Provincial Grand Chapter of Essex

The Holy Royal Arch

A guide for New Exaltees
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 1 – The Exaltation Ceremony ................................................................. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction ........................................................................................................... 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Before the Exaltation Ceremony begins ......................................................... 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why are there four knocks on the door? .......................................................... 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Why is a Candidate aided by the Circle and Triangle? ..................................... 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Why is the Candidate about to participate in the Light of our mysteries and be endued with Divine Spirit? ................................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Why is the Candidate perambulated round the Chapter? ............................... 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Why is the Candidate instructed to take seven steps? ...................................... 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What awaits the Candidate after taking the seven steps? .............................. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What action is taken by the Candidate to obtain those secrets? ..................... 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Why does the Candidate take a further Obligation? ......................................... 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is revealed when the blindfold is removed? ......................................... 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What happens after re-entry to the Chapter? ............................................... 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What is the Sojourners’ reward for their efforts? ......................................... 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What follows the successful discovery of the vaulted chamber? .................... 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What are the Secrets of the Holy Royal Arch? ............................................. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What further knowledge is imparted by the three long lectures which follow? .. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How is the method of sharing the Sacred Name explained? ......................... 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. What symbolism occurs during the Festive Board held after the Exaltation Ceremony? ................................................................. 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1 - The Exaltation Ceremony

Introduction

This section of the booklet has been prepared in the form of a step-by-step explanation of the Exaltation Ceremony, but, as in all things Masonic, please be aware that you will see different forms of ritual in some Chapters.

On entering the Holy Royal Arch, the Master Mason (the Candidate) needs to understand that his Exaltation is, in effect, a continuation and completion of his journey through Craft Masonry. As the Book of Constitution states, “Pure Ancient Masonry consists of Three Degrees and no more; namely, those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch”. In fact, in November 2007, the Most Excellent Pro First Grand Principal went further, by saying “...we should seek to describe the Royal Arch as the next logical step in Pure Ancient Masonry. It is, of course, both an integral part of Craft Masonry as well as being its completion”.

In essence, Freemasonry is the study and work of a lifetime: the First Degree tells us of man’s birth; ignorant and having nothing: the Second Degree tells of how a man can build for himself a useful and respected life by education and experience: the Third Degree tells how a man will die regretted, with death destroying his earthly Temple, but with honour.

Our professed faith in a Supreme Being tells us that this is not the end, but that life can continue, in spirit, to be enjoyed in the presence of our eternal God. Craft Masonry alludes to this as early as the Second Degree where, in the extended version of the Working Tools, we are told that “...every Mason ought in all his pursuits, to have Eternity in view”.

Thus, the Holy Royal Arch continues after the earthly experience of Craft Masonry and is exemplified by the prospect of building a spiritual life, or Second Temple, to replace the first, which truly is the fourth and final step in Freemasonry.

With that brief overview of Freemasonry, it is hoped that the following explanations will help the newly exalted Companion to understand the aims of the Holy Royal Arch and to appreciate and enjoy all the more, what this great Order has to offer the Master Mason.

But please note: it is not the purpose of this section to explain “…a perfect understanding of Royal Arch Masonry”. This is something we hope a newly exalted Companion will learn later when he ultimately progresses through the various offices to reach the Principals’ Chairs.
1. Before the Exaltation ceremony begins

As the Candidate is, in effect, carrying on from where he left off at the end of the Third Degree, various things happen:

a) He is asked to prove himself in the signs, tokens and words of the three Craft Degrees, so that the Chapter can be satisfied he is fully qualified as a Master Mason (with at least four weeks experience), to be exalted into Royal Arch Masonry.

b) He is blindfolded, showing that his Third Degree ended in the darkness of despair by having failed to obtain the genuine Secrets of a Master Mason through the untimely death of our Master H. A. Thus, he enters the Chapter in the same state of darkness but with the promise of recovering those secrets.

c) The Passwords, A… R……, are given, meaning “…my people have found mercy”. Thus, the Candidate is comforted by the fact that he and his people have been forgiven for the ‘sins of idolatry’, which they were supposed to have committed earlier. The lack of their professed faith in God had been the reason for the destruction of the first Temple. The Candidate is thereby strengthened in his pursuit of the lost genuine secrets.

2. Why are there four knocks on the door?

The Craft Degrees are punctuated by three knocks, indicating that the three Craft Degrees are the first three steps in Freemasonry. Thus, there is the further fourth knock to represent the fourth and final step the Candidate is about to take in pursuit of the “genuine Secrets of a Master Mason”.

3. Why is a Candidate aided by the Circle and Triangle?

These mathematical figures are very prominent throughout Royal Arch Masonry. They allude to the Deity for the reasons given in Heading 14.

4. Why is the Candidate about to participate in the LIGHT of our mysteries and be endued with DIVINE SPIRIT?

This statement reveals, at the very outset, the whole purpose of the Holy Royal Arch: the revelation of the genuine Secrets, whereby light overcomes darkness, enabling us to progress from our earthly existence to contemplate our future spiritual existence in the presence of our eternal Divine Creator. This is explained in greater detail in Heading 14.

5. Why is the Candidate perambulated round the Chapter?

This is to show that he is ready to continue where he left off; a duly qualified Master Mason, but still in a state of darkness.

