

The candidate cannot fail to be impressed by the extremely colourful appearance of the Chapter Room and particularly by the richly coloured robes of the Three Principals, who sit together on a dais. The beauty and significance of the ceremony are such as to have a strong appeal for any thoughtful Mason.

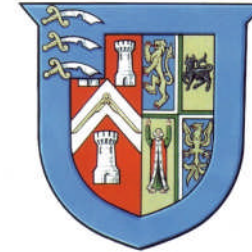
General

Most Royal Arch Chapters hold three meetings a year. The fees for admission and the annual subscriptions are very much lower than those in Craft Lodges.

To hold the office of a Principal, a Companion does not have to have been installed into the Chair of a Craft Lodge.

The Order of the Royal Arch, as practised under the English Constitution, contains the quintessence of Masonic philosophy and it is to assist the would be candidate to appreciate the nature and purpose of this Holy and Supreme Order that this pamphlet has been issued.

It is now not necessary to be an Installed Master of a Lodge prior to becoming the Third Principal of a Chapter.



THE CRAFT

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The Preliminary Declaration to the Book of Constitutions made between the two Grand Lodges of Freemasons of England in December 1813 has always been contained in that book. However on, 10th December 2003, the following words were agreed to form a second paragraph.

“At the Quarterly Communication of 10 December 2003 the United Grand Lodge of England acknowledged and pronounced the status of the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch to be an extension to, but neither a superior nor subordinate part of the degrees which precede it.”

Under the English Constitution, the Order is governed by the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England, and the Royal Arch Regulations are now contained in the same book as that which contains the Constitutions of Grand Lodge.

The close affinity between the Craft and the Royal Arch is further emphasised by the fact that the Grand Master of Grand Lodge is automatically the First Grand Principal of Supreme Grand Chapter, and the Pro Grand Master is automatically the Pro First Principal of Supreme Grand Chapter.

Whilst it is not constitutionally laid down that it shall be so, the Grand Superintendent of the Province, is very often also Provincial Grand Master.

Attachment of Chapters to Lodges

In October 2003 the S.W.P. agreed that it is no longer appropriate to regard a Chapter as attached to a Lodge, as in some cases the original sponsoring Lodge has effectively lost touch with its Chapter, or even been erased.

It is reasonable, in the latter case especially, to require a Chapter to find another Craft Lodge to which it has to be “moored”. Moreover, the Grand Master’s advisors have become more willing in recent years to permit (again)

Chapters to have different names from their sponsoring Lodge. The S.W.P. therefore recommends that although Chapters should normally continue to be sponsored by Lodges, it will be acceptable for an existing Chapter also to be the Sponsoring Agent. In such cases, the daughter Chapter would be assigned a spare number left vacant by the disappearance of a Lodge from the Roll of UGLE by virtue of, for example, having moved to another Masonic jurisdiction. Such cases are, of course, likely to be rare anyway, but overall these seem sensible relaxations of the current rules.

Membership of Royal Arch

Every Master Mason becomes eligible for Exaltation into a Royal Arch Chapter four weeks after the date of his Raising irrespective of his religious persuasion.

Members of a Royal Arch Chapter have the title of “Companion” and those who occupy the Principal Chairs “Excellent Companion”.

Work in the Chapter

A Royal Arch Chapter is governed jointly by the First, Second and Third Principals. The complete list of officers may be found in the Essex Freemasons’ Handbook. Apart from the Installation of the Principals, there is only the one single ceremony, Exaltation. The Exaltation Ceremony is based on the recovery of “the long-lost secrets of a Master Mason”. What those secrets are, cannot quite obviously be disclosed here. Suffice it to say that every Mason must surely remember the first question put to him at his initiation – “In whom do you put your trust?” and the answer he gave.

The Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch amplifies the answer and gives inestimable instruction on the nature of the Deity and the duties of man. The candidate cannot fail to be impressed by the extremely colourful appearance of the Chapter Room and particularly by the richly coloured robes of the Three Principals, who sit together on a dais