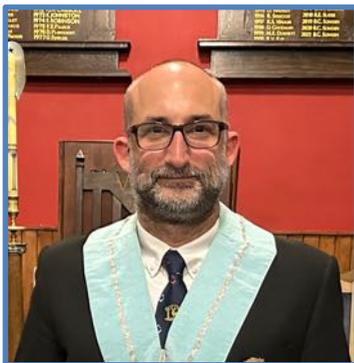


Darren Bond 2023



Ian Yapp 2018

Leighton R. Clack 2022.



Malcolm T. Bennett 2007





Martin D. Wilcox 2012



Neil B. Maw 1994 & 2013

Justin Henderson 2015



Silverio L. Ostrowski 2004



Stephen J. Devlin 1999



Ashdown Lodge No: 8592

Worshipful Master:

W. Bro Marcus J. Hilsdon



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting

Dear Sir and Brother

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024

By command of the Worshipful Master, you are summoned to attend the duties of your Lodge (301<sup>st</sup>) at the Masonic Hall, Gloucester Street, Faringdon on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024** at 6.15pm precisely

Yours faithfully and fraternally

W. Bro Neil B. Maw (Secretary)  
38 Woodson Road  
Swindon  
Wiltshire  
SN1 4JN  
Tel: 0977 034 6727  
Email: neil@neil-maw.co.uk

W. Bro Andy Rayson (Treasurer)  
Kuggar House  
Kuggar  
Helsdon  
Cornwall, TR12 7LX  
Tel: 07315 30069  
Email: andy.rayson@yahoo.co.uk

### Agenda

1. To approve the Minutes of the last Regular Meeting.
2. To hear Eulogies for our late W. Bro Vic Brown and Alec Chambers
3. To receive an Oration by W. Bro Stephen Devlin
4. To receive a short history of the Ashdown Lodge by W. Bro Neil Maw
5. To transact any other masonic business

The Worshipful Master is anxious to know of any brother who is ill or indisposed. Information about such brethren will be gratefully received by the Almoner, W. Bro Ian Yapp, 14 Lyddon Way, Gosmesmeadow, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN25 1PE. Tel: 07891 437682. Email: [ian.yapp@sky.com](mailto:ian.yapp@sky.com)

Please note that all payments to the Lodge would be much appreciated by BACS - it is Quicker, Safer and Cheaper. Our bank details are below.

**Ashdown Lodge: Sort Code: 30-93-18 Account No: 00623672**

Brethren wishing to dine and bring guests, should contact the Assistant Secretary Bro Luke Bennett, preferably by Email: [lukabennett@250yearsmedia.com](mailto:lukabennett@250yearsmedia.com) or by phone preferably text, 07901 573028. Bookings must be received by Saturday midnight before the meeting. Dining will be at the Corn Exchange, Faringdon and the Menu as chosen by the Lodge Committee is below:

**Consecration Dinner as enjoyed by Ashdown brethren on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1974**

*Prayer Cocktail Marie Rose*

*Consomme Maitre d'Hotel*

*Roast Sirloin of Beef Ashdown*

*Parisienne Potatoes*

*French Beans*

*New Baby Carrots*

*Fresh Pineapple Surprise*

*Cheese & Biscuits with Celery*

*Tea/Coffee*

Price £35

Payment by BACS preferred please (details above) or cheques on the night

**A lodge of Rehearsal will be held on Tues 17<sup>th</sup> Sept at 7.30pm**

**Lodge Mentoring Officer:** W. Bro Justin Henderson Email: [catejumbert@btinternet.com](mailto:catejumbert@btinternet.com)

**Visiting Lodge Officer:** W. Bro Paul Ackland-Snow Email: [paul.ackland-snow@gmail.com](mailto:paul.ackland-snow@gmail.com)

**Royal Arch Representative:** V.W. Bro Ian R.G. Hoggood. Email: [ianhoggood@btinternet.com](mailto:ianhoggood@btinternet.com)

### Emergency Precautions

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that they and their respective guests enter their names legibly (Printed - NOT a signature please) in the attendance book before each meeting. In the event of an alarm, all occupants should leave the building and gather outside on the pavement by Gloucester Street, where a Roll Call will be taken from the Attendance Register.

20 October 2023

R. J. E. CRAVEN  
DORSET, BETTVEILL  
THURRO KN14 7TA  
01424 82384

To the Worshipful Master, Officers & Members of  
Ashdown Lodge No. 8592

Brethren,

It is almost exactly 50 years  
ago since I last wrote to you with my  
good wishes and now I write with all  
the same good wishes for your  
fortieth anniversary. May there be  
another fifty years of good fellowship.

The word "Ashdown" means a lot  
to me as it was a family house for  
many years. My grandmother lived there  
for 40 years as a widow and it was my  
late father's home. There is a chapel to  
her at Ashbury Church & several relatives  
of Ashbury Chapel there. I do not  
remember her as she died shortly before  
I was born.

Rupert Craven M.M. Navy Lodge  
No 2612

P.S. Excuse the poor handwriting but it is  
not much worse than in 1974 pc.

To the Worshipful Master, Officers & Members of Ashdown Lodge No 8592

Brethren - It is almost exactly 50 years ago since I last wrote to you with my good wishes and now I write with all the same good wishes for your fiftieth anniversary. May there be another fifty years of good fellowship.

The word "Ashdown" means a lot to me as it was a family house for many years. My grandmother lived there for 40 years as a widow, and it was my late father's home. There is a chapel to her at Ashbury Church and several relatives of Ashbury Chapel there. I do not remember her as she died shortly before I was born.

**Rupert Craven.** M.M. Navy Lodge No 2612

## Officers of the Ashdown Lodge 2024

WM. W. Bro Marcus Hilsdon  
SW. Bro Grant Drury  
JW. Bro Glen Jones  
Chaplin W. Bro Steve Devlin  
Treasurer W. Bro Andy Rayson  
Secretary W. Bro Neil Maw  
DC. W. Bro Malcolm Bennett  
Almoner W. Bro Ian Yapp  
Charity Steward. W. Bro Alan Cottrell  
Membership Officer & Mentor, W. Bro  
Justin Henderson  
SD. Bro Ken Phillips  
JD Bro Steve Peregrine  
ADC. W. Bro Craig Godwin  
Org. W. Bro Neil Maw  
Ass Sec. Bro Luke Bennett  
IG. Bro James Hansen  
Stewards. Bro Tom Harris  
Bro Gareth Jones  
Bro Josh Taylor Davies  
Tyler. W. Bro Leighton Clack (IPM)  
RA Rep. VW. Bro Ian Hopgood.