



Reviewed 08/02/2020

TALKING HEADS A dialogue for Craft Lodges

Introduction.

The preamble in the original Metropolitan version which covers seating, lighting etc etc has been left untouched and only the dialogue between the two friends has been changed.

Obviously, this has resulted in some adjustments to the script read by the Narrator.

Before arriving at the meeting, the presenters collect / consider the following:

- *MM and PM aprons*
- *A West Lancs tie and a RA tie for the MM and PM respectively, to wear during the dialogue*
- *RA regalia for the PM to demonstrate*
- *“Next Steps” leaflets*
- *Book of Constitution tagged at Preliminary Declaration*
- *Laptop, projector, screen or suitable wall*
- *Three scripts. Note: prompts for advancing PowerPoint are sown in red*

On arriving at the Lodge, the team should do the following:

*Reserve seats in the body of the Lodge for the participants so they can access the floor of the Lodge easily and that the Narrator has a suitable place to sit for the dialogue
Consider the best place for the laptop, projector and screen*

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Inform Secretary that he will be asked to read the Declaration from the Book of Constitutions

The Lodge does not need to be called off.

*Assuming the lodge is open in the normal way, the agenda item “**To attend to a presentation of Talking Heads – The Next Step into the Royal Arch**” should be announced by the WM. The presenters then remove their aprons and regalia and put them on the chairs provided in the West, side by side in front of the SW’s pedestal*

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Opening [SLIDE 1 – neutral]

While they are doing this, the Narrator moves into the middle of the floor facing East and gives the following introduction:

Narrator: “WM, we thank you for allowing us the opportunity to perform this dialogue in your Lodge. It will be given by [introduce performers]. Our presentation is aimed at introducing the RA to those who are not members of this beautiful Order. It is based on a dialogue between two brethren which takes place before the start of a Lodge meeting. One is a fairly new Master Mason and the other an experienced Past Master and a member of the RA. We hope you enjoy our performance.

The Narrator then moves to the NE and sits in the front row of the Lodge. The two performers collect their Masonic cases where they have left them. They put them onto the two chairs placed in front of the SW’s pedestal and begin putting on their regalia.

During this process they greet each other as is typical in the robing room before a meeting.

The cost is much less because we meet four times a year and regalia is often recycled so very inexpensive. There is a Festive Board after the meeting with the same type of fundraising as in craft.

[Click to SLIDE 18 – information leaflets]

Here is a leaflet we prepared for MMs to consider, it is called Why I Should Join the Royal Arch which you may find useful and here is another leaflet called The Next Step in Freemasonry both of which you could have a look at sometime.

We do have stocks for anyone else who might like a copy.

MM: - That’s great you have been very helpful but if I have more questions can I come back to you?

PM: - Of course but in every lodge there is a Royal Arch Contact, every Group has a Royal Arch Lead and of course, your close friends in lodge will be there for you.

MM: - Thanks again, I am very grateful for all your help.

[Click to SLIDE 19- final slide]

[NARRATOR: - WM, thank you for letting us use the time at this meeting to help make an advancement in Masonic knowledge. We will now attempt to answer any questions.]

PM: - Can't give too much away but essentially the Royal Arch should guide us to a greater understanding of our own nature and our relationship with our God [Click} and especially, to recognise our own mortality. [Click to **SLIDES 17 to remove images of Z and H and J**] BUT, let me stress that very many Companions never reach the level of understanding but love the colour and dignity of the ceremonies and find fulfilment in that alone.

MM: - Well you have certainly given me a lot to think about and it seems to me that what you are saying is that the Royal Arch glues together all the craft ceremonies into a moral code that helps us develop throughout our whole life. What is the procedure for joining? What would be the expectations and commitment and would I find it very different from my craft lodge?

PM: - You will find that craft and Chapter are run on similar lines and many lodges have a Chapter attached to them – I think the Narrator mentioned this earlier - but you can join any Chapter you wish – some brethren stay “at home” whilst others decide to broaden their friendship base by joining another Chapter.

The first thing to do is decide what night is best for you and then look at the Chapters which meet on that night. Then the lodge Royal Arch Contact whose name is on every summons will point you in the right direction.

The pace of your progression is totally in your hands and many brethren join Chapter but prefer to wait until they have nearly completed their progression to Master before taking office in Royal Arch. I would recommend that everyone should wait until he is totally at ease with his Craft Masonry before moving into Royal Arch. Say by the time you are Junior Deacon, you should have considered the Royal Arch and made a decision.

.....
PM: - Hi Mark! Another Masonic season begins! It doesn't seem five minutes since we were closing down in April. Have you had a good summer?

