



Suffolk Holy Royal Arch

**POCKET
COMPANION**



SUFFOLK

HOLY ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER GUIDE

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The Provincial Grand Chapter of Suffolk

www.suffolkpgc.org.uk

*The Suffolk
Provincial
Tie*



Dear Companion,

May I extend a hearty welcome to you on becoming a Royal Arch Mason, which is the completion and climax of your Craft experience.

I particularly commend this introductory booklet to you as it will quickly help you feel comfortable within the Order. It will also give you a sound basis of knowledge which I hope will stimulate your interest and help you progress within your Chapter.

I wish you a long and satisfying experience in the Royal Arch generally and within the Suffolk Royal Arch community in particular.

Kindest regards.

David

*The Most Excellent
Grand Superintendent
Excellent Companion
David Boswell*



Foreword

You have probably received your copy of this booklet at the end of the ceremony of your exaltation, or soon after it, when the impact of the colourful spectacle and the pageantry is still fresh in your mind.

The purpose of this Guide is mainly to explain something of the ceremony through which you have passed, to prepare you for your next few meetings in a Royal Arch Chapter, and to suggest how you might enhance your future knowledge and enjoyment of this beautiful Order, which brings you to the climax of pure ancient Freemasonry. Also included is some historical, factual, and other useful information.

This Guide and the Book of Ritual you are likely to have been given following your exaltation should answer many of your early questions and your Proposer and Secunder are also available to offer guidance. In addition, your Chapter is there to provide any explanations and support you might need, particularly in your early days as a Companion in the Order, as indeed is the Royal Arch Representative in your Lodge.

We hope that your enthusiasm for the Royal Arch will develop so that, in due time, you will be encouraging your friends who are in the Craft to join you and complete their own Masonic journey.

Welcome

Welcome into the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch (RA) and to the Provincial Grand Chapter of Suffolk. Grand Lodge's Board of General Purposes has declared that: 'the teachings of the Royal Arch enrich those of the Craft and vice versa. Properly considered, therefore, each is inextricably interwoven with the other, with the result that no Brother's Masonic experience can be considered truly complete unless he has been exalted into The Holy Royal Arch'. The Royal Holy Arch is thus both the completion and the climax of pure ancient Masonry.

- There are around 6 million Masons worldwide and about 300,000 in England and Wales in just over 7,250 Lodges. Nationally, there are two-and-a-half-times as many Lodges as there are Chapters.
- There are currently approximately 66 Lodges and 29 Chapters registered in Suffolk. Most of these Chapters are associated with a Craft Lodge, and the majority of these carry the same number as the Lodge.

You have already progressed through the three degrees of Craft Masonry - Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason - and have now become a Companion of the Holy Royal Arch, thus completing your journey through pure ancient Freemasonry.

You will now find that there is plenty to stimulate your learning and comprehension as you discover more about this Order and about yourself.

Your Exaltation into The Royal Arch

Having been exalted into the Order, you have been invested with your Royal Arch regalia and at a future meeting will receive your Royal Arch Certificate. Your exaltation advances you further on your Masonic journey, which started with the three Craft Degrees.

Initiates into Freemasonry are told that their Masonic journey will enable them to understand themselves better and, through that understanding, reinforce their thoughtfulness for others. Masonry being a progressive science, it is not surprising that there is a clear implication in the Third Degree Craft ceremony that there is more to discover.

In the Royal Arch, the teachings of Craft masonry are taken to a higher plane as you are invited to develop your awareness of your God and contemplate life in the context of eternity. The Royal Arch is thus the climax of pure ancient Freemasonry, having virtue for its aim and the glory of God for its object. You are now enabled to gain a better understanding of the purpose of our mortal existence. Your contemplation of the vision revealed to you when you were restored to light during the Exaltation ceremony will help in this.

You will discover that the Royal Arch is a beautiful Order, not only because the regalia has striking colours, but also because the story and actions in the ritual are interesting and absorbing. As your experience of the ritual increases, so will your appreciation of the significance of the many messages it contains.

Recently Supreme Grand Chapter (SGC) introduced the 'permitted alternative' version of the ceremony to make it more accessible to members and to make the learning process less onerous - both of which should appeal to you and help you to enjoy your membership of your Chapter.

It is hoped that, with the guidance of the Companions who have now taken you into their ranks, you may quickly come to understand the Royal Arch and soon feel at home in your new Chapter.

Expectations

When discussing entering the Royal Arch with your Craft friends before you joined, you probably asked about the time and ritual learning commitment within the new order and were given at least a basic outline of what is expected. Chapters usually meet three or four times a year, and the ceremony practice evenings tend to be much less regular, perhaps in the two to three weeks just before a meeting. Otherwise, your ritual experience will be very similar to that you will have experienced in the Craft.

