



Mentoring and Retention

Sussex Royal Arch ONUS System

In other words, the **onus** or responsibility for looking after a new Companion falls

ONUS all.

The **ONUS System** embodies the duty of care, which we all owe as Royal Arch Masons to every newly Exalted Companion. It is only by supporting and encouraging him to understand the Exaltation Ceremony and its meaning, that he will come to appreciate and enjoy this Supreme Order. Hopefully, every Royal Arch Companion will be willing to play his part; **it is without doubt a team effort**. The leading personnel and their respective roles within the **ONUS** system are listed within this booklet together with a synopsis of the supporting resources which are available. The **ONUS System** is designed to support the **Supreme Grand Chapter Archway** initiative.

Foreword

Whilst we all spend much time and effort in attracting new members into the Royal Arch, it is unfortunately the case that, once they have been exalted and become Companions among us, we do not give the same time and effort in keeping them. The sad fact is that, in the Royal Arch in the Province of Sussex, we lose about fifteen per cent of our new Exaltees within three years of exaltation and another fifteen per cent or so are so disenchanted that they hardly ever come again. This is the worst disaster that can befall a Chapter and it is a potent criticism of the manner in which existing members relate to new members.

The need to look after a candidate does not stop when he has been exalted. Especially during his early years, he needs to be appreciated and mentored. Both are part of turning brotherhood into companionship.

Fortunately help in doing so is now at hand and, as Grand Superintendent, I am greatly indebted to our Provincial Grand Mentor, E Comp Stephen Austin, for originating the **ONUS** scheme. No member of a Chapter should consider that looking after a new Companion, and perhaps a not so new Companion, is not his responsibility; the obligation falls **On Us**, all of us. Comp Austin has, with meticulous care, prepared a scheme with its supporting documentation which will help us all in that regard. In doing so he is owed a debt of gratitude by the Province which we will repay only by adopting his scheme and utilising it to the full.

Chris Moore

ME Grand Superintendent

November 2023

The Newly Exalted Companion

At the completion of his Exaltation Ceremony, a new Companion will be presented with his **Royal Arch Welcome Pack**. The pack includes a **Welcome Letter** from the Provincial Grand Mentor and copies of the **New Companions Handbook**, a **Royal Arch Calling Card**, and the **ONUS Mentoring Booklet**.

The **New Companions Handbook** covers such topics as: *The Chapter Officers, Chapter Meetings, The Signs* – through to – *The Festive Board, Chapter Fire, Provincial Grand Chapter etc.* The **Royal Arch Calling Card** lists the resources available to him as he begins to explore Royal Arch Masonry. The **ONUS Mentoring Booklet** outlines the objectives of the **ONUS** Mentoring System and profiles the personnel within his Chapter and the Province of Sussex who form part of the **ONUS** Mentoring Team.

Within a few days of his Exaltation Ceremony, he will receive via email a digital copy of the **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook**.

To help explain the history of Royal Arch Masonry, its Ceremony and Symbolism it has been decided to make extensive use of the Royal Arch material contained on the **Solomon Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Website** and to encourage every newly exalted companion to engage with it. The **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook** contains an important link to the **Welcome Companion** module which sits on the Solomon VLE platform, with easy instructions on how to login and create an account.



The **Welcome Companion** module expands on the information contained in the *New Companions Handbook* and focuses on explaining the Exaltation Ceremony in more detail. This module forms part of the **Supreme Grand Chapter Archway** process.



If he wishes a new Companion can then expand his knowledge further by exploring the main **Royal Arch Modules** contained in Solomon and to help with this the **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook** lists the most interesting and **user-friendly** modules and files available to him. All in all, the whole experience has been developed to help him make sense of his Masonic journey thus far and to allow him to follow his own motivations and interests in his own way and at his own pace.

Personal Mentor

Every newly Exalted Companion will be assigned a dedicated Personal Mentor. A newly Exalted Companion's *natural* **Personal Mentor** is likely to be either his **Proposer** or his **Seconder**. If one of his proposers is an experienced and knowledgeable Royal Arch Mason, he will be able to



guide and explain to the newly Exalted Companion the various aspects of Royal Arch Masonry that are important to know, especially in his early days as a member. If, however, his proposers are themselves fairly new to Royal Arch Masonry or do not feel confident enough to guide the new Companion, another member of the Chapter will need to be assigned as his **Personal Mentor**.

Although a Personal Mentor should encourage a new Companion to engage with the Solomon Royal Arch virtual learning experience it is not being suggested that a Personal Mentor will need to be proficient in interpreting the information contained in the Solomon modules and files but simply that he is aware that they exist and can guide a new Companion towards them as part of the Mentoring process.

That said, the information contained in the **Welcome Companion** and **User-Friendly Royal Arch Modules** is very informative and enlightening to the extent that every Companion who takes a little time to review them will find it a very worthwhile exercise. Therefore, a digital copy of the **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook** will be made available to every Royal Arch Mason in Sussex.

