

*Suite 619 was home from 1947 to 1951. A variety of suite-mates rotated through, 6 at a time, including Mo Goldstein, Jim Angelo, Ed David, Ed Orear, Godfrey Coate, and others. It was a great arrangement.*

*- Ewell C Johnson*

*My memory of Ashdown is not of just a residence or of a building. When I lived at Ashdown, its inclusive community welcomed me and inspired me to do more than just sleep and eat there. I made many friends--many of whom I am still in touch with today--, I learned about different cultures and research topics (through the “My Country” and “My Research” talks), and I cultivated interests besides research, such as art, music, sports, and others. Ashdown provided many opportunities to escape from the hectic pace and stressful standards at MIT. I know this is not by accident. This community is the lovechild of the efforts of many caring housemasters and dedicated residents. I thank all of those people who have pitched in over the years and who have contributed to the collective Ashdown spirit. It will survive in any part of the campus.*

*- Megan Hepler Blackwell*

*I remember Doc Ashdown well. I would often have a meal with him in the graduate house cafeteria, as it was called when I was there from 1957 to 1960. He would also go the Saturday night Boston Symphony Concert.*

*-Paul H. Carr*

*The smell of chocolate with a  
north wind and the smell of soap  
with a north-east wind and the  
smell of the Charles with a south  
wind in the summer.*

*-Jack Long*

*I lived at Ashdown House from 1975 to 1980. I remember birthday celebrations and potluck dinners on the Sixth Floor, weekly ice cream socials for the entire house hosted by the Hulsizers. During the Great Blizzard of February 1978, there was a large snowball fight in the courtyard. When the snow stopped, the streets were closed to most vehicles, and we walked along Mass Ave. from Ashdown House to Harvard Square.*

*- Michael C. Loui*

*My first year in the Ashdown House, my room was in the very front close to Memorial Drive. About 3AM there was a terrible, loud, rumbling noise. My roommate hid under the bed. I jumped up and went to the window, not worrying about my safety.*

*When I could only see a little commotion right below me, I got dressed and went out to Memorial Drive. A 16 wheeler truck that was in too much of a hurry had tried to go under the Mass Ave underpass, and its top had been sheered off and smashed into an accordion shape. The truck base had caved in and scraped along the road because it lost its top support, and all of its contents had spilled into the underpass. The driver was emotionally distraught but physically OK. Fortunately, it was a dry night because the truck was full of bags of powdered cement. Had it been raining, there would have been a long term mess!*

*- Arthur Obermayer*

*A Gentleman's Club and A Home Away From Home. That is how Doc Ashdown always spoke of the Grad House to those of us who were making our way through graduate studies at MIT during the 50s and 60s, when he was the seemingly ageless Head Resident in the splendid brick structure once known as The Riverside Hotel and which still maintained many of the amenities of an old luxury hotel. It was my privilege and pleasure to serve on the Executive Committee for a time, during which I met regularly with Doc and fellow residents, to deal with such matters as social events -- the regular Mixers to which young ladies would be invited, or the regular Dinners at which such notables as Niels Bohr would be present. There were usually traditional complaints, often having to do with the food service, though I myself never found anything to complain about with the 99cent special -- to which one could add rolls at no charge -- the staple of my own rather impoverished existence. The dining room in those days was very much like I imagine the Round Table at the Algonquin Hotel to have been, in the heyday of Robert Benchley and Dorothy Parker, with various self-styled Smart Sets meeting at lunchtime to discuss intellectual interests or perhaps plan a strawberry and champagne brunch on The Cape. A particular advantage of lunchtime dining at the Grad House was the inevitable presence of secretaries, a way of becoming acquainted with at least a few members of the fairer gender, in days when all levels of the student population were overwhelmingly male. Saturday nights were often spent enjoying the jam session of talented players of stringed instruments, supplemented with country and western vocals, say Sleepin' at the Foot of the Bed. Or viewing Sputnik from the roof. Well, it is a time now gone, replaced by memories of good friends and the heady experience of forefront science.*

*- Bruce Shore*

*I was GJEC Chairman 1965.*

*- Roger J. Sullivan*



*It was a Gentleman's (and now Gentlady's)  
Club and a home away from home. A  
marvelous opportunity to really get to  
know other fellow graduate students from  
different countries and different academic  
fields. Unsurpassed!! Some of my best  
friends still go back to the era of the  
Graduate House/Ashdown House.*

*- Robert A. Summers*

*I remember the cook-outs – big steaks, lobsters. I remember the cute mailboxes, and I remember how certain magazine (The Economist) in the lounge area was “chained”; down with a special binder...and yet somehow pages would still be missing.*