You will, of course, find that visiting in the Royal Arch is as much a pleasure as it is in the Craft. You should, therefore, build into your time commitment the expectation that you will want to enjoy the company of other RA Companions and see how they conduct proceedings in their Chapters, just as you do through Lodge visiting.

Your rate of progress through the Chapter offices depends upon the amount of time and effort you are able and prepared to give. At one time appointment to the Third Principal's Chair was not possible until you had

been Master in a Lodge, but that rule is now relaxed. However, most Companions still want to complete most, if not all, of the progressive offices in their Lodge before moving through those in Chapter. This allows them to concentrate their efforts at a more relaxed and enjoyable pace and means they are better grounded in Craft matters before embarking on the RA offices.

Mentioned elsewhere in this booklet are the Aldersgate and Domastic Ritual Associations' meetings, held at Freemasons' Hall, London, where you can watch and participate in practice ceremonies when you are ready.

There is an increasing tendency nowadays, where younger Companions have career and family duties to accommodate, to divide the ritual work between members so that large sections do not have to be learned all at once. The Principal Sojourner's work can easily be split between all three Sojourners, for example, and the 2004 permitted alternative versions of the Lectures facilitate their delivery being shared.

In terms of financial commitment, because of the fewer number of meetings, or convocations as they are called in the RA, and lower Supreme and Provincial Grand Chapter dues, subscriptions are lower than in the Craft. With regard to charitable donations, there are Alms collections at meetings and sometimes raffles at festive boards, but, as in the Craft, your giving should be determined by your means, having regard to your personal and family commitments.

The Masonic Charities supported by the Royal Arch are the same as those in the Craft and many Companions make their main charitable effort through their Lodges.

There are four main Masonic charities, as you already know. The Grand Charity of the United Grand Lodge of England provides annuities, grants and other donations, including substantial amounts to non-Masonic causes. The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution (RMBI), cares for the welfare of elderly Masons and their dependants, including providing residential care. The Masonic Samaritan Fund provides financial support for medical treatment to Masons and their dependants. The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys helps to relieve poverty and to advance education for Masons' children.



Your Next Meetings

Since Lodges tend to hold more meetings than Chapters, it is likely that, after your exaltation, your next meeting will be in a Craft Lodge. Be sure to take your Royal Arch jewel with you, especially if you have a different case for your Craft regalia. Remember that, in the words of the newer permitted version of the Symbolical Lecture, 'you must always wear this Jewel in your Craft Lodge as a visible sign of the indissoluble link between RA and Craft Masonry.' The jewel should be worn on your top left jacket pocket, nearest to the centre of your body, with any other jewels worn to your left beside it. Remember to transfer the jewel back to your RA regalia case if you have a separate one.

When you next attend a Chapter, sign the attendance book, as you do in Craft, and put on your regalia as illustrated in the picture here. The jewel is worn as described above. The sash, or ribbon, should be worn over the apron belt, not tucked under it, and goes over your left shoulder, with the tasselled emblem hanging by your right thigh. You should already be aware that the dress code is as in the Craft i.e. dark lounge suit or morning dress (black jacket, waistcoat, striped trousers), with white shirt or a white collar and cuff shirt, black socks and black shoes. Ties are the same too, the Suffolk Provincial Royal Arch Tie, or a plain black tie. Gloves are not usually worn in Chapter, but, if you are visiting, have a pair with you in case their custom is different. You are now ready to proceed into the Chapter room.



On entering the Chapter room, you will notice that the Scribe Ezra (the RA Secretary) sits to the East at his table with the Treasurer on his right, the reverse of the Craft positions. Your seat, by custom, will be in the North West or the South West, near your Proposer and Seconder, if they are not occupying Chapter offices. You are also likely to have around you other newer RA masons and probably some visitors.

When the Principals enter the Chapter room and call the meeting (or convocation as it is known in the RA) to order, remember how to give the sign properly. No step is taken and the sign is given, always to the name on the pedestal, with the thumbs concealed. Remember that the correct way to give the sign is by raising the left hand first, then moving the right hand. The sign is dropped, not cut. The thumbs are always concealed in the RA, partly to distinguish it from the Craft and because it is a sign of reverence and humility before the T.A.L.G.M.H. Companions wait for the First Principal (Zerubbabel) to sit before taking their own seats.

You will be able to watch the ceremonies and learn more of procedures and about the exaltation through which you have passed. It is likely that you will need to see several ceremonies before you can take in and understand your own exaltation ceremony and this discovery process should become part of your enjoyment of participation in the Order.

At the end of the convocation, when you move to the festive board, remember that Royal Arch fire is different from Craft fire, as you probably found to your surprise on your exaltation night. As in the Chapter, watch what other Companions do and follow their lead.

Royal Arch Fire

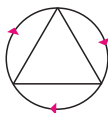
Aldersgate fire, illustrated here, is done vertically, as if on a wall, while Domatic is horizontal, as if on the pedestal. The Domatic starting point for the triangle and the square is the bottom left.



