

# Provincial Grand Lodge of Somerset

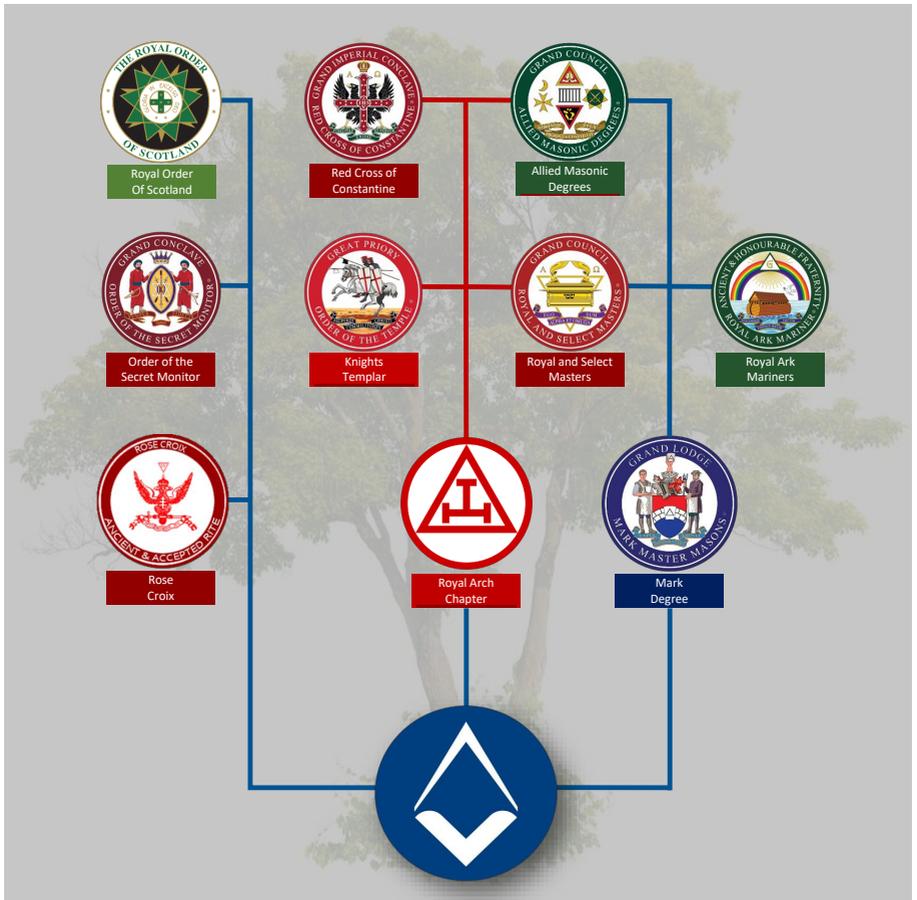
[www.Somersetfreemasons.org](http://www.Somersetfreemasons.org)



## An introduction to Masonic Orders meeting in Somerset

2021

## The Relationship between Craft & other Somerset Orders



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## Introduction

Having become a Freemason, you will have become a Member of a Craft Lodge which belongs to the United Grand Lodge of England. The first Grand Lodge was formed 300 years ago, in 1717. It subsequently united with a rival Grand Lodge to become the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) in 1813.

UGLE is considered as the mother Grand Lodge of regular Craft Freemasonry, otherwise known as the Antient Fraternity of Free and Accepted Freemasons. UGLE recognizes other Grand Lodges around the world that subscribe to a set of basic principles. These include that members are required to have a belief in the GAOTU, that obligations are taken in open lodge on the open Volume of the Sacred Law and that membership is open only to men. A recognized Grand Lodge is defined as being “regular”. A member of our Constitution may not attend an irregular lodge.

An integral part of Pure Antient Freemasonry is the Holy Royal Arch, often known as Chapter. The Royal Arch is administered by Supreme Grand Chapter. The same brethren lead both Craft and Chapter from Great Queen Street in London. Both are headed by HRH The Duke of Kent.