The ONUS System in Practice

Chapter Almoners (Mentoring Guardians)

In the first instance, if a newly Exalted Companion needs any help or guidance his first port of call, will be his **Personal Mentor**, **BUT**, if his Personal Mentor is unsure, the next point of contact will be the **Chapter Almoner**. The Chapter Almoners role has for some years included a mentoring aspect as per the description of his duties, but this will now be redefined to specifically include **Guardianship of the Mentoring Process within his Chapter**. This can be viewed on the Provincial website: RA22 RA Sussex Chapter - Almoners Duties v3. Chapter Almoners are responsible for the pastoral needs of all the Companions in their Chapter and this includes mentoring provision.

When required the **Chapter Almoner** should be able to guide a newly Exalted Companion and/or his Personal Mentor in the right direction. However, if he too is unsure of the correct path to take, he should enlist the assistance of a fellow Companion. So, for example, with regards Ceremonial matters or Historical or Symbolical guidance he can consult with the **Chapter Director of Ceremonies** or a **Royal Arch Representative**. If the enquiry is of a different nature, he can enlist the help of the **Chapter Scribe E** or the Chapter **Visiting Officer (VO)**. The **Provincial Mentoring** or **Provincial Almoners Office** are also able to assist if required.

A **Chapter Almoner** should also work in unison with the **Chapter Scribe E** to ensure that their Chapter has a **Retention** process in place and that it is being followed. They should take the initiative in monitoring the attendance of **all** Companions and attempt to contact them if they begin to miss meetings. A Companions absence from just one meeting, without an apology, should give rise for concern. Special attention should also be directed towards those Companions who may need a little extra help in attending meetings.

As **Mentoring Guardians**, the **Chapter Almoner's** role is to act as a **safety net** to the Mentoring Process within his Chapter. His first duty will be to ensure that every newly Exalted Companion and those Chapter Officers charged with looking after him are provided with all the mentoring resources they require.

The Chapter Director of Ceremonies

The Director of Ceremonies will play a very active and important role in the **ONUS** Mentoring process by ensuring that the new Companion's Exaltation Ceremony is of a competent and impressive standard as would befit the completion of his journey in *Pure Antient Masonry*. If a Director of Ceremonies has any concerns regarding the delivery of the Exaltation Ceremony and considers that his Chapter may need some practical help or guidance, he should contact the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies office as soon as is practicable.

provgdcra@sussexmasons.org.uk

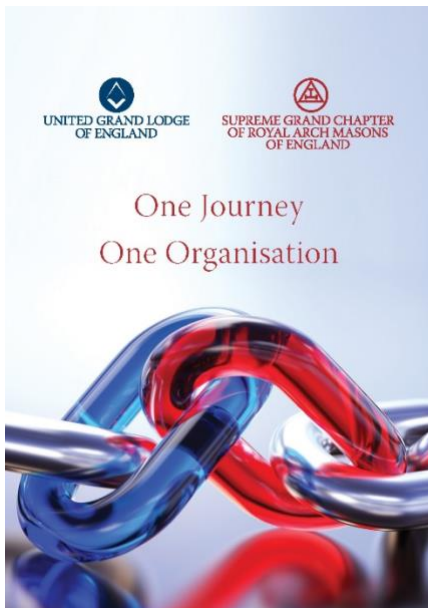
Normally, a Royal Arch Director of Ceremonies will be a very experienced Royal Arch Companion. His knowledge of the Ceremony, the History, Symbols, Signs and Lectures will have been cemented by a committed involvement in Royal Arch Masonry, possibly over many years of membership. As the New Companion, with the help of his Personal Mentor, begins to explore the various aspects of Royal Arch Masonry, the Chapter Director of Ceremonies may be called upon to help explain some parts of the Ceremony in more detail or expand on the meaning of some of the many facets of this Supreme Order. Although the Chapter Director of Ceremonies will already be familiar and conversant with the Exaltation and Installation Ceremonies, by studying his copy of the **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook** and then engaging with the **Solomon** website he can expand his knowledge further.

At some stage every newly Exalted Companion and perhaps his Personal Mentor will need a point of contact they can rely on when they need **some aspect of the Ceremony explained more clearly**. As part of the **ONUS** Mentoring initiative it is anticipated that the **Chapter Director of Ceremonies** will be the default Companion to provide the advice and guidance they require.

The Chapter Scribe E

Is the vital administration and communications link with Province and will be able to help with any administrative and general documentation issues. Every **Candidate for Exaltation** and his **Personal Mentor's** contact details will need to be communicated by email to the **Provincial Mentors** office via the **Chapter Scribe E**, ideally, at least fourteen days prior to the regular meeting at which the Exaltation Ceremony will take place. To assist in **Retention**, the Scribe E, working in conjunction with the **Chapter Almoner**, should ensure the **Retention Process** within his Chapter is operating correctly. If required, further advice and guidance on **Retention** can be sought via the **Provincial Grand Almoner** rapgalm@sussexmasons.org.uk or the **Chapter Visiting Officer**.