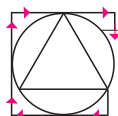
POINT



TRIANGLE



CIRCLE



1 2 3 CLAP

Protocols

Salutes

There are no salutes to any individual in Royal Arch Masonry. The R. or H. sign is used only in the Opening and Closing, or by a Companion who is arriving late or leaving early. It is always given to the Name on the pedestal and not to the Principals, no step is taken and the sign is dropped, not cut, before speaking. At other times a court bow is used, especially when addressing the Principals. 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. You may want to go through the correct way of giving the R. or H. sign with your Mentor; it will give you confidence knowing it is right.

Late Arrival

If you arrive late, the Janitor (the RA equivalent of the Tyler) will make sure you are signed in and correctly dressed. He will then knock on the door of the Chapter and, when opened, give your name. On admission, go to the Point of Address/Announcement in the West in front of the Sojourners, give the sign to the Name on the pedestal, apologise, and take your seat. In Chapter there is no squaring of the Chapter room.

Companions, Ranks and Titles

Members of the Chapter are called Companions, equivalent to Brethren in the Craft. The word 'Companion' is from the Latin, *companiono*, meaning 'one who eats bread with another', derived from 'com' meaning 'with' and 'panis' meaning 'bread'. The prefix 'E.Comp.' stands for Excellent Companion and is the title conferred on a Companion when he is installed in his first Chair, that of J (Joshua). This title is 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, or have been given that Past Rank, are known as 'Most Excellent Companion.'

The Principals and Scribes are referred to by their titles in full only during meetings e.g. Excellent Companion Haggai, or Companion Scribe Ezra. Outside the Chapter room the titles of the Principals and Scribes are abbreviated e.g. to Comp. Scribe E. The Principals will often be referred to as First Principal, Second Principal and Third Principal in those circumstances, particularly during the formal parts of the Festive Board.

When speaking about the Principals collectively they are often called 'their Excellencies.'

The Festive Board

The main point to remember is that, as in Craft Masonry, 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 certain Latin graces are prescribed - '**Benedictus, Benedicat**' (may the Blessed One bless) before the meal and '**Benedicto, Benedicatur**' (may the Blessed One be blessed) after it. The response to both these graces is '**Deo Gratias**' which means 'Thanks be to God.' Outside

London, some Chapters have an alternative grace in English. In addition, the Principal Sojourner has a special dialogue with the **MEZ after the second grace, raising the glasses “To the Memory” for which the glass is always held in the left hand and the Companions remain seated.** There are various theories about this. It might be an allusion to the only perfect sign in Freemasonry given with the left hand. Another theory is that it is a reference to the former implied penalty in the obligation of Master in a Craft Lodge (which not all Companions will know, of course). It could also be a tribute to those Masons who worked with sword and trowel in hand. Thus, the right hand held the trowel while the sword was in the left, so this shows that love and friendship prevail. It could also simply be an informal toast to the memory of the Grand Originals, except after the Janitor’s toast, when Craft Fire is given. This is because the use here 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 the Royal Arch.

Ritual

As in Craft Masonry, there are variations in ritual within Province, region, and by individual Chapter, but the essential themes and messages remain the same. In the Royal Arch two main rituals are used - Aldersgate and Domatic.

The Aldersgate ritual was devised by the Aldersgate Chapter of Improvement No. 1657, which first met in May 1900, as an endeavour to establish a ritual as near to the original as could be achieved. Meetings of the Aldersgate Chapter of Improvement are held in London at Freemasons’ Hall most Thursday evenings during the Masonic season at which the Exaltation Ceremony is demonstrated, with Installation Ceremonies performed monthly.

The Domatic Chapter of Instruction No 177 has been meeting since 1850 and similarly convenes at Freemasons’ Hall on Wednesdays, gathering in the Drawing Room beforehand to chat and establish what particular help Companions might need.

All members of RA Chapters may attend these meetings as members or visitors to witness the demonstrations. This can be very useful as you begin to move through the Chapter offices since most Chapters do not have regular weekly Chapters of Instruction (CoI, the RA equivalent of LoI, the Craft Lodge of Instruction), but rather CoIs held only in the weeks immediately preceding their regular convocations.

Some of the other rituals which are in use are Complete, Metropolitan, Perfect, Staffordshire, Standard, and Sussex. You will meet them if used by your own Chapter and when visiting outside Suffolk.

As mentioned earlier, in 2004 Supreme Grand Chapter allowed the use of certain variations to the ritual and permitted alternative versions of the Symbolical and Mystical Lectures. There are three main benefits from this. First, the explanations within the ritual are easier for a new Exalteé to take in and understand. Secondly, it is now easier to divide the presentation of the story and Lectures between different Companions so that the burden of the work can be shared if required. Thirdly, it allows more Companions to be involved in ceremonies.