6. Why is the Candidate instructed to take seven steps?

It was in 1834 that the Royal Arch Ceremony was generally adopted largely as we know it today. Before then, the Candidate went through a preliminary ceremony called “The Passing the Veils”, which consisted of passing through three veils of blue, purple and crimson, the adopted colours of the Royal Arch.

Each veil had a particular symbolism accompanied by a password and token. The Candidate approached the first veil by three steps, the second by a further two steps and the third by a final two steps (seven in all) before arriving at the door of the Chapter, there to be examined in the manner described earlier in Heading 1. The seven steps are repeated later as the Candidate approaches the vaulted chamber (Heading 7) and the Pedestal (Heading 13).

As a matter of historical interest, the ceremony of “The Passing the Veils” is now only permitted to be performed by the Province of Bristol. All other Provinces may, by permission of Supreme Grand Chapter, perform once annually a similar ceremony entitled “The Ceremony of the Veils”.

7. What awaits the Candidate after taking the seven steps?

He arrives at the representation of the vaulted chamber, which was the safest and most secure repository built by the original Masons beneath the first Temple to contain their genuine Secrets.

8. What action is taken by the Candidate to obtain those secrets?

Without being immediately aware of the symbolism of what he is doing, the Candidate now figuratively copies the actions of the Sojourners in opening and descending into the vaulted chamber. These actions are demonstrated and explained in the Principal Sojourner’s narrative described in Heading 12.
Meanwhile, still in a state of darkness, the Candidate hears two very meaningful passages of Scripture, which are set out in the ritual book and are well worth reading over again.

9. Why does the Candidate take a further obligation?

This further obligation is necessary before the blindfold can be removed to reveal the Secrets of the Holy Royal Arch. The fascinating process of discovering these Secrets then begins, having been sworn to secrecy, all can now be gradually revealed and fully explained. For the Candidate, this must be one of the most impressive sights in Freemasonry, as light is restored to him as explained in Heading 10.

10. What is revealed when the blindfold is removed?

The Candidate will see immediately before him the Arch, which in some Chapters will have been broken, whilst in others it will remain in place. This represents his unsuccessful attempts to regain the genuine Secrets whilst deprived of light. He next sees the chequered pavement, leading to the Pedestal (or Altar), which contains the ultimate rewards. The light and dark of the pavement indicates the joys and sorrows he will encounter on his journey through earthly life. It is that difficult journey which he must complete before enjoying spiritual life hereafter in eternity.

Light surrounds the Pedestal and beyond it are the Three Principals holding their sceptres aloft in the form of a triangle. This light will ultimately lead the Candidate to a perfect understanding of the Holy Royal Arch. At first, the Secrets contained on the Pedestal remain covered, a reminder that, as in the Craft, the Secrets can only be disclosed by a special process, which is explained in Heading 16.

Down the sides of the chequered floor are 12 staves, 6 on either side, representing the Twelve Tribes of Israel. They are held aloft to represent the Arch or vaulted chamber in which the Secrets (on the Pedestal) were deposited and through which the Candidate must travel to reach the Principal’s Chairs. These chairs were originally occupied by royal persons (S.K.I., H.K.T., & H.A. or W’s Son) possessing the highest or “Arch” authority; hence “Royal” and “Arch” appear in the title of our Order.

Having made this much progress, the Candidate and the two Sojourners retire to prepare for the next part of the story.

11. What happens after re-entry to the Chapter?

The Candidate and the two Sojourners re-enter the Chapter and the three assume the real roles of the three Sojourners who have returned to Jerusalem after their long captivity in Babylon. They are anxious to help in building the second Temple, after the first Temple was cruelly destroyed for the sins of their predecessors. They are job of clearing the derelict site but, out of their humble beginning, they excel through their own efforts to achieve their ultimate reward: the genuine Secrets which had been lost for centuries.

This is another example of how Freemasonry provides man with the means of achieving the highest standards in life, from the humblest of beginnings.

12. What is the sojourners’ reward for their efforts?

There follows what may be regarded as the most dramatic story in the whole of Freemasonry. Originally, the Candidate had figuratively attempted to find the Secrets, as explained in Heading 8. But now the Principal Sojourner explains to the Candidate how it really happened.

First, he enters the vaulted chamber when it is still too dark to see what lies ahead. But later, with the full benefit of light, he again enters the vaulted chamber and discovers the Secrets on the Pedestal in the centre of the vault. These Secrets are twofold: -

a) The physical portrayal of the Secret Name of the Most High.

b) The physical symbols on top of the Pedestal, emblematically representing our quest for spiritual life in eternity, in the presence of our Divine Creator. These physical symbols and what they represent, are explained later in the ceremony.

In the meantime, it is worth reading again in the ritual book, the wonderful story of success which the Sojourners tell.

13. What follows the successful discovery of the vaulted chamber?

The Principal Sojourner concludes his story by explaining how he approached the Pedestal with the benefit of light and carefully lifted the veil to see what was contained on the top of the Pedestal. At first, he declines to say what he perceives to be the genuine Secrets and only does so later when asked by the Principals to explain in the cautionary manner outlined in Heading 16. It is only then that the veil is removed from the Pedestal to reveal the Secrets given in Heading 14.

14. What are the secrets of the Holy Royal Arch?

The ultimate reward for the Sojourners is the discovery of: -
a) The Sacred Name of the Most High on the plate of gold on the Pedestal,

b) The Triangle and the Circle, which are at the heart of Royal Arch Masonry. The Triangle has long been considered a symbol of the Deity and the Circle is a symbol of eternity, as it has neither beginning nor end. Thus, symbolically God is set in the context of eternity and likewise, the Sacred Name is spelt out on the Circle itself.