“Pure and Antient Freemasonry consists of three degrees and no more, the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason including the Holy Royal Arch”.

It is hoped that as a Craft Freemason you will recognize, and take at a suitable time, the further step of becoming a Royal Arch Mason, thus completing your journey through Pure Antient Masonry.

Beyond the Craft and Royal Arch there are other masonic orders that are considered regular and which, in time you may wish to consider joining. Each provide opportunity to widen Masonic knowledge and understanding. Likewise, as may be experienced by visiting or joining other Craft lodges, a wider network of friends and social opportunities arise.

In general terms, the other Orders fall into three categories; those concerned with events leading up to and beyond the building of the first and second Temples at Jerusalem; the Masonic Orders of Chivalry; and other miscellaneous Orders. It is possible to join some 20 additional Masonic Orders in England, comprising well over 100 individual degrees.

This booklet is not intended to be a comprehensive guide, but simply to raise awareness, ignite the imagination and provide sufficient information to establish if a little enlightenment will inspire you to take a further step in masonry. The booklet has been compiled by the principal Orders meeting in Somerset.

As a Freemason, you should always regard your family and work life as paramount over any commitment to Freemasonry. Similarly, the first masonic claim on your time and money should be your mother Craft Lodge. Extending your membership into other Orders should never be to the detriment of your family.

Regard Freemasonry as a journey of discovery, of enjoyment and of challenges. It will be important to “rest awhile” contemplate and learn from what you have experienced and not move forward until you are ready and have carefully considered the commitment you are entering into.

Enjoy your Freemasonry.



## The Holy Royal Arch

[www.somersetroyalarch.org](http://www.somersetroyalarch.org)

The Degree is as old as the Craft itself and before the union and the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England; the Holy Royal Arch was conferred within Craft Lodges. Following the union in 1813 there was some disagreement between the two former Grand Lodges regarding the situation of the Holy Royal Arch and this was clarified in 1817 when The Supreme Grand Chapter of England was consecrated and the Preliminary Declaration agreed:-

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



The Provincial Grand Chapter of Somerset was formally consecrated at The Taunton Masonic Hall on 16th December 1880. In Somerset the degree is run entirely separate from the Craft and has its own administration and Team of Officers.

This Degree deals with the prolonged period after the reign of King Solomon; recounting how the Temple had been destroyed and how Cyrus the Great liberated the Jews and invited them to return to Jerusalem to assist with the rebuilding of the Temple.

The Degree looks to restore the genuine secrets of a Master Mason, which as we are informed in the Third Degree were lost. This is accomplished by workmen who make a momentous discovery under the ruins of the first Temple.

From this, a most interesting and illuminating explanation of the nature of God is conveyed. In a complimentary contrast to the Craft degrees which are concerned with man's relationship with his fellow men, the Royal Arch focuses on the relationship with God. The single ceremony of Exaltation takes place within a Royal Arch Chapter.

Membership requirements -  
Master Mason of at least four weeks.

Regalia -



The regalia consists of an Apron, Sash and Jewel. The Jewel is also worn by Royal Arch Masons with their Craft regalia. The colour of the ribbon denotes progress through the offices of Chapter.

**Grand Master's/First Grand Principal's comment** - "One aspect that I am sure they will want to emphasise is that no Mason should be joining other orders without first completing their journey in Pure Antient Masonry by becoming a member of the Holy Royal Arch".

**Pro Grand Master's/Pro First Grand Principal's comment** - "I must add that I am all for our craft brethren joining whatever other legitimate order that they want, but strongly believe that the Royal Arch should come first".



## The Mark Degree

[www.somersetmarkmason.co.uk](http://www.somersetmarkmason.co.uk)

In England, the Mark Degree is a separate entity with its own Grand Lodge, which was founded in 1856. In other constitutions throughout the world, the Mark is part of either Craft or Royal Arch Masonry, and a candidate may be given the Mark Degree as soon as he becomes a Master Mason, either in the Craft or in the Royal Arch Chapter as a preliminary degree.

The Mark Degree message is one of hope and encouragement and the ritual is built on a single verse from Psalm 118 “The Stone which the builders rejected has become the head stone of the corner”.