Chapter Layout

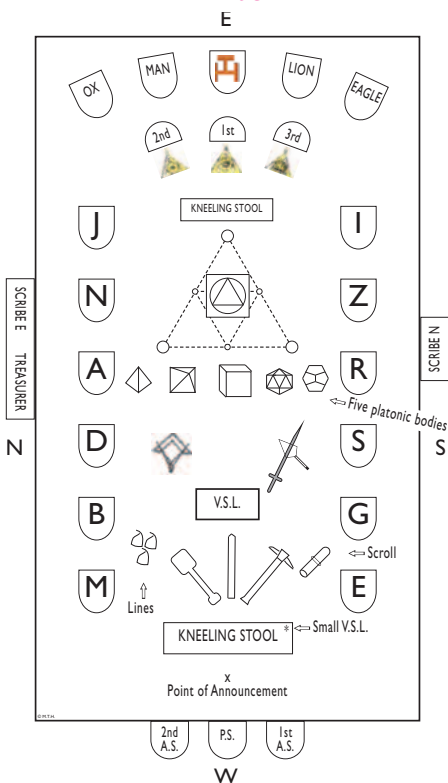
In the following sections, you will be taken through the basic layout of a RA Chapter room and introduced to the various Offices in Chapter.

The form of a RA Chapter approaches, as nearly as circumstances will permit, that of a catenarian arch. By this is meant that it is in the shape of the curve formed by a chain hanging from two points of support (catena is Latin for chain). When inverted, the curve delineates the form of an arch that derives particular strength across its span from the arch stones at the sides compressing against the keystone in the centre.

We have to envisage the catenarian arch and its supports in a Chapter room because they are in an horizontal plane, not vertical as in the vaulted shrine. You might also note the seating arrangement of the three Principals who often sit in an arch, or curve, rather than in a straight line, while the two Scribes, Ezra and Nehemiah, represent the two supporting pillars.

This illustration of the Royal Arch as depicted by Laurence Dermott is from 'The Register of Excellent Masters' dated about 1783.

ALDERSGATE



N = Naphtali
A = Asher

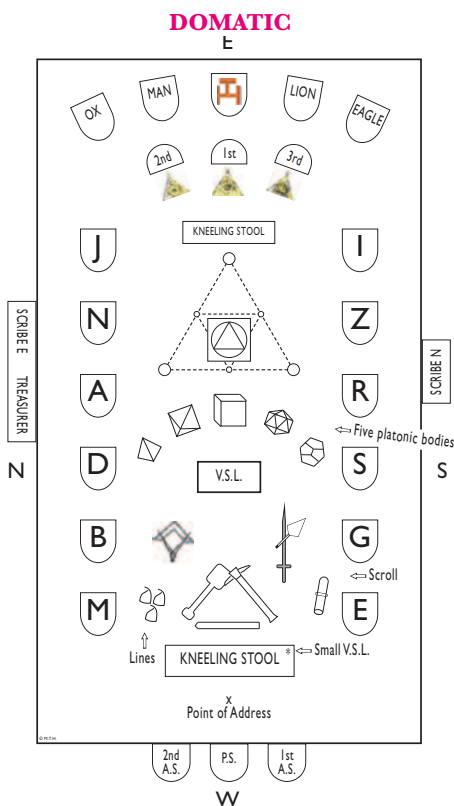
D = Dan
B = Benjamin

M = Manasseh
I = Issachar

Because of this design, the RA Certificate is often credited to Dermott, but it was more likely produced by Thomas Harper, jeweller and Deputy Grand Master of the Antients, who would of course have seen Dermott's illustration in the 'Register.'

The layout of a Royal Arch Chapter room is more complicated than that of a Lodge room because there are three Principals (as compared with one WM in the 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 concave flooring, in allusion to the secret vault, and the furniture of the Chapter room facilitate the depiction of this story.

The order of precedence among Companions starts with the three Principals - Zerubbabel (Z), Haggai (H) and Joshua (J). Next come the two Scribes, Ezra (E) and Nehemiah (N); then the Treasurer, Director of Ceremonies, Almoner and Charity Steward in that order, followed by the Principal Sojourner (PS) and his first and second Assistants. The Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Organist, Assistant Scribe Ezra and Stewards complete the list. A Chapter also has a Janitor, in many respects similar to the Tyler in the Craft.



Z = Zebulun
R = Reuben

S = Simeon & Levi

G = Gad
E = Ephraim

The important letters on the front of the central 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. There is also the mysterious Triple Tau, the ancient sign for life, which is mentioned in the traditional version of the Mystical Lecture.

On the floor of the Chapter, 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 also represent the four elements, Earth, Air, Fire and Water, the fifth being the Sphere of the Universe. They are named Platonic Bodies after the Greek philosopher Plato, who proposed that all men should be united by a common bond of civilized behaviour.