These Secrets are now open for the Candidate to see for himself and having obtained them he is rewarded with a Jewel, the most Important Jewel in Freemasonry. He is invested with the Apron and Sash (or Ribbon) of a Royal Arch Mason and is presented with a staff (…as a Prince and Ruler amongst us), which he will be able to bear unless 72 of his elders are present.

The reference to 72 elders probably has its origin in the fact that, in ancient times, Moses set up a Tribunal of 70 elders to assist in the judicial and administrative government of the Children of Israel in the wilderness and on their return, two others, who had received the prophetical spirit were added, making a total of 72. Further, King Solomon is said to have had a “Council of State” or “Grand Sanhedrin” of 71 advisors which, with him, made 72. As a new “Prince and Ruler” therefore, the Exaltee is entitled to join this august body, unless 72 more eminent members are present.

15. What further knowledge is imparted by the three long lectures which follow?

The Mystical Lecture, which should always be included in the Exaltation ceremony, explains the import of the Sacred Name.

The Historical and Symbolical Lectures, which can be delivered alternately, contain much interesting information about the symbolism of the Holy Royal Arch and the history of Freemasonry in general.

All three Lectures are contained in the ritual book and you are encouraged to read them again as together they give a fascinating insight into the important place which Royal Arch Masonry occupies in the hierarchy of Pure Antient Freemasonry. They confirm how important it is to complete one’s Masonic experience.

16. How is the method of sharing the sacred name explained?

It will be recalled that in each of the three Craft Degrees the word of the Degree was spoken by two Brethren in letters or syllables, thus preventing the word being given in full to an unqualified person. In the same way, secrecy is preserved in the Royal Arch by the Sacred Name, J.H.V., being split into three syllables, each being spoken by a different Companion in sequence. This is a token of recognition between qualified Companions, shared on a series of triangles.

17. What symbolism occurs during the Festive Board held after the Exaltation Ceremony?

Here, there are three main features:

a) We recall the three original Grand Lodges, which culminate in the Third or Grand and Royal Lodge, represented by the Master Mason’s Degree, which includes the Holy Royal Arch. It is customary that the toast to the Three Grand Originals is taken with the left hand, the reason being that they are dead.

b) Firing is given to acknowledge the toasts. Here, the symbolism is significant as the attention is first directed to the Plate of Gold on top of the Pedestal as we “Point”, then to the Triangle, then to the Circle and, finally, to the four corners of the top of the Pedestal, with a “clap” being given to acknowledge the importance of the fourth and final corner of the square, symbolic of the four steps and the four knocks in Royal Arch Masonry.

You will no doubt remember your first experience of the Craft Festive Board and your introduction and confusion of the Fire following a toast. There seem to be as many variations to the Fire as there are Lodges. In the Royal Arch the Fire tends to follow two variations, Aldersgate and Domatic, but be aware that individual DCs tend to place their own interpretation on the Fire.
c) At the end of the after-proceedings, the Janitor (like the Tyler in the Craft) gives the Janitor’s Toast in exactly the same manner as in the Craft, reminding us of our duty to remember all needy Freemasons and not just those who are members of the Royal Arch. It also emphasises the close affinity which exists between the Craft and Royal Arch Masonry.

You have now read a brief but concise description of your Exaltation Ceremony. Just as with any other subject in Freemasonry, or indeed life in general, one must study to gain knowledge and have knowledge to understand, as explained during the course of the First Principal’s (Mystical) Lecture “…so should we not expect to understand immediately all that we encounter but try to comprehend its meaning by continued study and enquiry”.

One of the best ways to gaining this understanding is to quickly become an active member of your Chapter, by which is meant taking a small part in the ceremonies. You have probably seen how easy it is to do this by delivering just a small piece of any one of the three Lectures; they all break down into manageable “chunks”. Every First Principal and/or Director of Ceremonies will welcome and encourage a genuine volunteer who puts himself forward to help his Chapter. You are its future and, by becoming its newest member, now share the responsibility of its continuing success. You are therefore encouraged to become involved as soon as you can, as only by this method will you gain a full understanding of what this beautiful Order has to offer.

On behalf of the Provincial Chapter Executive and all the members of the Province, you are to be congratulated on taking this step and are wished many happy years of enjoyment.

SECTION 2 – Everything (or Almost!) You ought to Know

Introduction

You are to be congratulated on joining the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch, of which you are now a Companion. By doing so, you have advanced further on your Masonic journey through Pure, Antient Freemasonry, which started with the three Degrees of Craft Masonry.

Masonry, being a progressive science, it is not surprising that there is a clear implication in the ceremony of the Third Degree that there is more to learn. The simple fact that you have been Exalted into the Royal Arch shows that you not only appreciate this but are also keen to gain a higher understanding of the purpose of our mortal existence. The Royal Arch is concerned with truth in the light of eternity and tries to meet this need.

Initiates into Freemasonry, are told that their Masonic journey will enable them to better understand themselves and through this understanding reinforce their thoughtfulness for others. In the Royal Arch the teachings of Craft Masonry are taken to a higher plane as they invite you to develop your awareness of God and contemplate life in the context of “eternity”. The Royal Arch is thus the climax of Pure Antient Freemasonry, having virtue for its aim and the glory of God for its object.