*- Koon-Ho J. Tam*

*I have very fond (though distant - 1965-67) memories of my time in Ashdown House. In fact, for years I designated my donation to MIT - Sloan to the Julie Fassett Fund named after the female half of the elderly couple who were the House Masters when I was there. I am glad the building will survive. After I read your note, I was concerned that the building was going to be razed and replaced with a shiny aluminum and glass high-rise. I'm sure that many current Ashdown residents will carry fond memories of you and your husband for many years. I will visit next time I am in the area. Sloan '67*

*- Mark Trozzi*

*I will not be able to make the Ashdown Alumni Dinner. I would like to relate one continuing experience I had with Professor Ashdown. This was back in 1962-1966. The Ashdown House was called the Graduate House, at least for part of that time. Professor Ashdown would hold a very informal breakfast meeting practically every day in the dining room. Anyone could join, you just came to the table and sat down. People would bring their New York Times, purchased for \$.10 at the desk. (I have continued to read the Times from that day on.) The first item that Ashdown would always bring up was "What is the weather in Calgary?" After that essential issue was resolved, we had a wide-ranging discussion about the topics of the day. I recall those breakfast meetings very fondly to this day.*

*- Joe Cornwell*

*Dr. Ashdown was a fine gentleman. It is a pleasure to think of him. I live just too far away to make the quick trip to Boston and back, too bad because the old Grad House was my home for many a pleasant month. I recall riding the elevator to the basement in order to take a shower and also that there was a piano in the basement where my buddy Bob Greene and I went once in a while.*

*He would play the piano and I the trumpet. Many a time I looked out the window while studying on a Sunday afternoon to see the citizens of Cambridge parked beside the Charles River, polishing their cars. My Harvard Business School buddy Frank Eck (the late Frank Eck) came up with his sleeping bag one evening and begged to stay with my roommate and me for a while. He was out of work and had to conduct a job search. We let him sleep on the floor but forced him to go into the closet to type his job applications because his typewriter made so much noise. Frank dated Dr. Ashdown's blonde secretary while he was with us, for which we admired him because she seemed so cold and distant that none of us dared approach her. And then, on December 3, 1949, Notre Dame played SMU in football with the great Doak Walker injured and on the bench for the whole game. Frank Eck was a Notre Dame graduate and my roommate was an SMU graduate. Notre Dame won it at the last moment, 27-20, not a time for good will in our room. I hope your dinner is a success.*

*- Oliver Axtell*

*I have very fond memories of my years at "The Graduate House" and then "Ashdown House" in the '60s. When I arrived in the Fall of 1962 and went to the cafeteria early in the morning. For several days, I sat alone before an older gentleman, who was sitting at a long table with several 'regulars' called me to sit with them. This was Dr. Ashdown, now the retired house master who was no-longer living in the Graduate House but who came for every breakfast at 7:00 AM and who carried on a lively conversation. These daily breakfasts started my day as long as I lived in the Graduate House. He was a good friend and in many ways he personified the spirit of MIT. His parting words were always said with great emphasis "Work Hard!" I have continued to live by these words and knowing him brightened my years at MIT. I am sorry not to be able to attend this dinner because of other business commitments.*

*- Dave Alles*

*I truly regret that I will not be able to attend the Alumni Dinner on April 26. I am certain it will be a great gathering and I send my best wishes to all. My stay at the Ashdown House (then, Graduate House) was a very meaningful experience for me as a recent immigrant and war survivor. I made many friends and began to feel at home in my new country.*

*Have a great event.*

*- Julian Bussgang*

*Among the most pleasant memories I have are of the very enjoyable musical brunches we held a few times each semester in the housemaster's apartment. Those were a welcome respite from the academic toils. But in many ways, Vernon and Beth Ingram always were there, counseling and supporting the residents or going to bat, joining the house officers when campus issues and politics needed to be battled.*

*- Michael Corvin*



*The Ashdown House reunion party on April 26 sounds like a wonderful idea, and I would very much like to be there. Unfortunately, I now live on the west coast and I don't think that it would be practical for me to return to Boston for the party. I'll be thinking of you, and the many friends from my days at Ashdown House. I hope that you and plenty of Ashdown House alums will have a superb party on April 26.*

*- John Keen*

*When I lived in room 223 with Tom Connor and Mike Tikson in 1956, things seemed rather simple. I don't remember meeting David A. Thomas the House Chairperson at the time. We had coffee every night with Avery Ashdown in the basement. After the coffee was brewed Ashdown would add a tablespoon or two of cold water. I asked him what that did. It wasn't exactly definable.*

