



Reviewed 08/02/20



The Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Jerusalem

Province of West Lancashire

Friendship Meeting

**INFORMATION PACK
for Organisers**

<https://www.westlancsfreemasons.org.uk/royal-arch/>

Brethren and Companions,

This Friendship Meeting Pack has been designed to help you, together with other measures now in place, forming part of a co-ordinated strategy throughout the Province of West Lancashire, to promote the Royal Arch.

This particular initiative can be used in Craft lodges to introduce non-members to the delights of the Royal Arch or in a Chapter to help members "Get Their Head Around the Royal Arch" but not exclusively. It has been compiled for a varied audience and by a variety of speakers. The presentation can be modified to suit both the speaker and audience.

The success of any venture is only a reflection of the commitment and enthusiasm of all the Brethren and Companions involved. Once you have made a decision to hold a Friendship Meeting, members, including your local RA Lead should give their support by inviting Companions from their Chapters and Master Masons from their Craft Lodges.

If a decision to hold a meeting is made and sufficient notice given, then you can expect strong support from the local Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals and other Senior Officers including our Deputy Grand Superintendent.

We will be happy to support your endeavours.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Rowling'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a long, sweeping underline.

APGP

PLANNING

If there is more than one Chapter meeting in your Masonic Hall, ask them to join you in the presentation.

Alternatively, you may consider it would be better to promote an evening involving your whole Group *or even **two groups** if appropriate*. You can record the details of Brethren who attend and show interest, and they can choose a Chapter which is most suitable to them, probably by location. Master Masons, on their raising, will have received a letter from the PGM when he wished them every success with their continued development in Freemasonry and expressed a hope that they would consider the Royal Arch as their next step.

FORMAT

- Use an evening where there is no ceremony planned
- Open your Chapter **without** the furniture, banners or ensigns **except for the pedestal**
- Transact any normal business quickly
- Close the Chapter
- MEZ welcomes visitors and proceeds with the suggested format below.
- Officers should then remain in post wearing full regalia
- DC admits visitors in Royal Arch Regalia/Craft Regalia and shows them to seats in the south where some Companions sit with the visitors

RUNNING ORDER

The presentations will probably be given by the MEZ and/or the Chapter DC or Scribe E about the Chapter layout, Offices and Regalia, whichever applies. The Treasurer or other Senior Officers should probably cover the costs of membership in terms of time and expense, both relatively minor! Refer to enjoyment, the inter-visiting between Chapters (travelling pedestal, travelling red wine bottle), the existence of Past Principal Chapters, the Chapter for Provincial Stewards, the Provincial Meeting at Southport and Supreme Grand Chapter in London.

1. Introduction and welcome:

This is the introduction presented by Ian Edge, MEZ of Monton Victoria Chapter.

The purpose tonight is to inform, in order that you should understand where the Royal Arch fits into the panoply of Masonic Orders. The hope is that at the end of the meeting, you will be stimulated to give membership of the Order your serious consideration.

Pure ancient Freemasonry, which is composed of Craft Masonry and Royal Arch Masonry, presents the inquiring mind with an inspirational framework for life. Through the lessons presented in the Craft ceremonies, a Freemason is called upon to improve his relationship with his fellows, his mind and himself. The Craft can be viewed as the sure foundation on which Freemasonry is based.

The Royal Arch takes matters further and can be seen to be the superstructure that makes all that is presented to the candidate complete and perfect.

The ceremony in the Royal Arch is colourful, thought provoking and uplifting. It is based on the legend of the rebuilding of King Solomon's Temple and invokes simultaneously sensations of humility and our dependence on our unseen Creator.

Only by taking the ultimate step in Masonry by joining the Royal Arch can a Craft Freemason become complete. For a Freemason to take only the three Craft degrees and not join the Royal Arch means his Masonry might be compared with the experience of the man who goes to watch a theatre play but leaves ten minutes before the end. In the latter instance he can say he has been to the play, but he doesn't know it was all about – in the former he can say he is a Freemason but he is missing that piece of the jigsaw that would render him complete.

Revisions made in 2004 have made the ceremony of the Royal Arch much clearer and more meaningful. Craft Masons are encouraged to find out more about the Royal Arch by asking Brethren in their own Lodges who are wearing their Royal Arch jewels.

To become a member, you certainly do **not** need to have gone through the chair of your Craft lodge but be aware of overburdening anyone who has significant duties to carry out in Craft.