You will find that the Royal Arch is a beautiful Order. Most Candidates find the ceremony of Exaltation moving and impressive, but as one’s experience of the ritual increases, so does one’s appreciation of the significance of the messages contained in it.

The History of the Royal Arch

When did it start?
The origin of the Royal Arch is clouded in mystery. It has been suggested that it was born in France as one of the large number of orders of chivalry fabricated there, after Freemasonry had spread from England and later re-exported to this country. The truth is that nobody really knows.
When did it emerge in England?

Elements of Royal Arch ritual have been found in the Third Degree in the early 18th Century. Around 1740, they may have been taken from that degree and transferred to a separate degree. At that time, there was only one Grand Lodge in England, which had been founded by four lodges at the ‘The Goose and Gridiron’ Tavern in St. Paul’s Churchyard in June 1717. In 1751, five lodges of Irish freemasons that met at a tavern called ‘The Turks Head’ in Greek Street, Soho, formed themselves into a second Grand Lodge, and called themselves the Ancients. The first Grand Lodge therefore became known as the Moderns or the Premier Grand Lodge. From that point on there were two divergent views about the Royal Arch.

How so?

The Moderns’ Grand Lodge banned the working of the Royal Arch degree within its Lodges, but in 1766 they set up the Society of Royal Arch Masons and the then Grand Master of the Moderns, Lord Blayney, became what they called the First Grand Master Zed. The Moderns’ view was that they didn’t want the Chapter degree worked in their Lodges, it was not part of Craft masonry, but they didn’t object to it as a separate order.

The Antients took a diametrically opposite view. Their leading spirit, an Irishman called Laurence Dermott, said that the Holy Royal Arch was “the root, heart and marrow of freemasonry”. They didn’t have separate chapters but worked the Royal Arch Degree in a Craft Lodge as a fourth degree, and every Antient Craft Lodge had the power to denominate itself a Chapter and confer the Royal Arch degree.

By the early 1800s it was becoming very important to merge the two Grand Lodges, but the difference in approach to the Royal Arch, and its place in Freemasonry, caused some of the biggest obstacles to reconciliation.

How were these difficulties overcome?

The two Grand Lodges merged on 27th December 1813 and became the “United Grand Lodge of England”. The second of the Articles of Union between the Grand Lodges states that “pure Antient Masonry consists of the three degrees and no more; viz, those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch”. This was a compromise; Chapter remains part of Pure Antient Masonry, and this is also reflected in the fact that the Chapter Jewel is worn in Craft Lodges (thus satisfying the Antients). However Chapter is treated as a separate order to the Craft and is not worked in a Craft Lodge (thus satisfying the Moderns).

What happened after 1813?

As a result of a meeting between representatives of the Moderns’ Grand Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter and some Antient Royal Arch Masons, the Supreme Grand Chapter came into being in 1817. From this date, former Antient Lodges could no longer perform Exaltations under their Craft Warrant and Chapters which had been in existence at the date of the Craft Union (27th December 1813) were required to unite with a Lodge and make a return stating the Lodge to which they belonged. By 1823, 198 Chapters had complied with this requirement. Those which were disinclined or were unable to comply went out of existence. To this day a Chapter is usually attached to a warranted Lodge and takes that Lodge’s number and precedence, but governance, meetings and membership are completely separate.

Have there been any further changes?

The qualification for Exaltation was changed from that of a past Master to that of a Master Mason of twelve months standing in 1817 and this was further reduced to four weeks in 1856. The ceremony of installing a Principal was regularised in 1824 along the lines of the procedure followed today. In 1826 it was decreed that only Past Masters could occupy a Principal’s Chair, but this requirement was rescinded in 2005 (see Chapter Officers below).

The Chapter

Does every Lodge have a Chapter?

Numerically, there are roughly three times as many Lodges as Chapters. There are currently 308 Lodges and 121 Chapters in Essex. Most Royal Arch Chapters in Essex are associated with a Craft Lodge, nearly all have the same name as the Lodge, but all will have the same number as the Lodge.

should candidates be Exalted into the Chapter associated with their Craft Lodge?

This is a matter for each candidate to decide after taking into consideration such issues as the days and dates of meetings, meeting place, particular friendships, etc. Having made your choice of Chapter, you are at liberty to join other Chapters as well, should you wish to do so.

Why does the Chapter layout differ from that of a Lodge?

The layout of a Royal Arch Chapter Room is more complicated than that of a Lodge Room because there are three Principals (as compared to one WM in Craft) and use is made of the central floor space (bounded by the ensigns of the Twelve Tribes of Israel). These differences are fundamental to the Royal Arch story of the rebuilding of the Temple. The other differences are less obvious apart from the fact that no pedestals are used. The concave flooring, in allusion to the secret vault, and the

Does every Lodge have a Chapter?

Numerically, there are roughly three times as many Lodges as Chapters. There are currently 308 Lodges and 121 Chapters in Essex. Most Royal Arch Chapters in Essex are associated with a Craft Lodge, nearly all have the same name as the Lodge, but all will have the same number as the Lodge.

should candidates be Exalted into the Chapter associated with their Craft Lodge?

This is a matter for each candidate to decide after taking into consideration such issues as the days and dates of meetings, meeting place, particular friendships, etc. Having made your choice of Chapter, you are at liberty to join other Chapters as well, should you wish to do so.

