

A Guide For A New Companion



Welcome Companion and congratulations on becoming a Royal Arch Freemason, we hope that you will enjoy your Royal Arch masonry for many years to come.

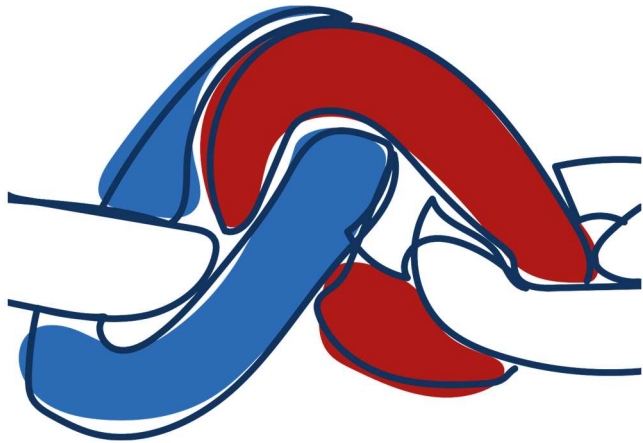
Hopefully this booklet will prove useful as you take your first steps into learning about the Royal Arch and the Order that you have now joined. Never be afraid to ask a question and above all else, remember to enjoy all of your Freemasonry.

To start your Royal Arch Journey, go to **'Solomon'** and have a look at the **'Welcome Companion'** module.



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The Royal Arch – What's it all about?

You will be aware that the Royal Arch or as its more commonly known 'Chapter' is not only an integral part of 'Pure Antient Masonry' as defined in the Book of Constitutions but is also the completion of your own personal journey in Freemasonry according to the United Grand Lodge of England.

The Royal Arch will provide you with very special feelings of friendship and companionship as those who have already embraced the order will testify.

In the Craft you were presented with a series of practical principles and tenets by which to live your life and be of service to your fellow man. But we are not just practical beings, we all have an essential spiritual aspect to our nature. That spiritual nature is introduced to us in the third degree where we are led to contemplate our inevitable destiny. That becomes the central message of the Royal Arch as you continue your journey of self-knowledge and discovery.



A potted history of the Royal Arch.

The Royal Arch as we know it today began with the Union of the Premier Grand Lodge and the Antients Grand Lodge in 1813. This union didn't completely clarify the position of the Royal Arch though and it was a further four years before the Supreme Grand Chapter of England was formed in 1817.

The Royal Arch degree somewhat predates the formation of Supreme Grand Chapter and it is

generally accepted that it was first practiced in England in 1752.

In Devon there are currently 51 Chapters with the oldest being The Friendship Chapter No 202 which meets in Plymouth and was consecrated in 1788. Our first Grand Superintendent was appointed on the 21st of January 1809 so you will appreciate that the history of the Royal Arch in Devon predates the formation of Supreme Grand Chapter.

Royal Arch Regalia

Like the Craft, the Royal Arch has differing regalia depending on the rank of the Companion. Remember that your sash is always worn over the left shoulder, tassels to the right hip and you do not wear Craft Jewels, (ie Past Masters jewels) in a Royal Arch Chapter, **however**, you should wear your Royal Arch jewel at all Craft meetings that you attend, and this jewel should always be worn closest to your heart.

The Royal Arch jewel is arguably the most important of all the masonic jewels. The design has remained virtually unchanged since 1807. It is full of symbolism and allegory and **Solomon**, our online learning portal, provides an amount of material to explore. There are two riddles within the jewel though and these are really interesting as, if you try to unravel this riddle then perhaps you will understand what freemasonry means to you?

The first is, '*Si Talia Jungere Possis Sit Tibi Scire Satis*' which translates as, 'If thou canst understand this thou knowest enough'. The second is '*Nil Nisi-s Clavis*

Deest' which translates as, 'Nothing is wanting but the Key'.



Companion



Excellent Companion



Provincial or
Grand Officers Jewel

The link between the Craft and the Arch is that it allows you to journey along the path of pure and antient freemasonry on your personal quest for knowledge and wisdom – Initiation to Exaltation.

