



Royal Arch
Masons of Sussex

New
Companions
Handbook

Foreword

Congratulations on completing your journey in Pure Antient Masonry by becoming a Royal Arch Mason.

There are many resources and reference materials available to a new Companion to assist with a full explanation of the Exaltation Ceremony and about the Royal Arch in general, which we hope you will now take the time to discover.

This guide is designed to give a brief explanation about the Royal Arch and also answer some of the questions which might arise at the beginning of this next stage in your Masonic journey of discovery.

We hope you will have many years enjoying this friendly, colourful, and exciting Order.

Contents

One Journey One Organisation	5
The Chapter Officers	7
Addressing the Principals	8
Chapter Meetings	9
Can I attend all Ceremonies?	9
The Signs	10
Regalia	11
Aprons Companions and Principals	12
Aprons Provincial and SGC	13
The Royal Arch Jewel	14
The Royal Arch Jewel	15
The Festive Board	16
Chapter Fire	17
Provincial Grand Chapter	18
Annual General Meeting	19



UNITED GRAND LODGE
OF ENGLAND



SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER
OF ROYAL ARCH MASONS
OF ENGLAND

One Journey
One Organisation



From Initiation to Exaltation

When the Antient and Modern Grand Lodges came together to form the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813 they declared that 'Pure Antient Masonry' consists of three degrees—the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason *including the Royal Arch*.

This declaration still stands at the front of our Book of Constitutions and means there are four parts to a Freemason's journey. For historical reasons, the first three are governed by UGLE, while the Royal Arch is governed by the Supreme Grand Chapter of England - but in real terms we are one organisation.

Because of this link, our Grand Master automatically serves as the First Grand Principal in the Royal Arch, and many other senior roles are also shared.

This connection makes English Freemasonry unique around the world and represents an important part of our history and heritage.

The Chapter Officers

A Chapter has Three Principals who rule conjointly, Zerubbabel as the First (1st) Principal, Haggai as the Second (2nd) Principal and Jeshua (Joshua in some Provinces) the Third (3rd) Principal.

The 1st Principal wears a crimson robe and carries a Sceptre bearing a crown.

The 2nd Principal wears a purple robe and carries a Sceptre bearing the all-seeing eye.

The 3rd Principal wears a blue robe and carries a Sceptre bearing a mitre.

As well as an elected Treasurer, the Principals appoint a Secretary known as Scribe Ezra and a Scribe Nehemiah.

There are Three Sojourners, the Principal Sojourner and the 1st Assistant and 2nd Assistant Sojourners.

The Principals may also appoint an Almoner, Charity Steward, DC, ADC, an Assistant Scribe E, as well as Stewards.

Addressing the Principals

A Companion (Comp), as we are known in the Royal Arch, is the equivalent to a Brother in the Craft.

When a Companion is installed into the first of the three chairs (that of Jeshua the 3rd Principal) his title is changed to Excellent Companion (E Comp). This title is then used for all Principals and Past Principals in the same way that WBro is used in the Craft.

When speaking directly to the 1st Principal, the term “Most Excellent,” is used.

When addressing all three Principals, “Your Excellencies,

No step or sign is taken when addressing the Principals, but it is customary to give a court bow before and after speaking.

What happens at a Chapter Meeting?

Similar to a Craft meeting, a Chapter is opened in due form, the regular business of the Chapter conducted and, if applicable an Exaltation Ceremony to admit a new Companion or, at the Installation Meeting, a Ceremony to Install the new Chapter Principals for the ensuing year. After the work is completed, the Chapter is closed, and the Companions make their way to the Festive Board.

Can I attend all the Ceremonies?

Whilst all Companions can witness the Exaltation Ceremony and also the Obligation taken by a Principal Elect, only those of equal or higher rank can remain within the Chapter when a new Principal is installed into his Chair.

The Signs

During your Ceremony of Exaltation, you will have been taught the relevant signs used in the Royal Arch.