It deals with the building of King Solomon’s Temple and the various Craftsmen employed, but its real message is one of contemplation of human strength and weakness.

The Degree contains many messages for the discerning man and illustrates that the wishes of men can be mistaken, that the experts are often wrong, that the weakest often display perseverance far better than the strongest, that the insignificant have a potential for distinction and that we all have a part to play in Building of Life.

It is for each to put his own interpretation on the message which the degree proclaims, but there is a clear encouragement that no man is beyond redemption, and the possibility of distinction is always within our power.

Finally, the Degree reminds us that when all the wisest and cleverest of men were gathered together only one looked towards the West and saw a sunbeam strike the roof of the Temple. The Degree represents the everyday life of each one of us, for the stone hewn from the virgin rock depicts us all on our journey through life. Its final recognition as perfection, should be the guide to our conduct through life that “we may be found worthy”

Membership requirements - Master Mason.



### Regalia -

An Apron similar to that of the Craft, but surrounded with a light blue ribbon edged in crimson, plus a similarly coloured breast jewel supporting a Key-Stone.



## The Royal Ark Mariner Degree

[www.somersetmarkmason.co.uk](http://www.somersetmarkmason.co.uk)

The Degree of Royal Ark Mariner (R.A.M.), although worked under the aegis of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, has no real historical connection with the Mark Degree. In essence, the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner Degree stands alone and, is entirely unrelated to any other Masonic degree.

The Officers of a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge represent Noah and two of his sons, Japheth and Shem. A particularly interesting aspect of this Degree is the position of the two Wardens, as in an old Craft Lodge.

The first authentic record of the Degree appears in the minutes of a meeting held in Bath in 1790. Interest in the Degree increased in the early 1800s and eventually the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales placed the Degree under its protection. A Grand Master's Royal Ark Council was subsequently formed to regulate the Degree and since then the fraternity has grown apace.

There is only one ceremony of "elevation", and this is relatively short, of some 45 minutes. As its name suggests it has a nautical flavour, with the "elevation" of a candidate into the Degree, commemorating the providence and mercy of God, with regard to the legend of the Deluge, as recorded in Genesis.

During the ceremony, analogies are drawn between the dangers of the flood and the dangers of life. How we should strive to reach the "Ark", the haven of rest, just as Noah's family and the other occupants of his Ark did. The subject matter, being taken directly from the Volume of the Sacred Law, is therefore both beautiful and instructive, guaranteed to make a lasting impression on every candidate.

Membership requirements - Mark Master Mason.

Regalia -





## The Ancient and Accepted Rite (Rose Croix)

[www.somersetrosecroix.org.uk](http://www.somersetrosecroix.org.uk)



The Rite originated in France in 1754 with The Supreme Council 33° for England and Wales and its Districts and Chapters Overseas being formed in 1845, being the governing body for the A&AR in England.

The History of the Order in Somerset was said to begin in 1852 with the granting of a warrant for the founding of St. Peter and St. Paul Chapter to meet in the City of Bath.

In the Rose Croix ceremony the Candidate is taken through several rooms which figuratively represent his spiritual and Masonic life progressing from Craft Masonry, through despair, to a Rose Croix Chapter and the discovery of the Lost Word. Commencing as a Master Mason (3°) he progresses to become a 17° Mason, a Knight of the East and West, of symbolic age, coming as the ritual explains - at a time of dire calamity but with incomplete pre-Christian knowledge.

The ceremony of the 18° seeks the Perfection of Christian virtues in Faith, Hope and Charity. It is an immensely thought provoking, impressive and beautiful ceremony which instils an even greater warmth of the brotherly love, on which the whole Masonic movement is founded.

Following perfection, the ensuing “feast of fraternal affection” is a wonderful moment of shared Freemasonry all too often lost in other degrees.

The Rose Croix, like Freemasonry as a whole, is not a religion. It does, however, serve to point the way.

