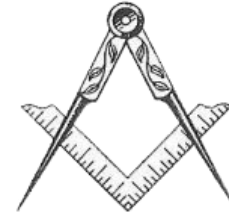
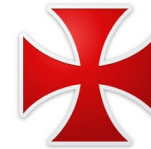


BEYOND THE CRAFT



ENGLISH FREEMASONRY IN THE BAHAMAS

Degrees, Lodges and Orders available to you beyond those of
Craft Freemasonry



Congratulations on your being Raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. This Booklet provides you with a little information on where you are now located on your Masonic path and the options open to you in terms of the additional Degrees, Lodges and Orders which are available to you here in Nassau.

CRAFT MASONRY

As you are aware, your “Mother” Lodge is part of what we refer to as “Craft Freemasonry, taken from the work, or “craft”, that operative stonemasons performed.

Although the origin of Freemasonry is never likely to be established with certainty, there are landmark dates which are significant to its history. Prominent dates for “English’ Masons are the founding of the first Grand Lodge in 1717, followed by the formation of the rival Atholl or Antient Grand Lodge in 1751 and subsequently the union of the two form the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813, which is based in Great Queen Street, London.

English Freemasonry in the Bahamas is governed by the District Grand Lodge of Bahamas and Turks, under the auspices of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Craft Lodges in Nassau include Royal Victoria Lodge no. 433, consecrated in June 1837, Lodge of Unity No. 8760, consecrated on 11th June 1977, and Bahamas Installed Masters Lodge No.8764, consecrated on 13th June 1977. Bahamas Installed Master Lodge is a Lodge of Research which does not conduct regular degree ceremonies. Membership requires a brother to be an Installed Master, but the Lodge is open to visitors of any rank.

Other Craft Lodges also meet in Freeport: Lucayan Lodge No. 8188, Arawak Lodge No. 8877 and the E. S. Larkin Lodge No. 9776; in Turks and Caicos: Forth Lodge No. 647, Coral Lodge No. 8888 and Caicos Island Lodge No. 9661; and in Marsh Harbour: Carleton Lodge No. 9134 All these Lodges you may visit.

The regalia worn after Initiation into the 1st Degree includes a unique apron in that it is wider at the bottom than it is at the top. It is bordered in crimson, and has a triangular flap with a matching fringe. Also, a crimson sash is worn.

On promotion to the 2nd Degree the apron is replaced with one which is bordered in crimson and thistle green, with a crimson triangular flap edged with a green fringe. A green sash is added in addition to the crimson one and a green garter is worn around the left arm. A gilt seven-pointed star, centered with a cross of the Order, is worn on the left breast.



Star



Garter



2nd Degree Apron

To be a member of this Order a Brother must have been a Craft Master Mason for five years or more, must profess the Trinitarian Christian Faith and either be a 32nd Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite (Rose Croix) or a Knight Templar.

Meetings are held in Nassau at the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Mid-Atlantic.

ROYAL ORDER OF SCOTLAND

The Royal Order of Scotland proudly professes to use a ritual which has changed little since the early 18th Century and both degrees included in the Order have wording and subject matter known long before that time. Authentic documented proof exists that Lodges were active in London as early as 1741, rendering the Royal Order of Scotland the most senior masonic system after the Craft.

The documented history of the Order commences with the issue, in 1750, of a Charter to Brother William Mitchell appointing him Provincial Grand Master of the Seven United Provinces, now known as the Netherlands, based in The Hague. However, it is very unlikely that this Lodge was ever worked as Bro Mitchell moved to Scotland in 1751, or 1752, and used the same Charter to set up a Royal Order of Scotland Lodge in Edinburgh. This body then elevated itself in July 1767 to become the Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland.

From the earliest written records of meetings, the Order claims their Hereditary Grand Master to be the King of the Scots and a vacant seat is always left available for him in the East at all Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge meetings.

All regular Lodges in this Order have the status of being Provincial Grand Lodges, ensuring that only one Lodge can exist in any jurisdiction. In 2003 there existed 66 Provincial Grand Lodges spread around the world.

The two degrees of the Order are:

1. Heredom of Kilwinning: Reputedly originating during the reign of David I in the 12th century and which provides a retrospective of the lessons and symbolism of the Craft Degrees in Masonry.
2. Knight of The Rosy Cross: Said to have been instituted by King Robert the Bruce and is centered around the Battle of Bannockburn on 24th June 1314, and alludes to a group of 36 brave Knights who were probably original Templars and Freemasons.