Why does the Chapter layout differ from that of a Lodge?

The layout of a Royal Arch Chapter Room is more complicated than that of a Lodge Room because there are three Principals (as compared to one WM in Craft) and use is made of the central floor space (bounded by the ensigns of the Twelve Tribes of Israel). These differences are fundamental to the Royal Arch story of the rebuilding of the Temple. The other differences are less obvious apart from the fact that no pedestals are used. The concave flooring, in allusion to the secret vault, and the
furniture of the Chapter room facilitate the depiction of this story.

The form of a Royal Arch Chapter approaches, as nearly as circumstances will permit, that of a catenarian arch. It is the shape of a curve formed by a chain hanging from two points of support. Inverted, the curve delineates the form of an arch. The strength across the span is derived from the arch stones at the sides compressing against the keystone in the centre.

You might note the seating arrangements of the three Principals who often sit in an arch, or curve, rather than in a straight line.

One of the most significant pieces of furniture in the room is the central pedestal. On the front of this pedestal are the initials of the three Grand Masters who presided at the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem. SRI stands for Solomon King of Israel; HRT stands for Hiram King of Tyre; and HA stands for Hiram Abif; the R in the first two sets of letters representing the Latin word, Rex, meaning King. Below these initials is the mysterious Triple Tau, the ancient sign for life, which is mentioned in the Mystical Lecture.

The tau is one of the most important symbols in the Royal Arch, along with the triangle and circle. We use the capital version of the Greek letter r, which is T, like our English alphabet capital. In ancient days the tau was considered as a mark or sign of life and as described in the Mystical lecture was “used to distinguish the innocent and those who escaped unhurt from battle”. The Aldersgate ritual, in the explanation of the Jewel of the Order, has the triple tau as having originated from the union of three taus whilst other rituals say that it was developed not from this conjunction, but from a T– over H sign meaning Templum Hierosolymae, the Temple of Jerusalem.

The Triple Tau is prominent on your Royal Arch regalia.

Between the candles at the west of the pedestal and the square and compasses, and the sword and trowel, are the “Five Regular Platonic Bodies”. These are the Tetrahedron, Octahedron, Cube, Icosahedron and Dodecahedron, arranged north to south in that order. They represent the four elements Earth, Air, Fire and Water with the fifth being the Sphere of the Universe.

The diagrammatic illustrations on the next page show the slightly differing layouts for the two main workings in the Royal Arch, Aldersgate and Domatic. The positions of the items between the kneeling stool and the pedestal are different. Also, the P/A is called the Point of Announcement in Aldersgate and Point of Address in Domatic.

Is there a particular position for each ensign?
Yes. the arrangement of the ensigns is based on the instructions given to Moses in Numbers, Chapter 2 and is further amplified in the Symbolical Lecture.

What do the initials on the West side of the altar stand for?
SRI stands for the Latin of Solomon King of Israel: HRT stands for the Latin of Hiram King of Tyre and HA stands for Hiram Abif, the three Grand Masters who presided at the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem.
What were the first carved stones on the floor?
There are “Five Regular Platonic Bodies”; the Tetrahedron, Octahedron, Cube, Icosahedron and Dodecahedron, arranged North to South in that order.

And the four banners in the East?
Known as the principal banners, these represent the leading standards of the four divisions of the army of Israel and show a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle. They were incorporated into the Arms of the Atholl or Antients’ Grand Lodge, which first appeared in 1764, highlighting the very close connection between the Antients’ Grand Lodge and Royal Arch mentioned in the section on the History of the Royal Arch above. The banners are explained further in the Symbolical Lecture.

The Chapter officers

Is there an order of precedence for officers?
Yes, and it differs from the Craft order. For example, in the Royal Arch the Scribe E (Secretary) comes before the Treasurer. First come the three Principals – Zerubbabel (Z), Haggai (H) and Joshua (J). Then follows the two Scribes, Ezra (E) and Nehemiah (N). The Treasurer, Director of Ceremonies, Almoner and Charity Steward are followed by the Principal Sojourner (PS) and his First and Second Assistants. The Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Organist, Assistant Scribe Ezr and Stewards complete the list. A Chapter also has a Janitor, in many respects similar to the Tyler in Craft.

What are the qualifications for the three Principals’ Chairs?
In brief, all have to be elected annually by the Companions of the Chapter. To be eligible for election to Joshua, a Companion must have served as a Sojourner or a Scribe. It is no longer necessary for him to have served as Worshipful Master of a Craft Lodge (see the Miscellaneous Heading). To be eligible for election to Haggai, he must have served as Joshua; and for Zerubbabel, he must have served as Haggai. The title of Past Zerubbabel (PZ) applies to those who have served as First Principal and is equivalent to the title of Past Master (PM) in Craft.

Why three Principals?
The Historical Lecture tells us that Zerubbabel, Haggai and Joshua presided over the rebuilding of the Temple, destroyed in 586 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar. These three are represented by the three Principals. The Principals are to be considered conjointly and severally equal in status, which does not correspond with the relationship between the WM and his Wardens in Craft.

Why the term Companion
The term Companion further adds distinction between Craft and Royal Arch. Companion, from late Latin, means “one who eats bread with another”, derived from “corn” meaning “with” and “panis” meaning “bread”.