MM: - Hello Graham! Yes thanks we had two weeks in France in August. Glorious weather. Took me ages to get here tonight, have you heard what was going on?

PM: - Pile up on the M6 – and as usual, all the roads are gridlocked. Perhaps a good thing the candidate has cried off – he is ill.

MM: - Didn't know that. Hope he gets well soon. What are we doing, do you know?

PM: - Not sure. We only learned yesterday so not much time to arrange anything else.

MM: - You know what I'd like to do? I have only been a member for 6 months but already there are questions I'd like to ask so I would love a Q & A session.

PM: - Really, well we have about ½ an hour, so go ahead and I'll see if I can help.

MM: - Well about every couple of months, the Secretary tells us that the Arch Royal Chapter “something” will meet in our hall. What's he saying?

PM: - He says Royal Arch not Arch Royal and he is referring to another very important branch of Freemasonry that many of us have joined.

MM: - Is it what the lads call a side degree?

PM: - No it is much more important than a side degree. It is a stand alone order fully recognised by United Grand Lodge of England as an integral part of Craft masonry.

MM: - Recognised? I would have expected all the branches of Freemasonry to be recognised.

PM: - Not at all, most are just acknowledged. That recognition is demonstrated by the fact that the head of Royal Arch in our Province is our own Provincial Grand Master James Anthony Harrison
[Click to \[SLIDE 2 - Tony Harrison\]](#) and if you wanted further proof, this jewel that we wear in lodge is the only Order jewel permitted to be worn in a craft lodge. We call it the Chapter jewel.
Look I'm even wearing the Royal Arch tie which is also allowed in a craft lodge and whilst not all members wear the tie, they all wear the jewel.

MM: - I was going to ask you about the tie. What's that symbol on it?

PM: - It is called a Triple Tau and it is the symbol of Royal Arch in a similar way that the square and compasses are symbolic of craft masonry. [\[SLIDE 3 - Triple Tau\]](#) The Tau is letter T in the Greek alphabet and in olden times was seen as a symbol of health, innocence or even someone who has escaped injury in battle. Putting three together like these on the tie, symbolises the Deity.
But look, most of the brethren have arrived so why don't we share our discussion with them and perhaps they too will learn about this lovely Order.

MM: - Yes OK.

The radiated pattern signifies sacredness. (Puts away regalia).

MM: - Presumably there is a story which unfolds during the ceremony but how much can you tell me?

PM: - There are some aspects that are special to the ceremony and cannot be revealed but I can tell you that the background is the story of the rebuilding [\[SLIDE 16 - Z, H and J\]](#) of the temple in Jerusalem by a man called Zerubbabel and other companions after being set free from captivity in Babylon by King Cyrus. During the work, a secret vault is discovered and the Royal Arch lesson is derived from the allegory surrounding the story.

MM: - Not very conversant with Old Testament history I'm afraid, but when was the temple destroyed and why were the workers in Babylon?

PM: - Perhaps the Narrator can help once more.

NARRATOR: - King Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon some 400 years after it was completed. The people in Jerusalem were then exiled to Babylon (modern day Iraq) until they were released some 70 years later by Cyrus King of Persia who had, in turn, defeated the Babylonians. Cyrus was a very clever man who saw that Babylon was getting overpopulated and by letting the Israelites return to their native shores they would in turn be willing to defend his western border against attacks from other unfriendly nations. The Jewish people saw this as the fulfilment of the prophecy by Isaiah.

MM: - So how does the allegory work then and what is the core message it delivers.

(Presenters move to position in front of JW)

NARRATOR: - This goes some way to explain why the Royal Arch has been described as a degree which is more august, sublime and important than those that precede it (the three craft degrees) and why it is considered the summit and perfection of Antient Masonry. Candidates for the Royal Arch have to give proofs of their proficiency in the Craft before being admitted and it is much a readiness of mind as well as a demonstration of ability that qualifies us to attain this climax of our Craft experience.

It has often been described as a beautiful Order – partly because as I have mentioned, it has coloured regalia as opposed to the monochrome of Craft but also because the story and actions are interesting and absorbing.

PM: - Have you seen any Royal Arch regalia?

MM: - Yes – there are aprons and other bits and pieces in display cabinets in halls that I have visited.

PM: - Well, I have my regalia here with me, let me show you. [SLIDE 15 - Regalia] We have an apron, sash and of course the jewel we spoke of earlier. You remember when we examined the jewel and especially the inscriptions? Well have a look at the back and the words “Wisdom” – “Strength” – and Beauty” and see if you recollect these same words in your craft ritual – no? Well during the explanation of the Grand Lodge Certificate there is mention of the columns which support the lodge – usually signified by candle holders with different orders of architecture. Wisdom for the Master, Strength for the Senior Warden and Beauty for the Junior Warden – one of the many pointers connecting the Royal Arch to craft.