You are also aware that Craft Freemasonry consists of three degrees; The Entered Apprentice, The Fellow Craft and The Master Mason, all three of which you have now attained. However, the Third Degree is not the conclusion of Freemasonry by any means. There are many other Degrees which continue to teach us virtues such as Honesty, Charity, Industry, Fidelity, Humility, etc. These Degrees have developed into separate Lodges and Orders which are superimposed on the basis of the Craft degrees and are therefore often referred to as “Degrees beyond the Craft”.

Membership of these institutions is by invitation only, but I am sure that your Proposer and Secunder to Freemasonry, as well as other Brethren, will soon be encouraging and supporting you to join them. Participation in them will enhance your Masonic experience and hopefully increase the joy, interest and fulfillment you feel by being a Mason.

Following is information on each of the Masonic bodies, under the English Constitution, which are present here in Nassau. All meet at the Bay Street Masonic Temple and the schedule of meetings can be found at the website www.freemasonrybahamas.net

The following list is organized in the order in which membership should be entered into.

HOLY ROYAL ARCH

In the Book of Constitutions, which is given to every Craft Mason in the English Constitution, there is a “preliminary declaration” which reads:

“...by the solemn act of union between the two Grand Lodges of Freemasons of England in December 1813, it was “declared and pronounced that pure ancient masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz: those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch”

This close association between the Craft and the Royal Arch is further reinforced in the Royal arch ritual when during the ceremony of Exaltation, the candidate is informed that he has not received a Fourth Degree but has completed the Third.

As the Order is part of “pure ancient masonry” it should not therefore be viewed as an optional extra but rather as the only opportunity for a Master Mason to proceed to the completion of their basic Masonic knowledge.

The Holy Royal Arch is more commonly Known as “Chapter”, for as Craft Masons meet in a Lodge, so Royal Arch Masons meet in a Chapter and are known to each other as “companions”. Chapters are, by regulation, always attached to a Craft Lodge and take the name and number of that Lodge.

The regalia worn in Chapter consists of an apron, sash and breast jewel. The apron is bordered by a red and blue triangular ribbon, with the sash having a similar pattern. Members are distinguished by the jewel, which they wear on the left breast, the color of the ribbon varying in accordance with their rank.

The Royal Arch jewel is the only jewel which is permitted to be worn together with together with Craft jewels in a Craft Lodge.

In the early 1960's, under dynamic new leadership, the pace and expansion increased and the number of Tabernacles now in existence is around 250. These are spread throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, the Bahamas, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Holland, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Bolivia, Togo and the Ivory Coast.

Meetings are held in 'Tabernacles' and members are referred to as 'Knight Priests' and the Master as 'High Priest'.

The dress is a tunic as worn by Knights Templar, a plain white mantle (though a Knights Templar mantle may be worn) and a mitre.



Mitre

To be admitted to the Order you have to be a Royal Arch Mason, a Knight Templar and an Installed Master of a Craft Lodge.

The Royal Victoria Tabernacle No. 76 was consecrated in Nassau on 25th January 1980.

HOLY ROYAL ARCH KNIGHT TEMPLAR PRIESTS

Like many other Orders in Freemasonry, the origin of the Knight Templar Priests is shrouded in mystery. The early history of this Christian Order is obscured by the fact that it was also known by many other names, such as:

- Order of Melchisedec
- Pillared Priest
- White Mason
- Order of Holy Wisdom
- Templar Ne Plus Ultra

There is a doubtful claim that it existed in the late 17th Century. However, firmer evidence exists of it being worked from the end of the 18th Century and operated in Ireland, Ayrshire, Lancashire and in Newcastle upon Tyne. It spread to being worked in York, Bristol, Bath and Salisbury and by the early 1800's the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of Ireland issued some forty Warrants of Order to meet at venues mainly in Scotland.

Overall, however, the Order made little progress during that century and almost died out but for a revival in 1895 when the sole remaining members in Newcastle rallied support from other areas. A prominent Mason, Henry Hotham, who was, apparently, the last known Knight Templar Priest at the time, revived the Order by creating a sufficient number of Knight Templar Priests in Newcastle to form a Tabernacle. As a consequence the first of the modern Tabernacles, Royal Kent, was formed in Newcastle.

