

# CRAFT TO THE ROYAL ARCH

In an ante room whilst the lodge is in progress the Team dress in Royal Arch Regalia (i.e. Aprons, Sashes, Principals Robes, Surplices and Officers Collars)

After the Lodge has 'Called Off'

Knock on the door from outside the Lodge. (This can, and possibly should, be different from any usual knocks).

Inner Guard opens the door to investigate the knock, after which he closes the door and reports to the Worshipful Master

The Team are admitted. They enter in a dignified manner in single file each carrying a banner of the Twelve Tribes.

The order in which they enter is:-

Ephraim	(Treasurer) (Possibly the RADO who could also give the introduction)
Gad	(Scribe E)
Simeon	(Scribe N)
Reuben	(Janitor)
Zebulum	(1 <sup>st</sup> Asst Soj)
Issachar	(Princ. Soj)
Judah	(2 <sup>nd</sup> Asst Soj)
Naphtali	(APGP or whoever is taking the senior role)
Asher	(IPZ)
Dan	(J)
Benjamin	(Z)
Menasseh	(H)

NB. This should ensure a tidy movement from Banners to respective chairs

Instead of the above and alternative can be adopted

The Worshipful Master invites the Team to give their presentation

## **A member of the Team (or RADO)**

"Starting with our craft masonry we began our journey with the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, referred to as our initiation which means 'beginning'. Our birth or beginning is conducted within a ceremony rich in symbolism as is our preparation which takes much of its symbolism from the apprentice stonemasons.

We then progress to the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree using the symbolism of the Fellow Craft stonemason and being encouraged to study the hidden mysteries of nature and science. The second degree is often considered fairly insignificant and just a place sitting between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees. However, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree represents life and therefore falls between birth and death it could be argued that it is the most important part and in fact how we shall be judged. Originally there would have been one degree, a combination of our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees. The apprentice stonemason would not have gone through a ceremony, but the craftsman, following seven years of apprenticeship would have received modes of recognition etc, which would enable him to find work at his level.

Then follows the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree moralizing on the tools, not of an operative stonemason but of a Master mason or architect. In this degree we portray a figurative death, there to rise stronger than before. The degrees of Craft Masonry use events surrounding the building of King Solomon's Temple, which was dedicated in 953 BCE, for its symbolism. In the opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree we are told that we seek for that which was lost. In the closing we are told that we have not found the secrets and will have to put up with substitutes for the time being. So where would we go to find those lost secrets, what are they, and what is the next step which takes us there?'

### **APGP (Possibly)**

That next step is in fact to a RA Chapter, which is the name we call our lodge and the meeting is a conclave. The word 'Chapter' when used in this context derives from the Latin 'head' in view of its headship or supremacy of the spiritual plane reached in the RA over the practical.

The RA part of our ritual began, so far as we know, with the Antients and the first recorded reference is in 1752 when Laurence Dermott, secretary to the Antients Grand Lodge, refers to RA masonry as the 'root, heart and marrow of Freemasonry'. There are earlier references to a system resembling Royal Arch but no definite proof that it was RA as we know it. The Book of Constitutions now states that 'pure ancient masonry consists of three degrees and no more, they are Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch, which is an extension to, but neither superior nor a subordinate part of the Degrees which precede it.'

The lost 'secrets' has several interpretations, but we shall use 'the word' as explained in the Royal Arch ritual. The 'word' itself would be recognised by virtually all masons, but its pronunciation and method of repeating was the 'lost secret'. It was broken into three parts and repeated by the three Grand Masters, Solomon King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram the widow's son, in rotation.

The Royal Arch uses the story of finding those secrets within the ruins of the 1st Temple which was originally dedicated in 967 BCE and then destroyed by Nebuzaradan in 586 BCE.

Whilst preparing for its reconstruction nearly 400 years later in 535 BCE a secret vault and passage was discovered.

Why was a secret passage and vault required?