As you can see, the colours are very striking – blue representing Craft and crimson the Royal Arch.

Click to [SLIDE 4 fade to neutral screen]

PM: - You know, if you had taken your third degree some 250 years ago, the chances are that you would have been made a Royal Arch mason at the end of your third degree – you would have “proceeded” into the Royal Arch to complete your admission into Freemasonry.

MM: - But earlier you said that Royal Arch was a stand alone order today so how did that separation come about?

PM: - Good question and maybe it is time for our Narrator to provide us with some history to set the time frame for us.

NARRATOR: - In the early days of Freemasonry, there was only one Grand Lodge in England. It was founded in 1717 by four lodges [SLIDE 5 - timeline] who met at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in London [Click - picture]. This Premier Grand Lodge as it was known, rewrote and formalised parts of the ritual. Not everyone was happy with the changes made and it didn't take long for some disaffected Irish Masons to set up a rival Grand Lodge impressively called “The Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons” popularly shortened to “The Antients” [Click – the Antients logo]. They claimed they were continuing to do things as they had previously been done for many years.

MM: - I've heard of the term Antients but wasn't there another group called the Moderns?

PM: - Yes, time for another history lesson.

(Presenters move to a position in front of Secretary's table)

NARRATOR: - The Antients Grand Lodge was also known as the [Click - Atholl] Atholl Grand Lodge because the [Click – pictures] 3rd and 4th Dukes of Atholl served as Grand masters of the Antients for over thirty years. This description “The Moderns”, [Click - moderns] used in a derisory manner was first coined by a man named Lawrence Dermot the Grand Secretary of the Antients who said that because the first Grand Lodge had changed things, they had “modernised” the ritual whereas his lodges were continuing to work in the old ways. Dermott was a passionate supporter of the Royal Arch and called it “the root and marrowbone of Masonry”

In fact, Dermott introduced a ceremony of installation (the Moderns did not have such a ceremony). Introduced the office of Deacons (no such office in Moderns) and adopted the Royal Arch (shunned by the Moderns). You can make your own minds up as to who were the modernisers!

MM: - The Narrator just said that the Antients adopted Royal Arch but Moderns shunned it, did this lead to conflict then?

PM: - Very much so. The Antients simply added the Royal Arch degree onto the third and claimed that their lodge warrant allowed them to do this [Click - RA in Craft]. The Moderns however, would have nothing to do with it [Click - RA sparately] – at least on the surface– until its sheer popularity forced them to take action which they did by setting up a Grand Chapter in 1766 as a separate governing body. Until then, at the top of the Moderns, there was total rejection of the Royal Arch but secretly, many of those who claimed against it had in fact joined an Antients Lodge and entered the Royal Arch. The conflict lasted over 60 years until peace was brought about when two sibling brothers The Duke of Sussex (Moderns) and the Duke of Kent (Antients) dragged the warring parties to the table. Tough negotiation led to the Union [Click - UGLE] but not before a

MM: - Can you tell me any more?

PM: - Well, after the third degree we are left with a feeling of doom and gloom. Hiram has been murdered and some of the secrets are lost but they are found when a brother is exalted into the Royal Arch. In addition, at your initiation you were restored to light after your obligation – material light that is, but in the Royal Arch, our ceremony sheds greater light on what is being taught and is the next natural step for a Craft Mason bringing a more spiritual dimension to his overall Masonic experience. In fact it is often said that the Royal Arch links a man’s practical side to his spiritual one and during his exaltation, he is clothed in his MM’s apron for part of the ceremony.

MM: - I suppose then that in the early days it would have been logical to move candidates into Royal Arch quite soon after their Craft degrees!

PM: - Yes, I mentioned earlier that in some ceremonies around the world, Royal Arch is introduced during the third – and in our early days there was very rapid progression into it.

Interestingly, in the early 1800s there was a ceremony called Passing the Veils which came immediately before the exaltation but it died out in this Country before being introduced in Chapters in Bristol in the 1920’s – the only area of England where you can witness an actual ceremony. There have been demonstrations in this Province but these are limited in number.

I mentioned too that here it was confused as being a fourth degree but the ritual book mentioned that it was the third degree completed.

Perhaps Narrator can help here.

PM: - On the front in the scroll at the bottom [**Click**] is a Latin phrase “NIL NISI CLAVIS DEEST” (nil nigh-sy clavis day-est) which means “nothing is wanting but the key”. None of the other inscriptions will mean anything to you [**Click**] but essentially they contain messages intended to help us come to know ourselves better and guide us to a contemplation of our relationship with the Supreme Being [**Click to SLIDE 14 leaving a neutral screen**].