What does E. Comp. mean?
E. Comp. (never Ex. Comp.) stands for Excellent Companion. Members of the Chapter are called. Companions, equivalent to Brethren in the Craft. Excellent Companion is the title conferred on a Companion when he is installed in his first Chair, that of J (Joshua), and is the title retained by all Principals and Past Principals. Note that the office of the First Principal has the title “Most Excellent” attached to it, but the Companion filling the office is still known as E. Comp. Only those Companions who are or have been the Principals of Supreme Grand Chapter are known as “Most Excellent Companion”.

Who was Zerubbabel?
Zerubbabel was a Prince of Judah and Governor of Jerusalem, a position to which he was appointed by Cyrus, King of Persia, when the latter permitted the captive Jews in Babylon to return to Judah. Born in Babylon during the Babylonian captivity, he was a descendant of King David and a grandson of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, at the time that the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar took them into captivity.

Who was Haggai?
Haggai was a prophet; about whom little is known apart from his prophecy that there would be pestilence and drought because of the failure of the people to finish the rebuilding of the Temple. Haggai declared that God was punishing them for decorating their own houses before completing the house of the Lord, and he urges Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah, and Joshua, the High Priest, to rally the people to their primary task.

Who was Joshua?
Joshua was High Priest during the rebuilding of the Temple. He was the son of Josedeoch and grandson of Seraijah, who was the High Priest when the Temple was destroyed by the forces of the Babylonish General. He reinstituted the correct Temple rituals, without which the older beliefs and practices of Judaism might have been lost.

Who was Ezra?
Ezra, a priest and scribe, was a leading figure in the revival of Judaism in the Land of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. Ezra, a scholar and teacher, was given official sanction to teach the law, appoint magistrates, offer sacrifices and beautify the Temple. He was the person responsible for defining both Temple worship and the Canon of Scripture for his time. Ezra certainly had a part in making the Jews the “People of the Book”. The book of Ezra describes the rebuilding of the Temple, which is reported in detail elsewhere only in the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Since this story is central to the Royal Arch story, you may wish to consult it.

Who was Nehemiah?
Nehemiah was a 5th Century BC Jewish Leader. He held a position of honour in the
court of the Persian King Artaxerxes I and in 444 BC was appointed by the King to the
governorship of Judea, with the authorisation to rebuild Jerusalem. The rebuilding of
Jerusalem and the reforms made during his administration are recounted in the book
that bears his name.

**What is the significance of the sojourners?**
A Sojourner is one who arrives as a stranger with every intention of moving on in
due course. The ritual relates how the three Sojourners who arrived to help with the
rebuilding work proved pivotal in rediscovering the lost secrets, offering the message
that those employed on lowly tasks may attain the highest honours through zeal and
industry.

**Attending Chapter**

**Are attendance procedures comparable with Craft?**
You will have noticed that they are similar in many respects. The following basics need
to be remembered. When you receive a Summons for a Convocation (as meetings of
Chapters are called) read it carefully, noting especially the start time of the meeting and
the agenda items. Remember to communicate with the Scribe E (or Assistant Scribe E)
to let him know whether or not you will be attending and to ensure you get a meal. On
arrival, sign or print your name in the attendance book, put on your regalia including
your Royal Arch Jewel and take your place in the Chapter. If you have not brought your
Summons with you, you may be able to get another one from the Scribe E.

**Who is Scribe E?**
There are two Scribes in a Chapter, Scribe Ezra and Scribe Nehemiah, normally
abbreviated to Scribe E and Scribe N. The Scribe E is the equivalent of the Secretary of
a Craft Lodge and the Scribe N is rather like an Inner Guard, except that he is a
higher ranking officer. The Heading on Chapter Officers gives some historical details
of these two individuals.

**What is the dress code?**
Basically, it is the same as Craft. You should wear a dark suit or Morning Dress,
white shirt, and black shoes and socks. In some Chapters white gloves are worn, so
always take a pair with you. It is expected that the Essex Provincial tie should be
worn, although you can wear a plain black tie. Check that you have all your Royal
Arch regalia items with you before leaving home as there are more items in the Royal
Arch regalia than in the Craft and it is easy to overlook something. The jewel of the
order should always be worn both in Chapter and in Craft.

**Are there any special seating arrangements?**
The Chapter Officers have designated seats. Grand Officers and acting Provincial
Grand Officers tend to sit on the Principals’ right hand side. You may sit anywhere in
the general body of the Chapter room, but initially it is recommended that you sit
with your Proposer or Seconder if their office does not preclude this.

**What do I do if I arrive late?**
The Janitor (the Chapter’s equivalent of the Tyler) will give a knock on the door of the
Chapter and, when opened, will give your name. On admission, go to the West in
front of the Sojourners, give the sign to the Name on the Pedestal, offer apologies and
take your seat. In Royal Arch a step is not taken when a sign is given and the sign
should always be dropped before speaking.

**What are the salutes in Royal Arch?**
There are no salutes to any individual in Royal Arch. The R. or H. sign is used in the
Opening, Closing, entering the Chapter, if already open (see above), or leaving the
Chapter early. It is always given to the Name on the pedestal and not to the
Principals. At other times a court bow is given especially when addressing the
Principals.

**How should a court bow be given?**
The court bow is given by a brisk lowering of the head bending the neck for a brief
period and no other part of the body forms any part of the movement.