Our two diagrammatic illustrations (on the previous pages) show the slightly differing layouts for the two main workings in the RA, Aldersgate and Domatic. As you can see, the positions of the items between the kneeling stool and pedestal are different. Also, the P/A is called Point of Announcement in Aldersgate and Point of Address in Domatic.

The four banners in the East, hung on the wall behind the Principals, are 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, Laurence Dermott having copied the design from a drawing by an eminent Hebrew scholar. These emblems remain in the Arms of SGC, UGLE, and MetGL to this day, and are explained further in the Symbolical Lecture. The RA Tracing boards depicted here are on display in the Library & Museum at FMH in the RA cabinet and are well worth a visit.



They are miniatures, mounted on wooden boards, and measure 23cm by 14cm and so are depicted here at under half life size. They were published in 1844 by John Harris (1791-1873), who was an artist and engraver.

The board picturing the collapsed Temple clearly shows the Sojourners' tools and the sunlight illuminating the pedestal. The board displaying the room has a few striking differences from today's layout, notably the absence of the rope-lines and platonic bodies and the addition of the central six-pointed Star of David and steps in the West.

The pentalpha, or five-pointed star, was the Antients' Royal Arch emblem. Laurence Dermott's design of the catenarian arch depicts the pentalpha just above the pedestal. It is also inlaid on the flooring at the entrances to FMH in Great Queen Street.



The arrangement of the ensigns, one of the most distinctive features of Chapter when you were restored to light during your exaltation, is based on the instructions given to Moses in the Old Testament Book of Numbers, Chapter Two.

The Chapter Offices: Principals

The Three Principals

The Historical Lecture tells us that Zerubbabel, Haggai and Joshua presided over the rebuilding of the Temple, destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar. The three Principals represent these important individuals and together rule the Chapter. They are to be considered conjointly and severally equal in status, which does not correspond with the relationship between the WM and his Wardens in the Craft.



Zerubbabel

The Most Excellent Zerubbabel is the First Principal in a Chapter. He wears a crimson robe and carries a sceptre bearing a crown. Zerubbabel was a governor of Judah, a position to which he was appointed by Cyrus, King of Persia, when he 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 (also spelt Jehoiakin), King of Judah, at the time that the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar took them into captivity.

Haggai

Excellent Companion Haggai, the Second Principal, wears a purple robe and carries a sceptre bearing the all-seeing eye, which you will recognise from Craft masonry. Haggai was a prophet about whom little is known, apart from his prophesy 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 urged Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, to rally the people to their primary task.

Joshua

Excellent Companion Joshua, the Third Principal, wears a blue robe and carries a sceptre bearing a mitre. He acts similarly to the Lodge Chaplain, saying the prayers at meetings. Joshua was a High Priest during the rebuilding of the Temple. He was the son of Josedeck and grandson of Seraiah, who was the High Priest when the Temple was destroyed by the forces of the Babylonish General. He reinstituted correct temple rituals, without which the older beliefs and practices of Judaism might have been lost. The Principals each have to be elected annually by the Companions of the Chapter. To be eligible for election to Joshua, a Companion must have served either as one of the three Sojourners or as one of the two Scribes. It is no longer necessary for him to have served as Worshipful Master of a Craft Lodge.

To be eligible for election to Haggai, he must have served as Joshua, and for Zerubbabel, he must have served as Haggai. The title Past Zerubbabel (PZ) applies to those who have served as First Principal and is equivalent to the title of Past Master (PM) in the Craft.

The Chapter Offices

The Scribes

The two Scribes in a Chapter, Ezra and Nehemiah, are 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. They wear white robes similar to the one with which you were invested at your exaltation and are distinguished as Lectors and Expounders of the Sacred Law and attendants on the Grand Sanhedrin (Sanhedrim in ritual books). This was the Supreme Grand Council and Court at Jerusalem which is now represented by the three Principals in a Chapter.

Scribe Ezra

Ezra, a priest and scribe, was a leading figure in the revival of Judaism in the Land of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. As a scholar and teacher, he was given official sanction to teach the law, appoint magistrates, offer sacrifices and beautify the Temple. The Old Testament 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 is central to the Royal Arch story, you may wish to consult these sources.

Scribe Nehemiah

Nehemiah was a 5th Century BC Jewish Leader. He held a position of honour in the court of the Persian King, Artaxerxes 1st, and in 444 BC was appointed by the king to the governorship of Judah, with authorisation to rebuild Jerusalem. The rebuilding of Jerusalem and the reforms made during his administration are recounted in the Old Testament Book of Nehemiah.

The Sojourners

The Principal Sojourner acts as the Deacon of the Chapter. He looks after and guides the candidate during the exaltation ceremony, and often helps in other ways during the course of a meeting, e.g. with ballots etc. He also has an important role at the Festive Board. The two Assistant Sojourners help the Principal Sojourner during the Exaltation ceremony.