The allegory of the discovered word is that you are discovering your personal key enabling you to gain a better knowledge of you, of your spirituality and of freemasonry – nothing is missing but the key AND if you knowest this then you knowest enough.

Royal Arch perambulations and signs.

In this Degree we do not acknowledge the square as a sign or symbol, so unlike in Craft, we do not step before we sign, and we do not square the thumbs in our signs.

Also, we do not square the Chapter, but instead we circle around it, and we can circle around the Chapter clockwise or anticlockwise.

There are no salutes or salutations given to any individual in the Royal Arch regardless of rank or office. The Reverential or Hailing Sign is given at the Opening and Closing of the Chapter and when entering or

retiring from the Chapter once it is opened. It is always directed towards the Name on the Pedestal, not to any individual Companion, and is always dropped before speaking. Remember, the thumbs of both hands are hidden.

When addressing any officer or Companion at any time a Court Bow should be used.

An appreciation of the Ceremony – The Sojourners Readings.

Before the first entrance - In the Craft, the background for our Ceremonies is the building of King Solomons Temple, starting with the foundation stone of the North East Corner and culminating with the death of Hiram Abiff and the loss of the genuine secrets of a Master Mason.

The background for the of the Royal Arch Ceremony is that some 400 years after the completion of King Solomons Temple, the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

Under the rule of their King, the Babylonians killed many of the people and exiled most of the rest to Babylon, leaving only a few behind to farm the land and to carry out other unskilled jobs.

Move forwards another 70 years and Babylon was overthrown by the Persians who also conquered what was left of Jerusalem. The Persian King was Cyrus and in historical terms he was renowned for of his habitual policy of respecting peoples' customs and religions in the lands that he conquered.

Within a year he issued a decree allowing the exiles from Jerusalem, along with their descendants, to return

home, in order to help rebuild their Holy City and its Temple.

The message of the Royal Arch is that it encourages you to build on the teachings of the Craft using the Working Tools of the Three Degrees to better understand yourself and looking at the spiritual side of your being rather than just the material.

Before the second entrance - This second part of the ceremony is a prequel to the first and provides some of the background from both a historical and a Biblical point of view.

You will remember that King Cyrus had issued a decree allowing the Hebrews and their descendants to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild their City and Temple. Historically this is known as The Edict of Cyrus.

Initially Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem with some 50000 people plus working animals and the contents of King Solomons Temple.

A little later more people arrived and in this part of the Ceremony the Candidate represents one of three Sojourners, or journeymen builders. The Sojourners present themselves to Zerubbabel's Council as Judeans and apply to work on the rebuilding of the Temple, happily accepting any work that is available. They are given work along with some pretty clear instructions.

Before the Third entrance - Chronologically this part of the ceremony follows on from the second part.

As masons the Sojourners have been carrying out that work allocated to them and have made a discovery which they report to Zerubbabel's Council.

It turns out that this discovery is hugely important and so the Sojourners are greatly rewarded for their efforts.

In completing your journey in pure and antient freemasonry you are able to discover the connection between the Craft and the Royal Arch – One Journey – Initiation to Exaltation.

From the foundation stone of the North East Corner, you have become a part of the superstructure where the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Conclusion - In the ceremony of Exaltation we become immersed in the rich and beautiful canvas that is the Royal Arch – the completion of pure and antient Freemasonry as practiced under the United Grand Lodge of England.

Everybody's journey in freemasonry is unique to them and the discoveries that we make are personal to us, but again, this evening, we are reminded of the valuable lessons of Companionship and teamwork.

Our three Sojourners, the heroes of our story, travelled together, worked together, trusted each other, found something together, reported that discovery together and were then rewarded accordingly.

Thus invested, rewarded, decorated and entrusted - Companionship is a very special thing.

The Chapter Officers.

As with the Craft there are two distinct groups of Chapter Offices, the progressive offices and the non-progressive, or administrative offices.

