

The Next Chapter

What will I discover?

Answers

Follow the clues from the Third Degree to complete your journey in Pure Antient Masonry

Companionship

Work together with old friends and new Companions to build on the principles of the Craft

Splendour

Learn more about our history in a spectacular ceremony you will remember forever

Yourself

Uncover new perspectives that will support you in a personal journey of discovery

By the time you become a Master Mason, you have learnt a lot about your Masonic Journey and made great progress. If you have enjoyed the three Craft Degrees, then you will be pleased to know there is more left to discover in the Royal Arch.



Whilst reading this leaflet, you are probably wondering 'Should I join the Royal Arch and if so what's in it for me?'

The short answer to whether you should join is an emphatic YES. Why? Because it is your fourth stage in the Craft and makes your Journey through Craft Masonry whole. After all, you wouldn't watch a four-part box set and then miss final episode, would you? So is the case with the Royal Arch.

But what's in it for me? Well, you qualify for membership earlier than you might think and you don't have to be a Past Master to join; in fact, you can join the Royal Arch four weeks after you have been raised in the Third Degree.

Its ceremony is different but also familiar and because it is supported by several Lodges you get the chance to meet, talk and network with many more Masons in your area. The ceremony is colourful and full of symbolism as one would expect, and as always, you'll find the Companions friendly, hospitable, and caring, thus increasing your enjoyment of Masonry in general.

You also of course get to wear your Royal Arch jewel in your Craft Lodge which is a demonstration of your pride in membership of the Royal Arch to your fellow brethren, something that other orders are not able to do, and an expression to others that you have completed your journey through Pure Antient Freemasonry.



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**The Provincial
Grand Chapter
of Durham**



The Royal Arch

'Discover More'

'Continue the Journey'

INTERESTED? speak with any Brother who is a member of the Royal Arch or contact enquiries@durhamfreemasons.org



An Invitation to Join the Royal Arch from the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent John Paul Thompson



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?

On your initiation into Freemasonry you were given a copy of the Book of Constitutions issued by The United Grand Lodge of England, and you will have noticed that this book contains a section concerning the Royal Arch Masons of England.

As you have progressed through the three degrees to becoming a Master Mason, you will have been informed about the Royal Arch, usually referred to as 'the Chapter', and that it is the completion of Antient Freemasonry.

You may also have noticed that the General laws and regulations for the Government of the Craft are set out on page 1 of that book and the first paragraph states:

"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 Royal Arch'".

So why is the Royal Arch described as the completion of Antient Freemasonry?

So that we understand the relationship of the Royal Arch with Craft Masonry we need to know a little of the history of Craft Masonry and its influence on the Royal Arch.



The History of Craft Masonry and its influence on the Royal Arch.

Where does it fit?

For over 300 years Masons have travelled the traditional Masonic journey from Initiation to the Royal Arch. At the beginning of the 18th century, Freemasonry as we know it today was established and in 1717, the first Grand Lodge was formed. These Masons were to become known as the 'Moderns'. In 1751, a further group of Masons formed themselves into another Grand Lodge and they became known as 'The Antients' and for the rest of the 18th century the two Grand Lodges existed in rivalry.

Also at the beginning of the 18th century, there were only two degrees in Freemasonry but this developed in both Grand Lodges to three degrees and, from the Third Degree, the Antients developed a fourth known as **'The Royal Arch'**.

The Moderns did not recognise this fourth stage causing a problem when in 1813 the two Grand Lodges combined to create The United Grand Lodge of England. The compromise reached allowed the Moderns to limit their degrees to three and the Antients to keep The Royal Arch and so the order became **'the completion of Pure Antient Freemasonry' and governed by Supreme Grand Chapter.**

The Royal Arch and the Craft - The Indissoluble Link.

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 whilst The Provincial Grand Master of Durham is also the Grand Superintendent of The Provincial Grand Chapter of Durham.

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

Our link is emphasised by the wearing of the Royal Arch Jewel (shown on the front cover) within our Lodges and we are the only order mandated to do so. This is further enhanced by ensuring that when wearing your Jewel, it is placed closest to the centre of your chest and takes precedence over all other jewels.

Each Lodge has a Royal Arch Representative: A knowledgeable Royal Arch Mason who can give you further advice and support and help you in finding a Chapter that suits you and your requirements.

The ceremony to become a Royal Arch Mason is called an Exaltation. This is a colourful ceremony, unlike anything you will have experienced in Craft Masonry. Chapters meet less frequently than Lodges and subsequently, joining fees and annual dues are usually less than those of the Craft. Follow the QR code on the back page to find out more.