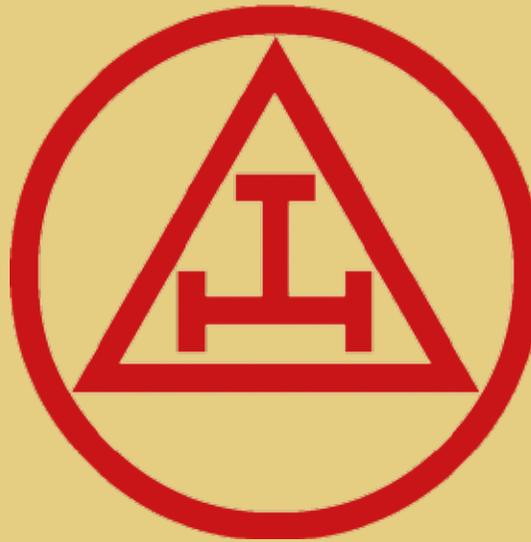


The Royal Arch Ritual

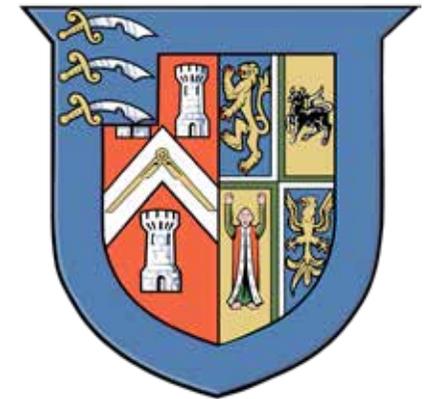
Apart from the Installation Ceremony, there is only one ceremony in the Royal Arch ritual, that of the 'Exaltation' of a new Companion. After the darkness of the Third Degree, it is a colourful, enlightening and memorable ceremony, with profound, challenging, allegorical significance. The story told, which contains some of the most delightful lines of Masonic ritual, concerns the re-building of the Temple after the Exile. In it can be seen explanation of words in the ritual which state that the Royal Arch is "founded on the Sacred Name".

Regalia

Aprons, Sashes and the Jewels of the Order are shown. Companions wear the white ribbons, Excellent Companions the red. An appropriate Jewel of the order is worn in Lodge, with Craft regalia.



Provincial Grand Chapter of Essex



The Next Step in Freemasonry

Your Future in Freemasonry: The Royal Arch

The Next Step

A Master Mason may join a Royal Arch Chapter four weeks after being Raised. It is the natural and traditional next step in Freemasonry.

The Craft and the Royal Arch

Long ago, the Royal Arch degree would have been worked in the Craft Lodge. For many years following the reorganisation of Freemasonry after the Union of the Grand Lodges in 1813, the supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch was stated to be the completion of the Third Degree. It is now said to be the completion of Craft Masonry.

Whatever working one prefers, it is a most rewarding and enlightening step for a Master Mason, offering as it does an opportunity to fill the gaps left in the Craft Masonry after the Third Degree and to continue the Masonic journey towards a spiritual conclusion.

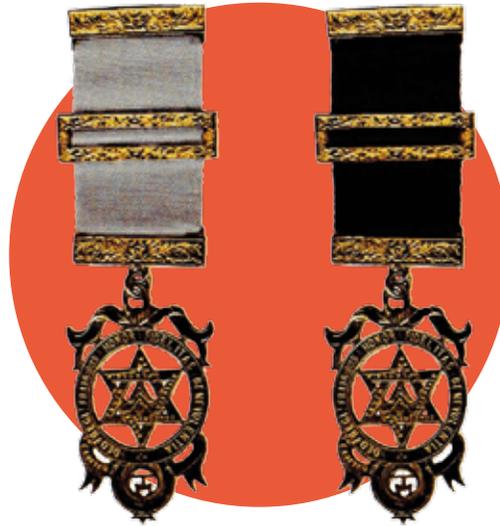
In the degrees which you received in the Craft you were taught that Freemasonry is a system of morality, based on a belief in T.G.A.O.T.U. and promoting brotherly love, relief and truth as the rule for your earthly pilgrimage.

The Ceremony of Raising implies that there is more to learn, for it urges us to lift our eyes beyond our civil duties and routine existence. The Royal Arch develops this theme.

Some of the many other orders in Freemasonry require Royal Arch membership as a prerequisite. A few are specifically Christian but the Royal Arch is not; it requires the same beliefs as the Craft.

The close affinity of the Craft and the Royal Arch is further emphasised by the fact that the Grand Master is automatically the First Grand Principal of the Supreme Grand Chapter, the Pro Grand Master is the Pro First Grand principal, and the Grand Secretary is also Secretary of the Royal Arch; he is called the 'Grand Scribe E.'

The Royal Arch Regulations are contained in the 'Book of Constitutions' of Grand Lodge.



Membership of a Chapter

Members are known as 'Companions'. Companions who have become one of the three Principals of a Chapter (equivalents of Worshipful Masters and Wardens) are known as 'Excellent Companions'. A Companion can be elected as a Principal of a Chapter without having been a Worshipful Master of a Lodge, though this will happen relatively rarely.

Usually, a Royal Arch Chapter is attached to a specific Lodge, and will most likely have the same

name and number as the Lodge, but not all Lodges have a Chapter. It follows that Companions of a Chapter will come from different Lodges, and perhaps from London or other Provinces.

Certainly, joining a Chapter will extend the circle of one's Masonic friends.

Chapters meet less frequently than Lodges, commonly three times a year. Joining fees and Annual Dues are less than those of the Craft.

Every Lodge has a Royal Arch representative, named on the Summons, but there will always be many Brethren eager to give advice about the Royal Arch.

A Lodge Summons may mention the name of an attached Chapter although it is not obligatory for a Brother to join the Chapter attached to his Lodge.

The Royal Arch in Essex

The Province of Essex is one of the largest in the country. The Provincial Grand Master, Rodney Lister Bass, also commands the Royal Arch, where he is called the 'Most Excellent Grand Superintendent'. There is a Deputy Grand Superintendent as well as two Provincial Grand Principals and four Assistants to the Principals. The Royal Arch in Essex is administered by the Provincial Grand Scribe E. who is also the Craft Provincial Grand Secretary.

The complete list of Royal Arch Officers may be found in the Essex Freemasons' Handbook. There are Provincial ranks, as in the Craft.