It is this which makes Rose Croix so important, encompassing all we seek, while pointing us clearly to the Trinitarian Christian Faith. In the early years, the Rose Croix Degree was worked by the Knights Templar.

### Membership requirements -

Master Mason for a minimum of 12 months. The Order amplifies the teachings of Craft Masonry within a Christian context, for which reason candidates must profess the Trinitarian Christian Faith.

### Regalia -

The regalia for the 18th Degree is both simple and spectacular, comprising a jewel appended to a red collar which is embroidered with the symbols and emblems of the Degree in gold braid.





## Knights Templar

[www.somersetkt.org.uk](http://www.somersetkt.org.uk)



Full Title - The United Religious and Masonic Orders of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta in England and Wales and its Provinces Overseas.

One of the Chivalric Orders, the Masonic Knights Templar Order is derived from the religious Order founded at the time of the Crusades. At that time the vocation of the knights was to defend pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land from the attacks of the Saracens. Knights took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and were quartered in Jerusalem, believed to be on the site of King Solomon's Temple, from which their name is derived.



The first record of Masonic Templar activity was in 1777 and a Grand Conclave was formed in 1791. The Order was officially founded in 1811. The Province of Somerset was constituted in 1846.

All candidates enter as Pilgrims and following periods of pilgrimage and warfare take the vows of a Crusader before being advanced through the ceremony to Knighthood.

After being installed as a Knight Templar he automatically furthers his knowledge by becoming a Knight of Malta. The Knight of Malta Degree is preceded by the Mediterranean Pass whereby the Knights gained victory, which enabled them to pass all parts of the Mediterranean coastline.

This final degree covers the period from when the Knights left Jerusalem until they reached their final home in Malta. The Order traces the history of the Knights of Malta throughout the Mediterranean over a period of some 400 years.

### Membership requirements -

Master Mason and a Royal Arch Companion for a minimum of 12 months. Candidates must profess the Trinitarian Christian Faith.

### Regalia -



The regalia is based upon the dress of its medieval counterparts and comprises a burgundy cap, tunic, mantle, sash, belt, sword, Breast jewels and Star.

## The Order of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests (KTP)

[www.knighttemplarpriests.com](http://www.knighttemplarpriests.com)

The earliest references to the Order are found in 1755 in ceremonies of "The High Knights Templar" in Ireland and it is known that travelling "Bands" of Knight Templar Priests conferred the Order in the newly-former Encampments of Knights Templar in Scotland and England.

The first mention of the Order in Somerset is in the records of two Bristol Lodges: The Mariners, (later known as Royal Clarence Lodge) and Jerusalem Lodge, meeting in Bristol but with Somerset members and was also conferred in two short-lived Encampments in Somersetshire, the Gethsemane and True Friendship. Following the Union of the two rival Grand Lodges in 1813, the order declined over the following 100 years until its revival in 1924 in Newcastle.

Two units (known as Tabernacles) were quickly formed in Somerset, in Taunton, the King Ina Tabernacle Number 4, in 1925 and in Bath, the King Edgar Tabernacle Number 31 in 1965.

There are two separate Ceremonies, that of the Order of Knight Templar Priests and the Order of Holy Wisdom. The Order is open to all Brother Knights Templar and the ceremony is woven around the Seven Pillars.

The members are known as Knight Templar Priests, the Officers as Pillars and the chair is occupied by the High Priest.

The Order is a friendly, peaceful, Christian Order and new members are welcomed.

A leaflet giving more information can be obtained from the Tabernacle Recorders or on the Website:

Membership Requirements -

Must be a subscribing member of Knights Templar, the Craft and Royal Arch.

Regalia -



The symbol of the Order is an equilateral triangle on which are inscribed certain letters alluding to the secrets of the Order.

Regalia consists of a Knight Templar white tunic, white a red cross, and a plain white mantle.

Knight Priests wear a mitre with a cross on the front. High Priests where a taller mitre with a patriarchal cross as shown in the illustration.



## Royal & Select Masters

[www.somerset-wilts-rsm.org.uk/distintro.html](http://www.somerset-wilts-rsm.org.uk/distintro.html)

The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of England and Wales was officially Constituted in 1873 under a Charter issued earlier by the Grand Council of New York.