- 1) The Reverential Sign (with the thumbs closed or concealed) is always used when entering or retiring from the Chapter, at all prayers and as directed in the ritual. The sign is given towards the Pedestal and is not directed to the Principals; no step is taken. There are no signs used when speaking.
- 2) The Penal Sign (given with the left hand) is used by all Companions whilst witnessing a Companion taking or reciting an Obligation at an Exaltation or Installation Ceremony.

There are other signs used during the Installation of the Three Principals, but these are explained and demonstrated as necessary during the Installation Ceremonies.

Regalia worn by the Companions

You may notice several different aprons and collars worn by the Companions in your Chapter.

All Companions wear a Sash which should sit on the left shoulder with the Triple Tau symbol falling to right hip, an Apron, and the Royal Arch Breast Jewel. Chapter Officers, Past Zerubbabels, Provincial and Grand Officers will also wear an appropriate collar.

The Breast Jewel worn by all Companions all have the same appendage but with a coloured ribbon of the appropriate rank. This jewel must also be worn in your Craft Lodge and takes precedence over all other jewels (such as Charity Jewels) that may be worn.

A Past 1st Principal of a Chapter may also wear a Past Zerubbabel's Jewel which may only be worn in his own Chapter.

A Companion below the rank of an Installed Principal will wear an Apron with white tassels and a white background behind the Tau symbol.

The Breast Jewel will have a white ribbon. The fringe on the Sash will be red and blue.



A Principal (or Past Principal) has an Apron with maroon tassels and colouring behind the Tau symbol, and a Breast Jewel with a maroon ribbon.

The Sash also has a maroon background behind the Tau and the fringe changes to gold or metal gilt.



Provincial Officers wear an Apron with blue tassels a blue background to the Tau and a tri-coloured ribbon to the Jewel. The Apron will show a badge of rank as awarded to the Companion by Provincial Grand Chapter.



Grand Officers also have a similar Apron, Sash, and Jewel to Provincial Officers, but a



Grand Rank Apron has a double-edged border on three sides and a badge of rank as conferred by the Supreme Grand Chapter of England.

The Royal Arch Jewel

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 is explained in the lectures, 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 this 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 another small circle. This is also an 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.

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



The Festive Board

A Chapter festive board is similar to that of a Craft meeting. A convivial meal often with some greetings followed by certain formal toasts.

In the Royal Arch, Grace given before and after the meal uses Latin phrases.

GRACE

Before the meal

Given by J.

Benedictus Benedicat

(pronounced Bene-de-cat)

May the Blessed One bless.

After the meal

Given by J.

Benedicto Benedicatur

(pronounced Bene-de-carter)

May the Blessed One be blessed.

*In each case the response is “Amen”— not
“Deo Gratias.”*

Chapter Fire

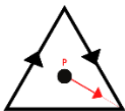
Royal Arch Fire differs from Craft Fire.

If in doubt, ask a fellow Companion or take a few extra moments to watch others.

Chapter Fire in Sussex is given by pointing down and tracing the pattern in a horizontal plane.



Point



Triangle



Circle



1,2 3 Clap

Provincial Grand Chapter of Sussex

Grand Superintendent
Deputy Grand Superintendent
Second Provincial Grand Principal
Third Provincial Grand Principal
Assistants to the Provincial Grand Principals
Scribe E
Scribe N
Treasurer
Registrar
Director of Ceremonies
Sword Bearer
Deputy D. of C.
Almoner
Charity Steward
Membership Officer
Mentor
Principal Soj.
1st Asst. Soj.
2nd Asst. Soj.
Asst. Scribe E
Standard Bearer
Organist
Asst. D. of C.
Stewards
Janitor

Meeting of Provincial Grand Chapter

There is an Annual Convocation of Provincial Grand Chapter, being its annual meeting, presided over by the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, the 2nd and 3rd Provincial Grand Principals.

At this meeting, as well as the usual business agenda, appointments to and promotions in Provincial Grand Rank are conferred.

The meeting is also attended by some of the executive members of Sussex Companion Orders and other Masonic 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 the Annual Convocation.

All Companions of any rank are not only welcome but encouraged to attend.

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, meetings, and meeting dates.

“Solomon, your journey of learning and development”



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Provincial Grand Chapter of Sussex 2023