

Commercial Lodge History & Customs

Masonic Lodges have many customs and traditions, and we are no exception. Listed below are a number of things that distinguish us from other Lodges. They are listed in the order of the length of time we have been doing them, not necessarily in order of importance.

Commercial Lodge was formed by a group of commercial traveling salesmen in 1913. They found it difficult to attend lodge meetings during the week so decided to form a new Lodge that would meet on Saturday. Several of these founding members were members of Unity Lodge No.51 and were of Scottish descent. The Lodge was granted its Charter in June 1914. In 1985 the members decided to try meeting on Saturday afternoon rather than at night, thus leaving Saturday evening free to spend with our wives and families. In 1986 the practice was adopted formally. With very few exceptions, our Lodge only meets once a month.

Music is another way our Lodge is special. For many years our Organist was Harry Farmer, a well known musician in Edmonton for decades. He passed away in 1986 and shortly afterwards Ted Arklie, a personal friend of Harry's and a wonderful musician himself, accepted an appointment as our organist. Sadly, Ted passed away in 2005, passing the torch to other musically-inclined brethren. The music at our meetings makes our meetings special and we miss it when our organist can't be there for some reason.

If a third degree is put on more than once in a Master's year, the Past Masters are asked to put it on. It doesn't happen very often and brings back lots of memories, and is quite enjoyable for the officers to watch for a change. The PM's have their work cut out, as Commercial Lodge prides itself on excellent ritual work! Our Lodge has a very dedicated group of Past Masters who are very supportive of the Worshipful Master and his officers, but will not interfere as a group in the running of the Lodge. A thirty-year tradition holds that twice a year (in the Spring and Fall), the Past Masters meet for a drink and dinner and chat with the Master.

In 1997 five members went to Scotland with the Grand Master's Scottish Tour. They visited Oban Commercial Lodge No.180 and struck up a sense of camaraderie. Oban Lodge gave us a Quaich, a traditional Scottish greeting cup from which the host and visitor share a drink of scotch. Now we pass the Quaich at our Festive Boards to share with our visitors. Members who have visited Oban Commercial Lodge act as host. All members of the Lodge are welcome to partake. In 1998, 16 Brethren from Oban Commercial Lodge visited us, and in 2000 our Master and Senior Warden visited them. In Spring of 2002, four Commercial Brethren went to Scotland, joined with Brethren from Oban Commercial and together visited Commercial 360 in Glasgow - the first meeting of three "Commercial" lodges and a great start to our Lodge's Correspondence Circle to bring together Commercial Lodges the world over. And so it goes, the beginning of another tradition.

Our final tradition is less tangible but the most important. We pride ourselves as being an active, well organized, democratic, cooperative and fun Lodge, and have a reputation for that throughout the Jurisdiction. We put an extra effort into mentoring our new members, involving them in our activities, and encouraging them to get involved with the life of the Lodge.