The Order demonstrates a significant link between the Craft, Chapter and Mark degrees. The Third Degree in Craft describes the assassination of the Chief Architect prior to the completion of the Temple; the plans were lost, the workmen were left with no leadership and the genuine secrets of a Master Mason were lost.

This degree looks at the situation leading to the secrets being hidden prior to the time of the Third degree and what happened in the period up to the Holy Royal Arch.

This series of events are covered by four separate Degrees known as the Order of Royal and Select Masters often referred to as the Cryptic Degrees.

A candidate is 'chosen, honoured and received' into the first three degrees with three distinct and separate ceremonies. The 4th, Super-Excellent Degree is conferred last.

The Select Master Degree relates to the construction of the secret vault under the Temple where the three Grand Masters met and the consequences of an innocent intruder straying into their presence.



The Royal Master Degree is set just prior to completion of the Temple. It refers to completed vessels for the House of the Lord and relates to a certain Fellow-Craft trying to obtain the secrets of a Master Mason. The subsequent discourse by our Grand Master on the subject of death is widely acknowledged to be the finest passage of ritual in Freemasonry. It also shows how the secrets came to be deposited in the crypt where they were subsequently found.

The Most Excellent Master Degree celebrates the completion of the Temple and describes the installation of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy Place.

The final degree, Super-Excellent Master, concludes the story of the first Temple with its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and the burial of the secrets under the rubble.

#### Membership requirements -

Royal Arch Mason and Mark Master Mason.

#### Regalia -

The regalia in this Order consists of a triangular apron, trimmed in crimson with gold braid edging. The jewel is also triangular in form in white enamel and hangs from a crimson ribbon.





## Red Cross of Constantine

[www.rccsb.org.uk](http://www.rccsb.org.uk)

Full Title - 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 exact date that the Order was founded is unclear, but appears to have been worked in some form or another from about 1770 and was formalised in 1865 when the 'Grand Imperial Conclave' was constituted in London.

There are five different degrees, namely: 'Knight of the Red Cross of Constantine', 'Knight of the Holy Sepulchre', 'Knight of St. John the Evangelist', Consecration as an Eusebius and Enthronement as Sovereign.

The first of these degrees, relates the story of Constantine the Great and his conversion to the Christian Faith when, after praying to his gods for help on the eve of battle he saw a 'miraculous sign' in the heavens of a Christian Cross and using this as the emblem on his banner the next day, in the battle which made him Emperor of all Rome, won him over to Christianity.

The second and third degrees known as the 'Appendant Orders' are taken together at the same meeting. The second degree, as the name implies concerns the Easter Story and the guarding of the Holy Sepulchre by Christian Knights over the three days from Good Friday to the Rising of Christ on Easter Day.

The third degree relates to the travels made by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, who went in search of the true cross.

Having made her discovery the ritual relates the finding of the ruins of the second Temple, which the Emperor Julian attempted to construct but 'laboured in vain' as 'we now build Temples in hearts' when we believe in the resurrection. This then being the link with the title of the Knights of St. John the Evangelist.

There are explanations in this ritual of how the ritual and tools in the Craft and Royal Arch ceremonies can be related to the Christian teachings.

The fourth degree is equivalent to being appointed as a 2nd or 3rd Principal and the fifth degree as the 'Z' in the Holy Royal Arch.

#### Membership requirements -

A Subscribing member of a Royal Arch Chapter and profess belief in the Holy Trinity.

#### Regalia -

The regalia of a Knight Companion of the Red Cross of Constantine consists of a purple sash and a breast jewel of a red cross suspended from a purple ribbon. Knights having taken the Appendant Orders wear a white sash together with an additional breast jewel consisting of a black eagle suspended from a white ribbon.





## Allied Masonic Degrees

[www.alliedmasonicdegrees.org](http://www.alliedmasonicdegrees.org)

During the 18th Century about thirty miscellaneous Degrees with no central authority were practiced. In 1880 all of these Degrees, both live and extinct, were brought together under a Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees and since 1931 only the five most worthwhile Degrees have been worked within this Order.