The non-progressive officers are, the Treasurer, the Scribe Ezra, (secretary), the Director of Ceremonies, the Almoner and the Charity Steward. Some Chapters also appoint an Assistant Director of Ceremonies, an Organist, and an Assistant Scribe Ezra.

The progressive Offices are, The Three Principals, Zerubbabel, Haggai and Joshua, the Scribe Nehemiah, the three Sojourners and the Chapter Stewards. The Stewards role is the same as in a Lodge.

Additionally, a Janitor will be appointed. Also there will be an Immediate Past Zerubbabel, although this is NOT an Office.

All the Chapter Officers are recognisable by their collar and jewel.

The Non Progressive Offices all have roles that mirror their Craft counterparts. Their jewels are also very similar, (see opposite), but are embraced within a triangle and with crimson collars.



The Three Principals sit in the East of the Chapter and represent Zerubbabel, Haggai and Joshua. Zerubbabel is the 1st Principal and sits in the centre, Haggai the 2nd and sits at Zerubbabel's right, and Joshua the 3rd who sits on Zerubbabel's left. The Three Principals rule the Chapter collectively.

Together the three Principals head up the Grand Sanhedrim, (or Court) which is represented by the whole of the Chapter.



The Scribe Nehemiah is a senior office in the Chapter. In some Chapters he sits in the South and in others he sits at the entrance. Like



Scribe Ezra he wears a surplus. In most Chapters these are white but in some Chapters they are green. His Duties mostly reflect those of the Craft Inner Guard. His jewel is the same as that of

Scribe Ezra, two pens in saltire embraced within a triangle.



The Three Sojourners sit in the West and their duties reflect those of the Deacons in the Craft. In many chapters today Sojourner's "work" is shared. The Sojourners wear white surplices and a Jewel which is a square.



The two Assistant Sojourner's wear identical jewels and the Principal Sojourner has a jewel with the square surmounting a Glory.

The Grand Originals

You will recognise that Chapter formalities continue in the Festive Board with the “toast” to the Grand Originals. This cannot actually be designated as a Toast as it precedes the first Toast, which is always to The King.

There is a fantastic paper on Solomon which looks at the Great or Grand Sanhedrim and at the three original Grand Lodges, suggesting that these Lodges were actually the Sanhedrims sitting at various points in the historical timeline.

In taking this toast, the glass is always raised with the left hand. There is no traceable explanation to this practice, but the main reason seems to be that the penal sign of a Royal Arch Mason is given with the left hand. Other plausible suggestions are that it is because the heart is on the left hand side of the body, or, there is also a tradition outside of Masonry of drinking a toast with the left hand if the object of the toast is deceased.

Epilogue

On the following page is the frontispiece to the 1723 Constitutions which offers an image of John Montagu, 2nd Duke of Montagu, Grand Master in 1721,

presenting the Constitutional Scroll and a set of compasses to Philip, Duke of Wharton, his successor.



Each is attended by his respective Grand Officers. Dressed in clerical vestments, Dr Jean Theophilus Desaguliers is placed on the far right.

In the central background framed by two rows of columns is an image of the parting of the Red Sea. Referencing the flight of the Israelites from Egypt and their journey across the Sinai Desert to the Promised Land, the image symbolises redemption and 'obtaining possession'. The pillars display the five orders of architecture: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite.

Pure and Antient Freemasonry consists of three Degrees and no more, those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Degree of the Holy Royal Arch.

The Royal Arch jewel is not just a jewel, it's a 'gem'. It is a constant, compact reminder of your Masonic journey through the Craft and including the Royal Arch;

of the indissoluble link between the two orders; of your own quest for knowledge which started with your Initiation and continued all the way through to your eventual Exaltation.

There are many different answers to what the Royal Arch discoveries represent, all of which may be equally relevant, equally personal, and equally important to different people. Look to find your own personal key and gain a greater knowledge and a better understanding of yourself, of your faith, and of Freemasonry; 'If thou canst understand this, thou knowest enough'.

Welcome Companion and wear your Royal Arch jewel with pride.





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