One Journey One Organization



Royal Arch Representatives

Nearly every Chapter has at least one member who is also the Royal Arch Representative of a Craft Lodge.

Royal Arch Representatives act as a **conduit** between the Royal Arch and Craft Masonry. They form an important bridge which links the two and epitomise the concept of **One Journey One Organization**. They are expected to give sound and impartial advice to any Brother who is contemplating joining Royal Arch Masonry.

As the **Royal Arch focal point** within their Craft lodge, they should offer their support to every newly exalted Companion within the Craft environment. Although they will normally be very proficient in explaining the numerous facets of Royal Arch Masonry and Chapter procedures,

by referring to their copy of the **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook** they can further advance and augment their existing knowledge. Not only will this enable every Royal Arch Representative to play his part as a member of the **ONUS** team, but the additional knowledge gained will prove invaluable when talking to any prospective Royal Arch Candidates.

To aid in the **Retention** process they should also continue to liaise with the existing **Royal Arch** members in their Craft lodge whose enthusiasm for Chapter maybe waning or whose membership may have lapsed and try to rekindle their interest. Some of the Royal Arch presentations and documents contained on Solomon and highlighted in the **Solomon Royal Arch Guidebook** can help in this regard. Many of them can be used in small group or one-to-one sessions as well as for larger events.

Provincial Support

Mentors Corner

A new Mentors Corner has been created on the Provincial Website which contains help and guidance on all aspects of the Mentoring process, including notifications of forthcoming Exaltation Ceremonies and other bulletins promoting noteworthy lectures and other Royal Arch Mentoring initiatives, along with documents, demonstrations, and presentations available via a link to the **UGLE Solomon Mentors Corner Module**. Depending on how engaged the members of a Chapter wish to become with the Mentoring process, this module provides material specially selected to be delivered in a Chapter room or over the Internet. It can also be used in one-to-one or small group situations or to form a series of presentations to be given at a Chapter meeting for the benefit of every Companion. Some of the presentations and lectures have already been used successfully in First Principals Chapters and the **Knowledge of Yourself** file forms the basis of the first part of the **RAVE (Royal Arch Vision Event)** presentations which are being held periodically throughout the Province. More information on the **RAVE** presentations can be obtained from the Provincial Membership Officer by contacting him via email: ramembership@sussexmasons.org.uk

Provincial Mentoring and Almoners Teams

In conjunction with the **Provincial Almoners Team** a dedicated **Provincial Mentoring Team** has been established to support the **ONUS** process. Members of the team will be available to help any Chapter or Companion with the implementation of the **ONUS** system and provide additional resources if required. Both teams can be contacted directly by email:

Provincial Grand Mentor ramentor@sussexmasons.org.uk

Provincial Grand Almoner rapgalm@sussexmasons.org.uk

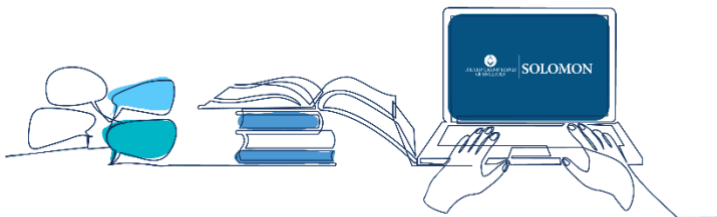
Documentation

A range of documentation and online platforms have been created to support the **ONUS** Mentoring Process. Some of the documentation is in hard copy (**HC**) and some in digital form: (**DF**). The documentation includes the **Royal Arch Welcome Pack** containing: the **New Companions Handbook** (formerly Pocket Guide) (**HC/DF**), the **New Exalte's "Royal Arch Calling Card"** (**HC/DF**) and the **ONUS Mentoring and Retention Booklet** (**HC/DF**).

Solomon Royal Arch User Guidebook (DF)

To be made available to every Sussex Royal Arch Mason

Online platforms include: **UGLE Solomon "Welcome Companion" Module** and the **Provincial Mentors Corner** (with links to) **UGLE Solomon Royal Arch Mentors version**.



In conclusion



The Ceremony of Exaltation differs greatly from any of those contained in the three craft degrees. The narrative of the Ceremony is based on real historical events and helps to explain the true meaning, context, and implications of “**Pure, Antient Masonry.**”

As Royal Arch Companions we are all members of the **ONUS** team. In the words of Shakespeare “**one man in his time plays many parts**” and you might well be a Candidate’s Proposer and Personal Mentor and at the same time the Chapter Director of Ceremonies or perhaps a Royal Arch Representative in your Craft Lodge. A similar set of circumstances could equally apply to other Chapter Officers. In the **ONUS** system, whatever part, or parts we may play dovetail together so that no one individual carries the responsibility for looking after their fellow Companions.

The ***onus*** is with us all.

To Find out more

Visit us at:



www.sussexroyalarch.org.uk

Our website has full details of all our Masonic Centres, and all our Chapters, including a diary of events and meetings.

“Solomon, your journey of learning and development”



[Solomon Start Your Journey](#)