MM: - Thanks for that – but what is the Master Mason missing by not being a member of the Royal Arch?

PM: - The essential difference between Craft and the Royal Arch is that whilst Craft teaches us about our responsibilities to ourselves as well as our fellow men, the Royal Arch impresses upon us the relationship we bear to the Supreme Being and helps us think about our own mortality. Once we have come to terms with the inevitability of death we gain a valuable perspective on the fleeting nature of life and our relationship with our God.

This is the reason why the Royal Arch is regarded as both the completion and climax of pure Antient Freemasonry.

MM: - I have heard that there are some parts of Craft ceremonies which point us toward the Royal Arch. Is this true?

PM: - Although Royal Arch is not mentioned anywhere in Craft ceremonies there are several pointers in the 3rd degree which tell us that there is more to learn after the death of Hiram – you just have to listen carefully to the ritual. That information is found in the Royal Arch. In addition, some of the words and actions in the 3rd ceremony are mentioned in the Royal Arch, again, you need to listen closely to what is said.

compromise was reached over the wording of the Preliminary Declaration at the front of the Book of Constitutions.

[**SLIDE 6**] Perhaps Bro Secretary will read the statement for us and then the Narrator can add further clarification.

SEC: - Reads Declaration.

“By the solemn Act of Union between the two Grand Lodges of Free Masons of England in December 1813, it was ‘declared and pronounced that pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz, those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch’”.

NARRATOR: - In the end, the compromise that enabled the Union was this: the Royal Arch remained part of pure Antient Masonry as it is today and exemplified by the wearing of the jewel in lodge (which satisfied the Antients). However, we treat the Royal Arch as a separate Order not worked in Craft Lodges and this satisfied the Moderns.

PM: - Here you are, the B of C for you to check.

MM: - Thanks. Not my preferred reading matter but I will have a look.

So what happened after the Union?

PM: - Another little history lesson for our Narrator. (*Presenters move to position in front of WM*)

[**SLIDE 7 – neutral screen**]

NARRATOR: - After the Union in 1813, the Antients Lodges could no longer carry out Exaltations into Royal

Arch under the authority of the Craft Warrant and all Chapters in existence at the date of the 1813 Union were required to attach themselves to a Lodge. Those that didn't simply went out of existence. To this day, a Chapter is usually linked to a Warranted Lodge taking its name and number but its governance, meetings and membership are completely separate from those of the lodge.

There are of course, some Chapters which have a different name from the lodge to which they are attached – the reason being that they were in existence before the rule was introduced.

MM: - So when did the Supreme Grand Chapter come into existence.

PM: - Narrator?

NARRATOR: - Much work was involved in reorganising the Craft from 1813 onwards and it was four years before attention turned to the question of the Royal Arch and to the then known United Grand Chapter which became the Supreme Grand Chapter in 1821.

Today, the UGLE and the Sup Grand Chapter work together in close harmony with joint headquarters, administration and often joint Rulers.

MM: - But what is the Royal Arch? Are you allowed to tell me?

PM: - Well I like to call it the fourth lesson in Freemasonry. Think back, your 1st degree was a lesson in how to be a model citizen and how to be a better person. Your 2nd degree urged you to make the most of your talents by study whilst your 3rd degree was a lesson that if you have led the model life, you need have no fear of death.

Think about it then, there's nothing left except how you will react when you meet your creator – the fourth lesson and this is demonstrated in a very colourful and impressive ceremony.

In the not too distant past Royal Arch was described as the completion of the 3rd degree and the red ritual book that you may have seen actually said this was the case but recent studies have revealed that Royal Arch deserves more recognition than simply completing the 3rd – hence the decision to define it as a “Stand Alone Order”.

MM: - Earlier you mentioned the jewel and I notice that the ribbon has three variations which must mean something? [SLIDE 8 - jewels].

PM: - Well spotted. A white ribbon [Click] is worn when you first enter the Order, maroon [Click] by those who are in the chairs or have been in the chairs – called Principals and then Past Principals whilst the three coloured one [Click] is worn by Grand or Provincial Grand Officers.

MM: - It seems to have been designed around a series of circles and triangles with engraving. Is it there on both sides?

PM: - Yes. Let's have a closer look, the same images will be shown on the screen [SLIDES 9 – 13]

The two outer circles [Click] represent the Deity and Eternity [Click]. The interlaced triangles form a six pointed star, called a hexalpha and represent the spiritual and material nature of man.

MM: - These inscriptions are quite hard to read. What are they?