Well during the building of the first temple King Solomon realised that attacks from non-Jews and heathens was a very real possibility. He arranged for a secret passage and vault to be constructed to house sacred treasures and 'The Word'. Here in one very colourful ceremony those secrets are revealed to new companions in a ceremony, called an 'exaltation'. Here is another difference; we refer to each other as Companions, meaning bread sharers, and not Brethren as in Craft. The ceremony is conducted by officers of the Chapter who have very distinctive names. Perhaps we should let them introduce themselves.

**I am the 1<sup>st</sup> Principal** and called Zerubbabel, and believe me you rarely pronounce that correctly the first time, and am in some respects similar to WM in the Craft. There are three Principals required to rule a Chapter because originally 'the word' required the three Grand Masters to deliver it. That is why in the absence of one ruler the 'word' could not be delivered. The method of pronouncing and delivering the word was deposited in the vault and found in 534, a few months after the work began.

I was a Prince or leader of Jewish people when they were in exile in Babylon. I was the one given authority by Cyrus, the Persian ruler, to lead the Jewish people back to Canaan and Jerusalem where the temple was to be rebuilt.

You will notice that the colour of my robe is scarlet, representing Kingly dignity which is confirmed by the crown on my sceptre.

**I am Haggai**, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Principal. Like the first Principal I am also the possessor of part of the ancient knowledge that is peculiar to a Conclave. My name refers to one of the books of the Bible and one of my roles is that of a prophet, which is why the rod I carry bears the 'All seeing eye' representing the omnipresence of the Almighty. My role in the return from exile in Babylon was that of scribe and acted in that capacity in the supreme council or Sanhedrin as it was called. This council was set up to govern the people of Israel and was composed of six members from each of the Twelve Tribes, hence the number 72 which features prominently in RA masonry.

The colour of my robe is purple, which is considered an emblem of unity, and as I am charged to quietly ensure harmony within the Chapter, there is one whose 'all seeing eye' sees all.

**I am Joshua**, the third Principal who assists in the ruling of the Chapter. My name means 'The God who saves' and my role is of a High Priest which is why the rod I bear has a mitre at its head. Incidentally the 3 Principals used to wear as headgear the items which are now represented on their rods. These can be seen on the Cana robes at Bridge Street. It is no coincidence that the name this Principal bears is the name in Hebrew as that which we know as Jesus.

The colour of my robe is blue to remind us that brotherhood and benevolence should be as expansive as the blue vault of heaven and within each of us.

I am the Immediate Past Zerubbabel and I will have had a year to get to know how to pronounce it correctly!! I am in many respects similar in position to the Immediate Past Master in a Craft Lodge and I do play a small but important part in the closing of a Chapter much as the IPM closes a Craft Lodge.

As I have had very little to explain, I might as well explain why there are three colours, apart from the fact that there are three Principals. The veils ceremony, which is no longer performed in England, with the exception of Bristol, symbolically takes the candidate on a journey in which he gives a password and receives a portion of scripture from Exodus at each coloured veil. Those colours are reflected in the robes of the Principals. After passing the veils he is considered ready for exaltation.

**I am called the Principal Sojourner**- The term sojourner is now used solely to refer to three of the Chapter officers, but not widely appreciated is that it originally described the three candidates who were required for the ceremony to take place. The term refers to someone who comes to stay for a time —the word deriving from the Latin DIURNUS via the French JOURNEE, and is related to the words 'journeyman mason', which meant someone paid by the day and not at first intending to stay.

I wonder if the designer of the lunar buggy who gave it the title of Sojourner was a RA mason, as it is not a term in everyday use — just a thought. In the ceremony of exaltation I play a major part in assisting the First Principal.

**I am the 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Sojourner** - and as the name suggests, I assist this one (tap on shoulder) usually assist with the ceremony of exaltation, along with lighting various candles and conducting

ballots. Now whilst I am on my feet I might as well tell you about the sword or dagger which is quite prominent in the RA. This (holds end of sash tassel) represents that implement which was quite necessary at the rebuilding of the Temple. Whilst workmen toiled with the trowel in their right hand, the left hand was to be free to immediately take hold of the dagger if required for self defence as there was some opposition to the rebuilding and the manner in which it was done. The Samaritans for example, offered to assist, but were refused, as they were not true-Jews and it was feared that they would attempt to install heathen altars once the structure was completed.

