

ORDERS BEYOND THE CRAFT

Brethren, I will not deal with the History or Origins of the various Orders just a brief insight into the ceremonies, and the regalia

There are many orders Beyond the Craft and I am privileged to be able to say I am in most of them, in fact apart from one all of the Orders I am talking about today I am in! I will start with the well-known ones first, and I will try to answer any questions you may have at the end!

THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH

The Holy Royal Arch or Chapter as it is commonly known.

The qualification for joining Chapter is that of being a Master Mason for a minimum of 4 weeks.

The meetings are called Convocations, and the ceremony is called The ceremony of Exaltation.

The degree deals with the rebuilding of the second Temple at Jerusalem and sets out to restore the genuine secrets of a Master Mason.

This is accomplished by workmen who make a monumentous discovery during their labours and from this a most interesting and illuminating explanation of the nature of God is conveyed.

The Regalia of the Order is an Apron, Sash and Jewel.

MARK MASONRY

The qualification for joining Mark is that of being a Master Mason.

The ceremony is called The ceremony of Advancement and chronologically follows that of the Fellowcraft. In fact it is often referred to as the completion of The Second Degree. And in most constitutions around the world you would take your Mark degree at the first opportunity after being Raised and always before Chapter!

As in the Craft the meetings are held in a Lodge and the ceremony incorporates two Degrees.

The candidate is first acknowledged as a Mark Man and then Advanced to the degree of Mark Master Mason.

The Degree relates to a period in the building of the Temple at Jerusalem prior to the Death of Hiram Abiff.

The Regalia of the Order is an Apron and Jewel.

ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS

The Degree of Royal and Select Masters is also known as Cryptic Masonry as it deals with Secret Vaults built beneath The Temple at Jerusalem.

The qualification for joining is that of being a Mark Master Mason and a Royal Arch Mason.

The meetings are held in a Council. There are 4 Degrees: - Select Master, Royal Master, Most Excellent Master & Super-Excellent Master.

SELECT MASTER

The Select Master Degree relates how a well-known mason employed by King Solomon accidentally intrudes on a meeting of The Three Grand Masters held in a secret vault beneath the Temple and the consequence of his intrusion.

ROYAL MASTER

The Royal Master Degree is set in a time just prior to the completion and dedication of the first Temple and refers to a certain Fellowcraft making diligent enquiry of Hiram Abiff as to when he might receive the secrets of a Master Mason.

The subsequent disquisition by our Grand master is one of the most enthralling pieces of ritual in Freemasonry.

MOST EXCELLENT MASTER

The Most Excellent Master Degree deals with the completion and dedication of the First Temple.

SUPER-EXCELLENT MASTER

The Super-Excellent Master Degree is about the first Temple down to the time of its imminent destruction by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar.

Therefore this Order fills the gap between Mark and Chapter and so completing the Solomonic Degrees.

The regalia of the order is a triangular Apron and Jewel.

ROYAL ARK MARINERS

Royal Ark Mariners or RAM as it is known.

The meetings are held in a Lodge and the qualification for joining is that of being a Mark Master Mason.

The ceremony is called The ceremony of Elevation.

The Degree deals with the period of Noah, his family and the deluge.

The Worshipful Commander represents Noah and the two wardens his two sons Japheth and Shem.

An interesting facet of this degree is the positioning of the two wardens as in an old Craft Lodge, both in the West.

The regalia is an Apron and Jewel.

THE ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED RITE

The Ancient and Accepted Rite is commonly known as Rose Croix.

The meetings are held in Rose Croix Chapters.

The qualification for joining is that of being a Master Mason for at least one year and professing to the Christian faith.

There are 33 degrees in The Ancient and Accepted Rite.

1 to 3 are the same or equivalent of those taken in a Craft Lodge.

4 to 17 are known as the Intermediate Degrees and are conferred by name only, although there are working rituals for each degree.

In the 4th to the 12th degrees the legend of Hiram Abiff is continued in a series of allegories, collectively they portray the confusion caused by the death of Hiram Abiff and the steps taken by King Solomon to complete the building of the Temple.

The 13th and 14th degrees refer to the legend of the secret vault.

The 15th and 16th degrees give an account of the assistance received from Cyrus and Darius in rebuilding the Temple.

The 17th degree is apocalyptic and may be regarded as the preparation of the coming of Christ.

The 18th degree is always worked; the ceremony is divided into four distinct sections.

In a series of highly mystical experiences it expresses the figurative passage of man through the darkest vale and into the abode of light and discovery of the lost word.

The 19th to the 29th degrees are conferred by name, whilst the 30th to the 33rd are worked.

The regalia of the 18th degree is a beautiful embroidered collar.

The regalia of the 30th degree is a beautiful embroidered sash.

THE UNITED RELIGIOUS MILITARY AND MASONIC ORDERS OF THE TEMPLE AND OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, PALESTINE RHODES AND MALTA

The United Religious Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine Rhodes and Malta commonly known as The Knights Templar or KT.