**What should I know about the Festive Board?**
The main point to remember is that the Festive Board is a formal part of the
evening’s proceedings and requires the same standards of behaviour and decorum as
the Chapter meeting itself. Procedures are similar to Craft, except that E.Comp
Joshua is called upon for grace both prior to the commencement and after the meal.
The response in both cases is ‘amen’. In addition the Principal Sojourner has a
special dialogue with the MEZ after the second grace. This culminates in a toast to
“The Grand Originals” for which the glass is always held in the left hand and the
Companions remain seated. The Fire is different (see Heading 1 para. 17(b)), except
after the Janitor’s Toast, when Craft Fire is given.

**Why is the Fire after the Janitor’s Toast the same as the Fire after the Tyler’s Toast
in Craft?**
The use of Craft Fire returns us to our Masonic roots and to our over-arching precept
of benevolence. In the final Toast we remember all needy Freemasons, not just those
associated with Royal Arch.
Regalia

What are the main differences between Craft and Chapter regalia?
In Craft only an apron is worn initially, until you are invested with an Officer’s collar. Charity and Past Masters’ jewels are worn when appropriate. In Royal Arch the apron (or badge) is worn with a sash (or ribbon) and a jewel (or insignia) from the day you are exalted into Chapter.

How do they indicate rank?
The apron flap and sash for a Companion have gilt triangles with a white silk backing and the jewel has a white ribbon. The apron flap and sash of a Principal or Past Principal have gilt triangles with a crimson silk backing and the jewel has a crimson ribbon. The apron flap and sash of a Provincial or Grand Officer have gilt triangles with a dark blue silk backing and the jewel has light blue, crimson and dark blue ribbon. In each case the apron tassels are the same colour as the hacking of the triangles. For more detailed explanations of the aprons and sashes please refer to Royal Arch Regulations 96 and 97 which are contained in the General Regulations in your copy of the Book of Constitutions.

should I wear my Craft Jewels in Chapter?
No, Craft Jewels should not be worn in a Chapter meeting except current Craft Charity Jewels.

should I wear my Royal Arch Jewel in a Craft Lodge?
Yes, it is the one jewel which should always be worn in a Craft Lodge, even after you have received Provincial or Grand Honours.

should the Royal Arch Jewel be worn in a particular place?
Yes. In Essex Lodges the Royal Arch Jewel takes precedence over all other Masonic jewels and is worn nearest the centre of the body.

Why does it take this precedence?
At the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813, the close relationship between the Royal Arch and Craft was recognised by decreeing that the Royal Arch jewel took precedence over all other jewels.

Provincial Grand Chapter

What is Provincial Grand Chapter?
Each Province has a Provincial Grand Chapter, presided over by a Grand superintendent, appointed by the First Grand Principal. Within his Province he is referred to as “Most Excellent Grand Superintendent”. Each year he appoints his Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals, and normally he also appoints a Deputy Grand Superintendent. These officers wear a chain of office with their regalia instead of a collar. In our Province of Essex he also appoints four Assistants to the Provincial Grand Principals (APGPs). These officers wear a special collarette and jewel to distinguish their rank.

How many Chapters are there in the Province?
There are currently 121 Chapters meeting at various locations in Essex.

What is the Provincial Executive?
The Provincial Executive is the “management team” of the Province. It comprises the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, the Deputy Grand Superintendent, the Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals, the Assistants to the Provincial Grand Principals, the Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra, the Provincial Grand Treasurer, Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies and the Royal Arch Membership Officer.

How do I address the Provincial Grand Principals?
Their correct titles are as in the previous paragraph. For example, E. Comp. Rodney Lister Bass, Most Excellent Grand Superintendent. They are all “Excellent Companions”. The prefix “Most Excellent” for a Grand Superintendent, as with a Chapter First Principal, applies to the Office and Rank he holds and not to the individual himself.

What are Provincial Grand Honours?
The Most Excellent Grand Superintendent will annually appoint a number of Companions to the various offices. These active officers fulfil various duties in the Province as required by the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent. He also has the power to appoint a number of Past Officers in recognition of the work they have done in their own Chapter and their contribution to Provincial Grand Chapter. The number of appointments and promotions to each office is dependent on the number of Companions in the Province and is strictly controlled by Royal Arch Regulation 31 of the Book of Constitutions.

How does a Companion earn Provincial Honours?
A Companion is normally considered for a first appointment to Provincial Grand Rank six years after being installed in the First Principal’s chair. Those appointed to active rank may be appointed earlier. Appointments are made on merit and potential for further service after receiving the honour. Promotion to a higher rank is considered after a period of about a further six years. Occasionally a Companion who has not been a First Principal may be honoured for his services to the Royal Arch.
Is there a meeting of Provincial Grand Chapter?
Yes, there is an annual meeting, or Convocation, of Provincial Grand Chapter, presided over by the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent. At the moment it is held in the main Temple at Great Queen Street, London on the third Thursday in September and the agenda includes business items and the investiture of the newly-appointed or promoted Provincial Officers. The meeting is also attended by some of the executive members of surrounding Royal Arch Provinces and is followed by dinner. It is the responsibility of the First Principal of a Chapter to ensure that his Chapter is represented at that meeting.

Can I attend this meeting?
Yes, you are most welcome at this meeting, but if you wish to be seated with your Royal Arch friends at dinner, an early application is recommended. Details of this meeting will be sent directly to you, together with the ‘Essex Mason’ in good time each year.