**I am the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Sojourner** —Like the 1<sup>st</sup> assistant, I also assist him (tap on shoulder) and in many respects in a similar manner to the 1<sup>st</sup> assistant. Now whilst I am on my feet I might as well tell you about the trowel just mentioned by my colleague, the 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Sojourner. The trowel was originally the sign of a Past Master who was thus recognised as fit to assist in completing the building of the Temple and only such Masons were originally admitted as Companions, so a very important implement which is prominently displayed on the floor of a Chapter conclave. It represents brotherly unity as well as confidentiality.

**I am Scribe Nehemiah** - Part of my duty is to in some way act in a similar manner to the Inner Guard in Craft Masonry. I was the leader of the third group of Jews to return to Jerusalem. I was also a cup bearer or tester, chosen to test for possible poison, the Persian King's drinks before he did. This meant that I would get to taste some excellent wines, but may not reach retirement age! My name means 'God's consolation' and part of my task was to superintend the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and to assist in the preparation of a candidate by supplying the correct implements of work, which is observed within the ceremony.

**I am the Janitor** - and my place is outside the door of the Chapter, much as the Tyler in your Craft Lodge. If for you, like me, the word Janitor conjures a mental picture of a man, devoid of all humour, trudging down a school corridor complete with mop and bucket; then you may think that the jewel of my office would be just that — a mop appended to my collar. My jewel is in fact a sword exactly as the Tyler and my duties are similar. The word Janitor originated with the Roman God Janus —the God of beginnings and transitions, and a door or gatekeeper. So, we may see the connection between God of beginnings and transitions and door keeper to my position outside the door.

Where I normally stand is the beginning and transition in the final journey of Pure and Ancient Freemasonry, as the candidate will have completed his Craft journey and now enters his final phase of the journey within a Chapter. Janus also gives his name to January —the end of the previous year and the beginning of the next and is depicted as a man with two heads facing in opposite directions.

**I am Scribe Ezra** — In the story of the Scriptures I was the leader of the second group of Israelites to return to Jerusalem. Much of the Temple had been built when I arrived so my task was to ensure the restoration of the Law of Moses which is why I am described in our lectures as an expounder of the Sacred Law. The white of my clothing also relates to what was once the white curtain which was reached at the end of the ceremony of the Veils. This is not to be confused with the clothing of the candidate in white at the end of his exaltation. Here the word 'candidate' means to be clothed in white in a similar manner to prospective members for the Roman Senate, who were referred to as candidates as they were clothed in white.

**I am the Chapter Treasurer** — In many respects similar to the treasurer in a craft lodge, but have the enviable position of collecting subscriptions —odd you might think, but when they are typically only a fraction of Lodge fees they represent extremely good value for money!!

### **Person in the Chair**

Well brethren and companions we hope that this has in some way been illuminating and the advantage of this type of presentation is that nobody has had anything to learn, but hopefully we have all learned something. Etc etc as he wishes.

The Team then depart in a very dignified retreat. The Companions approach the Banners down the North and South side of the Lodge. Pick up banners simultaneously, turn to face West and East and are led out of the Lodge by the IPZ carrying the Banner of Ephraim.

**A QUOTE FROM THE OPENING ADDRESS  
"IF EVERYTHING WISE, EVERYTHING  
VIRTUOUS AND PRAISEWORTHY  
WERE UNITED, THE RESULT WOULD PRODUCE  
ROYAL ARCH MASONRY.  
ITS AIM IS THE PROMOTION OF VIRTUE AND  
ITS SOLEMN BUSINESS THE COMMUNICATION  
OF THE HOLY NAME OF THAT GREAT BEING  
WHO ALONE CAN EXALT US TO JOYS  
IMPERISHABLE IN THEIR NATURE AND  
ETERNAL IN THEIR DURATION".**

**IF YOU ARE READY  
TO TAKE YOUR FINAL  
STEP IN PURE ANTIENT  
FREEMASONRY  
WHY NOT COME  
AND JOIN US?**

Speak to your Lodge Royal Arch Representative whose name should be on your summons

Or

Your Lodge Secretary who can provide you with the contact details of the **Royal Arch District Officer (RADO)** for your District