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. This offers the important message that those employed on lowly tasks may attain the highest honours through zeal and industry. During the ceremony of your Exaltation you were represented as a Sojourner and were invested with the white robes that they wear as emblems of that purity of heart and rectitude of conduct which should be the inspiration of all members of the Royal Arch.

Other Offices

The other offices of a Chapter, the Treasurer, Almoner, Charity Steward, Director and Assistant Director of Ceremonies, Organist, Assistant Scribe E and Stewards, all fulfil the same functions as their equivalents in a Craft lodge.

Some Interesting History...

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' standing 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.

Important Change

This requirement was rescinded on the 10th November 2004 when Supreme Grand Chapter accepted the recommendation of a Working Party that a candidate should qualify for the Third Principal's Chair if he had held the office of Sojourner or Scribe in a Regular Chapter. However, careful consideration is recommended so that a candidate does not progress too quickly, particularly as the office of Principal Sojourner is key to understanding the Royal Arch ceremony.

Regalia

You will already have noticed a number of differences in regalia between Lodge and Chapter. In Craft, you wear the Entered Apprentice's and Fellowcraft's aprons before the Master Mason's apron. In the Royal Arch there is no intermediary stage and the Companion's apron is worn with a sash and a jewel from the day you are exalted into Chapter. While the Royal Arch Jewel is to be worn in Lodges, no Craft jewel is to be worn in Chapter. By long established custom the Royal Arch Jewel takes precedence over all other Masonic jewels, and is worn on the left, nearest the centre of the body.

Distinctions in rank

Different colours in the apron triangles, tassels, and jewel ribbons indicate the distinctions in rank in Chapter. 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 Metropolitan, Provincial or Grand Officer or holder of SLGCR LGCR or LCR have gilt triangles with a dark blue silk backing and Regalia the jewel has a tri-coloured ribbon of light blue, crimson and dark blue. In each case the apron tassels are the same colour as the backing of the triangles. For more detailed explanations of the aprons and sashes refer to Royal Arch Regulations 96 and 97 which are contained in the Book of Constitutions.



The Jewel of the Order

Your Royal Arch Jewel warrants a more detailed examination, because it is easily the foremost breast jewel in Masonry today and is to be worn in Craft Lodges, as explained earlier. Also, it symbolises in a condensed form what Freemasonry teaches. It is a very detailed design and much is contained in what is essentially a small piece of regalia. Most of the symbolism depicted in the design of the jewel was mentioned in the lectures delivered at your Exaltation, but you will probably need to listen to them again before you can appreciate the full significance of the explanations.

The basic features of the jewel are its interlaced triangles, the circles that surround them and the fact that it is double-sided. The interlaced triangles represent the twofold nature of man, spiritual and material, and form a six-pointed star. At the centre of this star is a sun and, because that sits within another small triangle, it is regarded as an emblem of the Deity.

Enclosing the interlaced triangles are two concentric circles. The inner circle denotes the Deity and His Omnipresence and the outer represents Eternity.

At the bottom of the jewel, outside the two concentric circles, is a small circle. This is another emblem of Eternity and there is within it the Triple Tau, which also alludes to the Deity. The Triple Tau is an important emblem or mark for a Royal Arch Mason and every Companion has them on each part of his RA clothing: jewel, sash and apron. Beneath the small circle with the Triple Tau is a scroll.



Royal Arch Jewel Front



Royal Arch Jewel Reverse

The Jewel is covered with inscriptions - between the circles, on the triangles and on the scroll at the bottom.

On the front of the Jewel the inscription between the two concentric circles is: 'Si talia jungere possis sit tibi scire satis' which means 'If you can understand what follows, you know enough'.

There are two sets of inscriptions on the interlaced triangles on this side of the Jewel. The triangle with the apex pointing upwards is the spiritual triangle and the inscription on the base is: 'We have found' which is repeated in Greek and in Latin on its other sides. On the material triangle, with the apex pointing down, the base is blank, where the Companion's name could be inserted, and on the two sides are: 'Cultor Dei' and 'Civis Mundi.' The translation means that the wearer is 'a worshipper of God' and 'a citizen of the world'.

The scroll is superimposed with the words in Latin 'Nil nisi clavis deest', meaning 'Nothing is wanting but the key'.

On the reverse side of the Jewel only one third of the scroll is engraved. Two vacant spaces after the word 'Exalted' are left for insertion of the date of exaltation of the wearer on the lower part and the name or number of his Chapter on the other. It is not essential for the scroll to be completed and it seldom is.

Between the two concentric circles on the reverse side, another two groups of words are inscribed in Latin: 'Deo, Regi, Fratribus; Honor, Fidelitas, Benevolentia.' These are to be read conjointly and signify: 'Deo Honor - To God, Honour'; 'Regi Fidelitas - To the King, Fidelity';

‘Fratribus Benevolentia - To the Brethren, Love’. The inscription is a translation into Latin of part of the Regius Poem, an ancient manuscript which is held in the British Library and dates back to the 14th century.