The qualification for membership is that of a Master Mason and a Royal Arch Mason and being of the Christian faith.

The Degree of Knight Templar is carried out in a Preceptory and commemorates the action of a band of Knights who were granted a place of habitation within the sacred precincts of King Solomon's Temple by Baldwin II King of Jerusalem in 1118.

A candidate for Installation is admitted in the garb of a pilgrim and is required to undergo a period of pilgrimage and warfare before being received, armed and proclaimed a Knight of the Temple.

THE ANCIENT AND MASONIC ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, PALESTINE RHODES AND MALTA

The Ancient and Masonic Orders of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine Rhodes and Malta commonly known as The Knights of Malta.

The qualification for membership is that of a Knight Templar.

The Ceremony is held in a Priory and is in two parts; the first part is called The Knight of St. Paul or The Mediterranean Pass, which leads to The Knight of Malta Degree.

The Degree recounts the History of The Knights of Malta.

The regalia for both Degrees is quite impressive.

HOLY ROYAL ARCH KNIGHT TEMPLAR PRIEST

Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priest or Order of Holy Wisdom commonly known as KTP.

The qualification for membership is that of being an Installed Master in the Craft, a Royal Arch Mason and a Knight Templar.

The assemblies are called Tabernacles.

There are 32 Degrees in this Order, 1-31 are conferred by name and the 32nd worked.

The Ceremony consists mainly of readings from the Old Testament.

The candidate is conducted to Seven Pillars, each having a word revealing the true spirit of God.

The Symbol of the Order is an equilateral triangle, upon which are inscribed certain letters alluding to the secrets of the degree.

The regalia consists of a mantel, tunic and mitre.

ORDER OF THE SECRET MONITOR

Order of the Secret Monitor or Brotherhood of David and Jonathan, commonly known as OSM.

The qualification for membership is that of a Master Mason.

This Order consists of three Degrees: -

1. Secret Monitor.
2. Prince.
3. Supreme Ruler.

First Degree – Secret Monitor:

The legend narrated during the Induction Ceremony is the story of the friendship of David and Jonathan.

During the ceremony the candidate is instructed in a certain course of action to take when a Brother is about to do anything which might prove injurious to himself and it teaches a beautiful lesson in friendship.

Second Degree – Prince:

The Admission ceremony to an Assembly of Princes narrates how Saul sought the life of David.

It further relates an interesting legend of the methods contrived to thwart the efforts of the jealous King.

Third Degree – Supreme Ruler:

The Third Degree is unusual, as it is the ceremony of Installation.

The ceremony pertains to the kingship of David and is fundamentally concerned with the headship of a Conclave.

The regalia consists of a Jewel.

THE MASONIC AND MILITARY ORDER OF THE RED CROSS OF CONSTANTINE AND THE ORDERS OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE AND OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

The Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine and the Orders of the Holy Sepulchre and of St John the Evangelist commonly known as The Red Cross of Constantine.

The qualification for membership is that of a Master Mason and a Royal Arch Mason and being of the Christian faith.

The Degrees are :-

Knight of the Red Cross of Constantine,

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre

Knight of St John the Evangelist.

Knight of the Red Cross of Constantine

This Degree relates the story of the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, conversion to Christianity and his subsequent victory over the rival emperor Maxentius.

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and Knight of St John the Evangelist.

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and Knight of St John the Evangelist are known as the Appendant Orders and are always conferred together.

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre

This Degree is said to have originated after the discovery of the true cross by St Helena. It is concerned with the three days between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Knight of St John the Evangelist.

This Degree is founded upon a tradition concerning a remarkable discovery made at the ruins of the Temple at Jerusalem and the subsequent foundation of the Knight of St John..

The interpretation of the legend is most interesting as it attempts to explain the Craft and Royal Arch ceremonies in a purely Christian sense.

The regalia consists of a sash and jewel.

THE ORDER OF THE ALLIED MASONIC DEGREES

The Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees
commonly known as the Allied.

The qualification for joining is that of being a Mark Master Mason and a Royal Arch Mason.

The Degrees are :-
St Lawrence the Martyr.
Knight of Constantinople.
Grand Tilers of Solomon.
Red Cross of Babylon.
Grand High Priest.

St Lawrence the Martyr.

This degree relates to the martyrdom of St Lawrence.

Knight of Constantinople.

This degree attempts to connect Constantine with the Masonic fraternity.

Grand Tilers of Solomon.

This degree is very similar to the degree of Select Master and relates the story of the accidental intrusion of a craftsman into the secret vault of King Solomon.

Red Cross of Babylon.

This degree is closely associated with the Holy Royal Arch and the rebuilding of the second Temple.

Grand High Priest.

This degree is founded on the Blessing of Abraham.
The candidate is admitted with due ceremony to the Holy office of Grand High Priest.