A candidate is required to pass through each of the 5 ceremonies to be fully qualified. Candidates are first admitted in the Degree of St. Lawrence the Martyr, which explains how Lawrence gave his life rather than betray his principles and responsibilities and teaches a lesson of fortitude arising from the sufferings of St Lawrence.

The Knights of Constantinople Degree concerns the relationship between the Emperor Constantine and his subjects and preaches the virtues of humility and equality.

The Grand Tilers of Solomon Degree is very dramatic and teaches the need of reflecting on the danger of hasty judgement.

The Red Cross of Babylon Degree is very old and is closely associated with the Holy Royal Arch, with Zerubbabel gaining permission to commence the rebuilding of the Temple and the supreme importance of truth.

The final Allied Masonic Degree is that of Grand High Priest, dealing with the Blessing of Abraham and the consecration of Aaron.

Membership requirements -

Mark Mason and a Royal Arch Mason.

Regalia -

The regalia consists of either five small individual breast jewels representing each of the five degrees, or a composite pentagonal jewel





## The Order of the Secret Monitor

[www.orderofthesecretmonitor.co.uk/](http://www.orderofthesecretmonitor.co.uk/)

The Order of the Secret Monitor, otherwise known as The Order of David and Jonathan, is believed to be of Dutch origin and came to England around 1875, with a Grand Council being formed in 1887.

The story narrated during the first degree is based on the remarkable friendship between David and Jonathan and teaches a beautiful lesson in fidelity and friendship.

The second degree, Princes, is derived from the Book of Samuel and refers to how Saul sought the life of David.

The third degree, Supreme Ruler, is the Installation of a new Supreme Ruler into the Chair of a Conclave.

Membership requirements -  
Master Mason

Regalia -

The regalia is simple, consisting only of a breast jewel of two equilateral triangles interlaced with three arrows and charged with the letters D and J. It is suspended from a purple and orange ribbon which are the colours of the Order.





Provincial Grand Lodge of London  
and the Metropolitan Counties

## The Royal Order of Scotland

[www.royalorderscotland.org](http://www.royalorderscotland.org)



The oldest Masonic Order after Craft is the Royal Order of Scotland, being active in London in 1741. It became defunct but was reintroduced in Edinburgh in 1763. It is an appendant Order within the structure of British Freemasonry.



There are two degrees, the Heredom of Kilwinning and the Knighthood of the Rosy Cross.

The Heredom of Kilwinning Degree dates back to 11th century Scotland and depicts Freemasonry from a Christian aspect, with most of the ritual recited in the form of catechisms and verse. This ritual embraces elements and references found in other Orders which appeared later.

Knight of the Rosy Cross is said to have been founded by Robert the Bruce to reward the Knights and masons who aided him to great victory in the Battle of Bannockburn. This Degree travels from the Old to the New Testament and finishes with the doctrine inculcated by the life and death of Our Saviour.

### Membership requirements -

Master Mason, but membership of this Christian Order is by strict invitation only. The basic requirement is five years as a Master Mason but membership of some other specific Orders is additionally required by some Provincial Grand Lodges.

### Regalia -

This consists of a tapered apron; a jewel on a red sash or baldric relating to the first degree worn over the left shoulder; a jewel on a green baldric relating to the second degree worn over the right shoulder; a breast star and a strap. The kilt and/or a tartan tie may be worn by those so qualified.

## **Further reading**

Not all Orders meeting within the Province of Somerset are covered within this brief resumé. For brethren wishing to expand their knowledge further, there are a number of books available which provide a greater depth of information and detail of all the masonic Orders meeting in the UK.

Membership of one Order often provides a route to additional degrees and to have detailed them herein would complicate what is intended to be a simple overview at an early stage in a new masons journey.

If in time you are interested in finding out more about any Order that meets within the Province of Somerset, the contact details for the Secretary or their equivalent may be found in the Somerset Masonic Reference Book pages 22 - 28.

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## NOTES