The remaining inscription on the reverse of the Jewel is on the interlaced triangles. The first triangle is engraved with ‘Concord, Truth, Peace’. On the second is ‘Wisdom, Strength, Beauty’, which three allude to the Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence of the T.A.L.G.M.H. as recited at the opening of every RA Chapter.

More detailed explanations of the symbolism of the RA Jewel can be found in Masonic literature and Ritual books and this item of regalia can be an interesting subject for further research as you delve deeper into the history and meanings of the Royal Arch.

The Triple Tau

The tau is one of the most important symbols in the Royal Arch, along with the triangle and circle, as just explained for the RA Jewel. We use the capital version of the Greek letter τ , which is **T**, like our English alphabet capital, as the basis for this symbol. It was also a very early and simple form of the cross, often known as St Anthony’s cross. 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.’

In the Book of Ezekiel, chapter nine, the Lord speaks to the six men appointed to punish the city of Jerusalem and tells ‘the man dressed in linen with pen and ink at his waist’ to ‘go through the city and put a mark (or tau) on the foreheads of those who groan and lament over the abominations practised there.’ He then tells the others to ‘kill without pity... but touch no one who bears the mark.’ In pagan times a warrior who survived battle with honour could attach a T to his name.

The Triple Tau developed, not from a conjunction of three T’s, but from a T-over-H sign meaning Templum Hierosolymae, the Temple of Jerusalem. The earliest Grand Chapter regulations directed that aprons should bear on their bibs a T and H of gold. On Thomas Dunckerley’s Royal Arch certificate, issued in 1768, the T touches the bar of the H, and both letters have serifs, the little bars on the letter limbs. The true Triple Tau of today has no serifs and the letter strokes have become right angles. It would appear that the T-over-H developed over time into a true geometric Triple Tau by a process of elision and alteration, rather than by any regulatory decree. It is hard to date when the true Triple Tau was officially accepted, but it would appear to have been in the early 1830s when revised regulations were issued. Today it is prominent on your RA regalia.

As with the RA Jewel, further and more thorough explanations of the tau and its symbolism can be found in Masonic and other literature and especially in Bernard E. Jones’ ‘Freemasons’ Book of the Royal Arch’.



*Simple
Cross*



T over H



*T over H
Joined*



*True Triple
Tau*

Royal Arch Beginnings

The Royal Arch of today essentially began with the Union of the Premier Grand Lodge and the Antients Grand Lodge in 1813 and the declaration then that the Royal Arch was the completion of pure ancient Masonry.

Prior to that event, the precise origins of the Royal Arch are clouded in mystery and were caught up in the debate between the so-called 'Antients' and 'Moderns' of Craft Masonry.

Rival Grand Lodges

In the earliest days there had been only one Grand Lodge in England, which had been founded by four Lodges that met for the purpose at 'The Goose and Gridiron' Tavern in St. Paul's Churchyard in June 1717. However, before long some disaffected masons felt that the established customs of the Craft were not being followed. Thus, in 1751 five lodges of Irish Freemasons met at a tavern called 'The Turks Head' in Greek Street, Soho, and formed themselves into a rival second Grand Lodge. This became known as the 'Antients' or 'Atholl Grand Lodge' after the 3rd and 4th Dukes of Atholl, who altogether served as Grand Masters for over thirty years. Paradoxically, the senior Grand Lodge became known as the 'Moderns' or the 'Premier Grand Lodge'. From that point on there were two divergent views about the Royal Arch.

Division on the Royal Arch

The Premier Grand Lodge never acknowledged the Royal Arch, and did not want the Chapter degree worked in their Lodges because they considered it was not part of Craft Masonry. However, in 1766 they set up the separate 'The Excellent Grand and Royal Arch Chapter of Jerusalem' and the then Grand Master of the Moderns, Lord Blayney, became what they called the First Grand Master Zed.

This new Grand Chapter was enacted through the Charter of Compact, illustrated here. It bears three coats of arms (Royal, Premier Grand Lodge, and Lord Blayney's) and has thirty signatories including Blayney and Thomas Dunckerley who was probably a leading architect of the Charter.

The Charter which is 75cm by 65cm is a well-crafted document and is adorned with nine triangles, three hexalphas, and the T-over-H figure. It has been framed and used to hang in the Librarian's office at FMH, but is now kept securely in the safe.

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 did not 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 turn of the century attempts were being made to merge the two Grand Lodges, but the difference in approach to the Royal Arch and its place in Freemasonry caused one of the biggest obstacles to reconciliation. Real progress was not made, therefore, until the Duke of Sussex became Grand Master of the Moderns and his brother, the Duke of Kent, became Grand Master of the Antients.