There are lodges in the Province of West Lancashire where few Companions belong to any further orders. Brethren, they are missing so much! The wealth of Masonic knowledge and history, the friendship which permeates these other orders is lost to them. Remember, most of the senior members of the Craft have ventured further and have found so much fulfilment.

So, from a fairly brief background to the Order, now to some presentations which you hopefully will find very interesting, stimulating and informative.

2. Presentation

Experience has shown that the most effective addresses are quite short and to the point.

Here is an example written by Bill Walker, DC of Monton Victoria Chapter:

It is my pleasure to try and explain the different names that the four most important offices have in a Holy Royal Arch Chapter.

Zerubbabel (in craft this would be equivalent to W.M.) According to biblical history, Zerubbabel was a governor of the province of Yehud Medinata and grandson of Jeconiah and led the first group of 42,360 Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity in the first year of Cyrus the Great. In the accounts of the Hebrew Bible, Zerubbabel

is always associated with the high priest Joshua, son of Jozadak, who returned with him. Together, these two led the first wave of returnees and began to rebuild the Temple. The reason for this was because King Darius 1 was so preoccupied with revolts within the province, Zerubbabel felt that he could initiate the rebuilding of the Temple without repercussions. The Davidic line from Jeconiah had been cursed by Jeremiah saying that no offspring of "Coniah" would sit on the throne. Zerubbabel was the main Davidic line through Solomon and Jeconiah. Because Zerubbabel was viewed as a governor of a state in another nation and thus technically not on the throne, he was given the task of rebuilding the Temple along with Joshua.

Haggai, "The Prophet", was a Hebrew prophet during the rebuilding of the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem and one of the twelve minor prophets in the Hebrew Bible and the author of the Book of Haggai. His name means "my holiday". He was the first of three post-exile prophets from the neo-Babylonian exile of the House of Judah (along with Zechariah and Malachi) who belonged to the period of Jewish history which began after the return from captivity. Scarcely anything is known of his personal history, but after the work on the temple had been stopped for eighteen years, it was resumed by the efforts of Haggai and Zechariah by exhorting the people and rousing them from their lethargy and induced them to take advantage of a change of policy of the Persian government under Darius1.

Joshua, "The High Priest", is the central figure of the Hebrew Bible's Book of Joshua. He was Moses' assistant and became the leader of the Israelite tribes after the death of Moses. His name was Hoshea, the son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim, but Moses called him Joshua, the name by which he is commonly known. He was a major figure in the events of the exodus. He was charged by Moses to select and command a militia group for their first battle after exiting Egypt against the Amalekites in Rephidim, in which they were victorious. He later accompanied Moses when he ascended Mount Sinai to commune with God and receive the Ten Commandments and heard the celebrations of the Israelites around the Golden Calf on their descent and broke the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments. Joshua is seen as the custodian of the tent or Tabernacle as Moses returned to Mount Sinai, for the second time, to re-create the ten Commandments as Moses was told by God "No man shall come up with you."

These three Principals as they are called are referred to as Most Excellent and are considered to be the master although each one separately is deemed to be a Master. That Companions is my little bit of history for you to contemplate, but don't forget the pleasure that companions can and do receive from visiting other Chapters and seeing the way that they open and close their Chapter as against the way you open and close yours. The best way to find this is to attend a Chapter Installation, you will always be welcome at any. There are also Chapters who have a travelling wine bottle or pedestal. There is a Chapter for Provincial Stewards for instance and of course the Provincial Grand Chapter meeting at Southport which is a spectacle to be seen by every companion and also, if you're lucky enough, the Supreme Grand Chapter in London. I shall now hand you over to our Scribe Ezra, the equivalent of the Craft Secretary.

3. Chapter Furniture and Regalia:

Use the booklet "Information for Newcomers to the Royal Arch" to explain:

- the indissoluble link between the Craft and Royal Arch by those objects which are visible
- the differences in regalia
- the offices within the Chapter, especially the three Principals, Scribe E, Scribe N and the Sojourners and their robes
- briefly the structure of ranks

Here is an example written by Bob Allman Scribe E of Monton Victoria Chapter:

Regalia

The Regalia of the 3 Principals

- The 1st Principal wears a Scarlet 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 Light Blue Robe and carries a sceptre bearing a Bishops Mitre.