The regalia is a set of miniature jewels.

CHEVALIERS BIENFAISANT DE LA CITE SAINTE

Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cite Sainte or CBCS, the English translation is Knights Beneficent of the Holy City.

The CBCS is the oldest Order connected with Freemasonry, which has had a continuous existence.

The qualification for membership is that of Knights Templar and at least one year as a Master Mason! (And if you can become a Royal Arch Mason, Knights Templar and get invited to join CBCS in 12 months you are pretty special!)

The Grades of the Order are:
Scottish Master of St. Andrew.
Perfect Master of St. Andrew.
Squire Novice.
Knight Beneficent of the Holy City.

Scottish Master of St. Andrew: This grade makes reference to the Divine tradition of the Temple of Solomon and the presence of the Holy Shekinah. It also infers that while the first Temple was laid to ruins there still remained within the sacred knowledge of the God of Israel.

Perfect Master of St. Andrew: Here the legend of the second temple is developed, exhorting the true seeker to penetrate the tomb of Hiram in search of the lost word.

Squire Novice: This grade recounts a legend that at the dawn of the Christian era, wise sages dwelling within the Holy City were converted to Christianity by St Mark.

Knight Beneficent of the Holy City: In the final grade it is revealed to the Novice that at the Zenith of ancient Egyptian civilisation a religious dogma existed, which was identical with that of Christianity.

THE COMMEMORATIVE ORDER OF ST THOMAS OF ACON.

This Order is an English Chivalric Order, the ritual is based around the death of St Thomas Becket and the lesson of the degree is humility.

The qualification for joining is that of being a Knight Templar.

The Regalia is that of a Knights templar, except the jewel of the order and the Cross on the tunic is slightly different.

THE MASONIC ORDER OF ATHELSTAN

This is the newest Masonic Order and is built around the legend that King Athelstan called a meeting in York of all the Masons in England.

The Ceremony deals with the further instruction of a Master Mason.

The qualification for joining is that of being a Royal Arch Mason.

The Regalia is an Apron.

The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA)

The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (Society of Rosicrucians in England) is an independent Christian society. Admission is limited to Master Masons who are subscribing members of a Lodge under the Grand Lodge of England or a jurisdiction in amity with Grand Lodge and who accept and believe in the fundamental principles of the Trinitarian Christian faith.

The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia does not, however, constitute another interesting degree in Freemasonry, to be acquired in the course of ordinary Masonic progress. It is something beyond and outside Freemasonry. More and more Freemasons are looking to the Christian degrees for answers to the questions confronted during their daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

The membership of the S.R.I.A. is made up from brethren who have all trod the same path within the structure of Masonry. The Society is the ideal forum for Masons who wish to extend their contemplation of the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science.

The S.R.I.A. can provide the thoughtful Mason with direction, structure and resources for his enlightenment and advancement in working out the great problems of Life, in comprehending and appreciating his relations to his fellow man and to his Creator.

The Society also provides an outlet for sharing insights, learning and experiences with others through presenting papers and by joining study and discussion groups.

Structure of the Society

The Society is governed internationally by The Supreme Magus and his High Council. It is divided into Provinces, each governed by a Chief Adept.

The Chief Adepts are responsible for the Colleges within their respective Provinces. Each College is presided over by a Celebrant and his officers elected or appointed annually.

A member of the Society (called a frater) aspires to progress through a series of nine grades, each having its own colourful and impressive ritual ceremony, in three distinct Orders.

A candidate is required to be proposed and seconded by members of the Society and is elected by ballot.

Through regular and graduated steps, the members of the Society are guided from the initial effort to the final goal.

The Regalia is a Jewel, suspended from a green or yellow ribbon, depending on your Grade

The Royal Order of Scotland

The Order consists of two Degrees, The Heredom of Kilwinning and Knight of The Rosy Cross. Most of the ceremony is carried out in quaint old doggerel verse, and depicts Masonry in a truly Christian aspect.

Qualification is Master Mason for 4 years and region specific; this could mean being a member of at least two other Christian Orders or a connection with the City of London for instance.

Regalia is an Apron, Two Sashes and a Jewel & Garter.

The Worshipful Society of Freemasons, Roughmasons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviours, Plaisterers and Bricklayers commonly known as 'The Operatives'

Meetings are held in Assemblages and the ritual is far more archaic in form than that of us 'speculative' masons containing practical instruction of which there is little of in speculative masonry.

Qualification is Mark Master Mason and Royal Arch Mason

Regalia is a Jewel peculiar to each Degree attached to a blue piece of string.

The August Order of Light

Regular bodies of the order are called Temples and meetings are called Ashayana's.

There are 3 degrees, First Degree, Passing Degree and Second Degree.

Qualification is Master Mason but the important thing is you have to present a Paper on any topic except Freemasonry to the members, who will then either recommend you for membership or not. There is no appeal!

Regalia is a robe and belt.