The eventual Union took place on 27th December 1813, with the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master.

Compromise and Union

The second of the Articles of Union between the Grand Lodges stated that 'pure Antient Masonry consists of 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 the compromise: the Royal Arch remained part of pure ancient Masonry, and this is still reflected today in the fact that the Chapter Jewel is worn in Craft Lodges (thus satisfying the Antients).

However, the Royal Arch was treated as a separate Order from the Craft, as it is now, and was not subsequently worked in a Craft Lodge (thus satisfying the Moderns). This definition of pure ancient Masonry can be found today in the Preliminary Declaration in the preamble to Rule 1 of the Book of Constitutions that every Craft Mason is given on his Initiation. This Book also contains the Regulations for Supreme Grand Chapter that you may find useful for reference as you progress within the Order.

The Articles of Union and the signed document with the seals, are held in the safe in the Museum.

After 1813 Antient Lodges could no longer perform exaltations under their Craft Warrant, and Chapters that had been in existence at the date of the Craft Union 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 the requirement. Those Chapters disinclined to comply, or which were unable to do so, simply went out of existence. To this day a Chapter is usually attached to a warranted Lodge and takes that Lodge's number and precedence, although governance, meetings and membership are completely separate.

Much work was involved in reorganising the Craft after the Union of the two Grand Lodges, so it was not until 1817 that administrative attention was turned to the Royal Arch. On 18th March 1817 the Royal Arch members of both the former Grand Lodges met at FMH and the Duke of Sussex formed them into the United Grand Chapter of England.

Because there had never been a separate Antients Grand Chapter, the new United Grand Chapter was ineffect a continuation of the original Grand Chapter, with the addition of those members of the former Antients Grand Lodge who were RA Masons. In 1821 the title was changed to its present name of Supreme Grand Chapter.

A more detailed history of these events can be found in the many books on the subject and on the Supreme Grand Chapter website.

Supreme Grand Chapter

The Supreme Grand Chapter of England is the governing body of the Royal Arch Masons in England, Wales, and the Channel Islands. It was formed in 1817, as is explained in the history section. Its headquarters are at Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street.

Provided he is an Installed First Principal, the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England is also the First Grand Principal, the head of Supreme Grand Chapter. If the Grand Master is a Prince of the Blood Royal and has appointed a Pro Grand Master, then (again, provided he is an installed First Principal) he 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.

Convocations of Supreme Grand Chapter are held each year on the second Wednesday in November and on the day following the Grand Festival of Grand Lodge.

The Supreme Grand Chapter of England has over 107,000 members within nearly 3,500 separate Chapters. Chapters in London (an area within a 10 mile radius of FMH) are administered by the Metropolitan Grand Chapter of London. Chapters outside London are grouped into 47 Provinces, each headed by a Grand Superintendent. Chapters meeting abroad are administered in Districts, Groups, or directly by Supreme Grand Chapter.

The website is at: www.grandchapter.org.uk

The Provincial Grand Chapter of Suffolk website is at: [/www.suffolkpgc.org.uk](http://www.suffolkpgc.org.uk)

Suffolk Provincial Structure

Grand Superintendent
Deputy Grand Superintendent
Second Provincial Grand Principal
Third Provincial Grand Principal
Scribe E
Scribe N
Treasurer
Registrar
Director of Ceremonies
Sword Bearer
Deputy D. of C.
Almoner
Charity Steward
Principal Sojr.
1st Asst. Sojr.
2nd Asst. Sojr.
Asst. Scribe E
Standard Bearer
Organist
Asst. D. of C.
Stewards
Janitor

Provincial Grand Chapter Meetings



There is an annual meeting, or Convocation, of Suffolk Grand Chapter, presided over by the Most Excellent Suffolk Grand Superintendent, usually held in the Greshams, Ipswich.

Details of this meeting are published on www.suffolkpgc.co.uk. The agenda includes business items, appointments to active Suffolk office and investiture of those receiving Senior and Suffolk Grand Chapter Ranks.

The meeting is also attended by some of the executive members of other Masonic Provinces and is followed by dinner.

It is the responsibility of the First Principal of a Chapter to ensure that the Chapter is represented at that meeting. Any Companion will be most welcome at this meeting, but if you wish to be seated with your friends at dinner an early application is recommended.

Yearbook

The Scribe Ezra of your Chapter will have a reference copy of The Yearbook for Suffolk Grand Lodge and it is worth asking him to let you browse through it. Following the pattern of the Craft section, you will find Chapters listed by both number and alphabetically. There is also a list of current officers of Suffolk Provincial Grand Chapter.

Hymns

Not all Chapters sing hymns at opening and closing. These are the most popular, but are not always sung to the same tune, and sometimes have slightly different words. Many Chapters have other hymn choices.



SUFFOLK HOLY ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER GUIDE