To whom should I address any other questions?
Seek out your Proposer, Seconder or your Chapter Scribe Ezra. In fact any senior Companion in your Chapter should be able to help.


Grand Chapter

What is Grand Chapter?
The full title is Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England. It is the governing body of the Holy Royal Arch in England and was formed in 1817.

Who is its head?
The head of Supreme Grand Chapter is the First Grand Principal, who is normally the same person as the head of the Craft, i.e. the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England. If the Grand Master is a Prince of the Blood Royal and has appointed a Pro-Grand Master, then the latter normally becomes Pro First Grand Principal. These two are assisted by the Second Grand Principal and the Third Grand Principal. The Third Grand Principal is often a cleric.

Miscellaneous

I was told some time ago that I could not go into the Chairs of Chapter until I had gone through the Chair of my Craft Lodge, but do I understand correctly that this is now changed?
Yes. Until the recommendations of a recent Working Party were accepted (see introduction), it was a requirement that a candidate for the Third Principal’s Chair must be an Installed Master. However, in 2005 that situation changed, and Regulation 49 was re-worded so that it is now possible to be installed as Third Principal without having been installed in the Chair of a Craft Lodge. However, careful consideration should be given so as not to advance a candidate too quickly.

summary

Having embarked on the next step of your Masonic journey of enlightenment, you can rest assured that those around you are not only eager to help you get pleasure from that journey but are looking forward to enjoying your company on it. Hopefully, this section has got you started. Progress has been made if you have learnt something. No doubt you will refer to it again in the future to refresh your memory on the points it has covered. But now your main sources of guidance will be by senior or experienced members of your Chapter.

As mentioned earlier, Laurence Dermott, second Grand Secretary of the Atholl or Antients Grand Lodge, who contributed so much to the early days of the Royal Arch, said that it was “the root, heart and marrow of Masonry”. As you become familiar with the ritual of the Royal Arch you will begin to understand these sentiments and, like so many others, empathise with them. You will come to appreciate that, as the revised ritual points out, while Craft is concerned with matters TEMPORAL, the Royal Arch is concerned with matters SPIRITUAL.

May your understanding and enjoyment of this beautiful order, and the companionship you get from it, continue to grow. Remember to make it enjoyable by being happy and to communicate that happiness to others.

In the compilation of this booklet we have used information and script from neighbouring Provinces, particularly from Norfolk and we acknowledge their help and assistance. This is another example of the very happy and harmonious relationship that exists not only between the Chapters of our Province but from those other Provinces that we meet so often. Long may it continue!
PHONETIC GUIDE TO COMMON PRONUNCIATIONS.

The following list does not take into account purist Hebrew pronunciations but is intended to convey common Anglicised forms of unfamiliar words and names. Where stress should be voiced the appropriate syllable appears in italics.

AARON  Air-ron  MORIAH  Mor ri-yah
ABINADAB  Ab-bin-a-dab  NEBUCHADNEZZAR  Neb bu-kad-nezzar
AHOLIAB  A-hol-le-ab  NEDER  Nee-der
AMMI  Ar-mee  NEHEMIAH  Nay-he-mi-yah
ARAUNAH  Ar-rawn-nah  PROPITIATION  Pro-pish-shen-
PATRIARCHS  Pay-tre-arks  shun
BERITH  Be-rith or Be-rith  SACERDOTAL  Sas-ser-done-
BETHELEHEMITE  Beth-le-hem-mite  tal
BEZALEEL  Bez-ar-lee  SANHEDRIM  San-he-dee-rim
EZEKIEL  Ez-zee-kiel  SHADDAI  Shad-eye
ELIAB  E-li-ab  SHAMMAH  Sham-mah
ELI  E-li  SHEALTIEL  She-al-lee
LUCIS  Lu-sis  SHINOH  She-low
SHADDAI  Shad-eye  SINAI  Sign-eye
SHAMMAH  Sham-mah  SOJOURNER  Soj-jurn-
SHEALTIEL  She-al-lee  HEISHER  Soj-jurn-
SHILOH  Shh-voor  HOPE  Soj-jurn-
JEBUSITE  Jeb-u-zite  THUMMIM  Thum-mim
JESUS  Jesh-ur  YURIM  You-rim
JEHOIAKIN  Jesh-u-arin  JERUBBABEL  Zer-rob-
JESSE  Jes-see  ABEL  Zer-rob-
JOSEDECH  Jo-se-dech  JOSHUA  Josh-u-ar
JOSHUA  Josh-u-ar  LUCIS  Lu-sis

opening Hymn

O Worship the King,
All-glorious Above;
O gratefully sing
His power and His love;
Our Shield and defender,
The Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor,
And girded with praise.

O measureless Might,
Ineffable Love,
While Angels delight
To hymn Thee above,
Thy humbler creation,
Though feeble their lays,
With true adoration
Shall sing to Thy praise.

Closing Hymn

The God of Abraham praise
Who reigns enthroned above,
Ancient of everlasting days,
And God of Love;
JEHOVAH, Great I AM,
By earth and Heaven confessed;
We bow and bless the Sacred Name
For ever blest.

The God Who reigns on high
The great Archangels sing;
And “Holy, Holy, Holy,” cry,
“Almighty King!
Who was, and is the same,
And ever more shall be;
JEHOVAH, FATHER, Great I AM,
We worship Thee”.

Page 24