*Then about 11 or 11:30 p.m, I would watch Steve Allen on the B&W TV for a few minutes as a break from course work. It was like the Gong Show; he always had some weirdoes performing on strange instruments or doing stupid pet tricks. It was dark in there and usually about 6 or 8 people whom I didn't know. As you said, I didn't know my next door neighbor. I did know 3 or 4 other grad students from the ME dept. I did my thesis under Prof. Kaye who did the Steam Tables which were still big at the time. The other ME grads and I would walk into Boston sometimes and have dinner at an Armenian restaurant called the Harpoot. Other times a visiting Prof named Knox Milsaps would take me out to dinner on Friday night to some places in Boston. I had to borrow \$400 from MIT at 1% to finish my MS. I sat next to Prof. Ashdown at lunch in the dining room lots of times. He was very approachable and fun to be around.*

*- Martin Anderson*

*I wish you all well in your endeavors with Ashdown house. Not only does the graduate house as it was known in my day remain in my memories but the housemaster Dr. Ashdown is surely as important if not more important to me since I was a new student at MIT and going to graduate school there was a real challenge to me at the time. Dr Ashdown as I recall was helpful in the transition for me from a CCNY undergraduate to a MIT graduate student which to mind at the time were worlds apart. To this day I appreciate all the efforts by the graduate house staff and especially Dr Ashdown to enable me to make that transition and graduate. It has been over fifty years since I spent two very enjoyable years there (1951-1953) and my memories about the place are still there. I will never forget the music room that was available to students for one hour where classical records could be played and enjoyed and of course the buttery hour with Dr Ashdown was a highlight for me as well. The rooms were very comfortable and I looked forward to getting a single one during my last graduate year there and enjoyed the experience a lot. The MSEE DEGREE I received from MIT in 1953 shaped my future professional life and of course my personal life and I have always been grateful for the opportunity afforded me by MIT.*

*- Sol Kurtzman*

*I have so many memories of Ashdown House. I was among those who campaigned for it to become co-ed. Met there for the first time an international milieu. I resided for six years always with two roommates. I could easily write a novel of my experiences only someone has already pre-empted the title: *Of Human Bondage*. Yet there were some high moments and I daresay I came away a very different person.*

*- Jesse Schwartz*

*I lived in Ashdown House from 1988-1993 while studying for my Ph.D. at MIT. It was an important part of my graduate experience at MIT, and on-campus housing is vital to many graduate students. I grew up on a farm in Minnesota, and had never been on a plane before going off to MIT. I arrived at Logan with one suitcase and a trunk. A \$10 cab ride brought me to Ashdown. I met many close friends at Ashdown, and remember cooking in the second floor kitchen, playing pool in the basement and socializing in the Thirsty Ear after IM softball games.*

*- John Smith*

*I cherish my days in about '62 at  
Ashdown under Francis Bitter and  
wife. We lunched often with Doc  
Ashdown and had late night snacks  
with Francis Bitter frequently.  
What a terrific tradition.*

*- Ralph Mor*

*I was a course 5 graduate student in the '60s, and lived for two years on Ashdown's second floor (or was it the third?) in a suite overlooking the dock. Avery Allen Ashdown would often breakfast with residents. While I was there, The Thirsty Ear was established within Ashdown. Is this watering hole still in existence?*

*- Tom Thibault*

*Many of my fondest memories of the years at MIT have to do with Ashdown House - for example - the weekly cookie and milk gatherings Dr. Ashdown arranged. I believe the charge was one nickel per glass of milk including all the cookies you could eat.*

*- Gerald Lyons*



*I may be one of its oldest residents  
1938-1941 during the time Professor  
Ashdown was Housemaster. I  
remember Ashdown House not only  
as a wonderful residence but as a  
place of intense shared learning  
amongst the graduate students  
during the build up to World War II.*

*- Albert M. Clogston*

*I stayed at Ashdown in Fall 2005  
and it was wonderful. The spirit of  
the people is what I like the most.*

*- Fatwa F. Abdî*

*I lived in Ashdown House from 1984-1989. It was a memorable experience -- I enjoyed the living space, the company, the house-master's hospitality. It was my home, and it is still my home in my heart.*

*- Gurumurthy Kalyanaram*

*Wonderful lunches and dinners  
in the Ashdown House cafeteria,  
1967 - 1969*

*- Duane J. Matthiesen*

*My husband, GK, reminisces fondly of his life and living in Ashdown House for five years. I have never seen the House, and this is my opportunity and time to visit and connect with the House.*

*- Santha Ramakrishnan*

*I attended a previous Ashdown  
dinner a few years ago. I  
enjoyed the concert especially.*

*- Anne K. Smith*

*I was a member of the Cherry Pie Society, which met monthly with Dr. Ashdown, to share experiences on topics which were not our professional expertise. Grad. students and alumni were involved and we learned a lot from each other, enjoying the sociability as well. Cherry pie was always a la mode.*

*- Winthrop W. Smith*