

### What are the Royal Arch Ceremonies?

Apart from the Installation, 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 dramatic ceremony, with profound, challenging and allegorical significance. The story told, which contains some of the most delightful lines of Masonic ritual, concerns the return to Jerusalem by a small group of Israelites after the Exile in Babylon, their excavation of the remains of King Solomon's Temple in preparation for the Second Temple, and the discovery of a hidden vault. The Royal Arch Tracing Board, illustrated overleaf, will give you a flavour of this.

### What next?

Every Lodge should have a Royal Arch Representative named on the Summons. There will always be Brethren, including your Lodge Mentor, eager to give advice about joining the Royal Arch and make the necessary introductions. A Lodge summons may give details of an attached Chapter, although it is not obligatory for a Brother to join the Chapter attached to his Lodge.



To find out more speak to your Royal Arch Rep

If you are unable to obtain an introduction to a Chapter, you should contact the Provincial Grand Chapter office: [www.buckspgc.org](http://www.buckspgc.org)



INITIATION TO EXALTATION

COMPLETE YOUR JOURNEY IN  
PURE ANTIENT FREEMASONRY

IT IS YOUR RIGHT AS A MASON



THE FOURTH AND FINAL STEP:  
THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH (CHAPTER)



THE THIRD STEP: THE MASTER MASON



THE SECOND STEP: THE FELLOWCRAFT



THE FIRST STEP: THE ENTERED APPRENTICE

ARE YOU ONLY THREE QUARTERS OF THE  
WAY THROUGH YOUR JOURNEY?



TO FIND OUT MORE SPEAK TO YOUR  
ROYAL ARCH REPRESENTATIVE OR GO TO:

[WWW.BUCKSPGC.ORG](http://WWW.BUCKSPGC.ORG)



**JUST ONE MORE STEP:  
INTO THE ROYAL ARCH**



# *Your Future in Freemasonry: The Royal Arch*

## **Who is eligible to join the Royal Arch?**

You may join a Royal Arch Chapter four weeks after being Raised to the Third Degree. It is the natural and traditional next step in Freemasonry.

## **What is the Royal Arch?**

It is the completion of your journey through pure Antient\* Masonry.

In its earliest days the Royal Arch degree was often worked in a Craft Lodge as a fourth degree. Indeed, for many years following the re-organisation 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.

The Ceremony of Raising is set against the back-drop of the completion of King Solomon's Temple and we might expect that, at its conclusion, the new Master Mason would be able to reflect upon the complete Masonic journey. In reality, the Third Degree leaves us with more questions than answers.

The Royal Arch takes us forward in time well over four centuries and answers those questions. The ceremony also has a strong allegorical interpretation.

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.

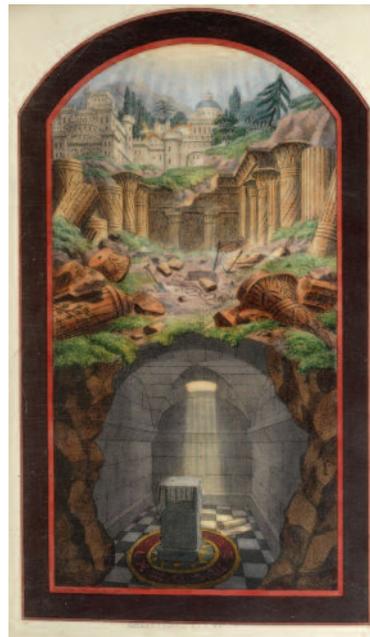
The ceremony of raising implies that there is more to learn, for it urges us to lift our eyes beyond our civil duties and routine existence. The Royal Arch develops this theme because it teaches us that the true secrets of a Freemason are to be found within ourselves.

\*Antient is the old spelling of Ancient in the Book of Constitutions

## **Where does it fit relative to the Craft?**

For nearly 300 years Masons have completed the traditional Masonic journey from initiation to the Royal Arch. It has a unique position as part of the mainstream of Freemasonry, so that it and the Craft are totally complementary, and are together described as forming pure Antient Masonry. There are other Masonic Orders, all of which require Craft membership as a pre-requisite; many of them also requiring candidates to have been exalted into the Royal Arch.

Usually, a Royal Arch Chapter is attached to a specific Lodge, and will most likely use its name and number, though not all Lodges have a Chapter. It follows that members will come from different Lodges and perhaps from other Provinces. Certainly, joining a Chapter will extend your circle of Masonic friends, but you will be under no pressure to learn new ritual until you are ready to do so.



Royal Arch Tracing Board circa 1845

## **The Royal Arch and the Craft**

The close affinity of the Craft and the Royal Arch is emphasised by the fact that the Grand Master is automatically the First Grand Principal of Supreme Grand Chapter, the Pro Grand Master is the Pro First Grand Principal, and the Grand Secretary is also the Secretary of the Royal Arch in which he is called the Grand Scribe Ezra.

The Royal Arch regulations are in the Book of Constitutions of Grand Lodge which you received at your Initiation.

Chapters meet less frequently than Lodges, commonly three times a year. Joining Fees and Annual Dues are less than those of the Craft. The Royal Arch is consequently less challenging in terms of cost and time.

Our members are known as 'Companions'. Companions who become one of the three Principals of a Chapter (broadly equivalent to the Worshipful Master and Wardens) are known as 'Excellent Companions'. It is perfectly permissible to be elected a Principal of a Chapter without having been a Worshipful Master of a Lodge

## **The Royal Arch in Buckinghamshire**

There are over 40 Chapters under the Provincial Grand Chapter of Buckinghamshire, some meeting as Daylight Chapters. The Province is presided over by the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent. There is a Deputy Grand Superintendent, as well as Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals. The Royal Arch in Buckinghamshire is administered by the Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra. Chapters meet at most of the usual Buckinghamshire Craft venues and at times and on dates to suit all. Further information is available on the Buckinghamshire Royal Arch website [www.buckspgc.org](http://www.buckspgc.org)