It is said that inside the Tabernacle there were a series of Veils which covered the Holy of Holies. The first Blue, then Purple and finally Scarlet. I now request the following Companions to assist me.

All Royal Arch Masons wear the same Regalia, but with different colour combinations.

First a Sash over the left shoulder, possibly to hold a scabbard or a loop for a sword. As the Old Testament tells us that the workmen when building the Temple had a trowel in their hand and a sword by their side. The recipients of the Order of the Garter also wear a Sash over their left shoulder.

A Companion has a White background colour of the Triple Tau [on the right hip] and when you become a Principal it changes to Maroon and will change to Blue when you become a Provincial or Grand Officer. Also, the Fringe changes from Red/Blue silk to Gold or Metal Gilt. A Companion's Apron has White tassels and belt, a Principal or Past Principal has Maroon tassels and belt and a Grand or Provincial Officer Blue.

The Jewel follows the same pattern. Companions- White, Principal or Past Principal - Maroon, Grand or Provincial Officers – Blue.

As in Craft, a Companion may receive Provincial Honours without being a Principal for long and outstanding service. He will wear the normal Blue Provincial Apron. The Sash will have Red/Blue Tassels, but a Blue background to the Triple Tau, but is only allowed to wear the Jewel with the White ribbon.

Due to space being required for this evening's presentation a lot of the Chapter furniture isn't on display. For example, in 2 rows of 6 on both sides of the floor covering would be the Banners of the 12 Tribes of Israel. The working Tools – the crow[bar] axe and shovel. The four banners at the East end of the Chapter represent the four divisions of the Army of Israel - An Eagle representing the Tribe of Dan; A Man representing the Tribe of Reuben; An Ox representing the Tribe of Ephraim; A Lion representing the Tribe of Judah.

In the centre is the Triple Tau. It is literally three Taus the Tau being the 19th letter of the Greek alphabet. This Mystical Character can be signified in a couple of different ways. First, the names of Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif appear in the Phoenician Language with the same letters "H" and "T" as they do in English. Therefore, the Triple Tau takes on the interpretation of the initial letters in Hiram Abif's name. Secondly, it signifies also T.H. Templum Hierosolyma the Temple of Jerusalem, and when used as the Royal Arch symbol, some jurisdictions teach that the wearer acknowledges himself a servant of God.

Moving down the Chapter we find: The Pedestal in the middle of a squared pavement, but in a perspective view which would have been seen by the Sojourner looking down into the vault. The double cube is symbolised thus: The bottom cube represents the rough ashlar of the Entered Apprentice, symbolic of worldly man, engrossed in material things and expecting material rewards for his labours, and still uncouth in the spiritual ideals of Masonry. The top cube is the perfect ashlar achieved by obedience to the moral code of our order.

And the colours? The idea that White symbolises innocence, and that purity and richness are symbolised by gold [The plate beneath the cover] has been common across much of humanity throughout history. The initials on the Pedestal are the names of the three key persons recorded in the Bible as being involved at that time. The R is Latin for Rex – King- so the inscription reads, Solomon King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram Abif. But some scholars believe that this explanation is made up. Under the cover and on a plate of gold is the name of The True and Living God Most High which at this time, like the lottery numbers, must remain a mystery.

4. Run "The Royal Arch Explained" video or "The Royal Arch Explained" PowerPoint

Make sure you are aware of the full presentation and refer, during the running, to the Solomon nuggets included in the speaker's notes as and when appropriate.

During the **PowerPoint** there is an opportunity for an experienced ritualist to deliver the first part of the Sojourners' speech to the three Principals. From "M.E., early this morning, on resuming our labours ..." to "... I was thus duly lowered into the vaulted chamber."

However, if no ritual is to be presented, then run the **video** instead.

5. Conclusion

MEZ, APGP or senior Grand Officer thanks attendees and presenters and makes available any outdated RA "Information for Newcomers to the Royal Arch" booklets to existing companions who did not receive one at their exaltation. Ensure that Forms P are available for any craft master masons wishing to commit to joining.

6. Festive board toasts

- The Queen
- The First Grand Principal
- The Most Excellent Grand Superintendent (Name him)
- The Deputy Grand Superintendent (Name him)
- The APGP or most Senior Grand Officer present or Group RA Lead
- The Three Principals
- The visiting Companions and Brethren
- The Janitor's Toast