After a short period of control by the Allied Masonic Degrees in London, the Order became an independent body. It has been administered since 1924 by the Grand College located in York, England. Development continued to be slow for the next few decades, though Tabernacles were formed in New Zealand in 1930, 1942 and 1944, with Australia joining a few years later. In 1931, Grand College sponsored the setting up of the Order in the United States as an independent authority and it still remains the only other Grand College in the World.



Apron and Sash



Breast Jewel

Chapters are overseen by the Supreme Grand Chapter, which is separate from, but works in close harmony with, the United Grand Lodge of England, with whom they share joint Headquarters.

The requirement for candidacy to the Holy Royal Arch is that a brother must have been a Master Mason for at least one month.

In Nassau, the Royal Victoria Royal Arch Chapter No. 443 was consecrated on 24th September 1951.

Other Chapters in the Bahamas are Turks Island Forth Chapter, No. 647, in Turks and Caicos, Lucayan Chapter No. 8188 and Arawak Chapter No. 8877, Both in Freeport, and Carleton Chapter No. 9134, in Marsh Harbour.

All Chapters in the Bahamas are administered by the ***District Grand Chapter of Bahamas and Turks .***

ORDER OF THE SECRET MONITOR

(OR BROTHERHOOD OF DAVID AND JONATHAN)

Like many Masonic Orders, the origin of the Secret Monitor is Shrouded in mystery, but the most common theory is that it originated in Holland during the rebellion against Spain in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. There is the story of the friendship between David and Jonathan was used to create a system of code of recognition for the rebels. Later it was taken to the United States by Dutch settlers emigrating to the New York area.

The Order was brought to England by Dr. Issachar Zacharie, an Englishman born in Chatham, who, after serving in the American Civil War, settled in California and joined the Order of the Secret Monitor. He returned to London in 1875.

Members meet in “Conclaves” rather than Lodges, but still refer to each other as “Brother”. The Master of the Conclave is called the “supreme Ruler”, and past Supreme Rulers are referred to as “Worthy Brother”.

Due to the steady growth of Conclaves, the Grand Conclave of the Order of the Secret Monitor or Brotherhood of David and Jonathan for the British Isles and Territories Overseas was formed in 1887. The early years of the Order were a little complicated as the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees was also empowered to confer the Degree until 1931, when C.W. Napier-Clavering, who headed both the Order of the Secret Monitor and the Allied Masonic Degrees, arranged the agreement whereby the Allied Masonic Degree Council gave up all rights to this Degree.

A similar set of regalia is worn in Knights of Malta, except that the tunic is red with a Maltese cross, the mantle and cap are black, also with Maltese crosses, and it has its own jewel. However, as the Order only meets once per year, Knights are permitted to wear their Knights Templar regalia, with the KM jewel, during Knights of Malta meetings.



KT Tunic, Mantle, Cap and Breast Jewel



KM Regalia

Membership of the Order is open to Companions of the Holy Royal Arch who profess the Trinitarian Christian Faith. So, it is also a Christian based Order.

The Royal Victoria Preceptory No. 456 and the Royal Victoria Priory No. 456 were consecrated in Nassau on 14th February 1975. Both are administered directly from Great Priory in London.

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

(KNIGHTS TEMPLAR and KNIGHTS OF MALTA)

The lengthy title of this Order actually comprises two separate Orders, usually abbreviated to Knights Templar, or more simply KT, and Knights of Malta, or KM.

Despite the names, no claim is made to any connection with the medieval military Orders of the same names. The earliest references to masonic Knight Templar activity are found in Ireland. The earliest records in England come from Portsmouth in 1777, where rituals appear to have been worked under Royal Arch warrants. It was not until 1791 that a Grand Conclave was founded, and Thomas Dunckerley was installed as Grand Master.

Knights Templar meetings are held in 'Preceptories', the Master being referred to as 'Eminent Preceptor' and Knights of Malta meet in 'Priories', with the Master being 'Eminent Prior'. Members of both Orders are called 'Knights'. Under authority of its warrant a Preceptory has the power to hold a Priory of Knights of Malta. Therefore, membership of Knights Templar automatically qualifies a Brother for membership of Knights of Malta, which only meets once per year.

Orders are administered by Great Priory which operates out of Mark Mason's Hall in London.

The Knights Templar regalia is elaborate and consists of a white tunic with red Latin cross, a white mantle with red Crosse Pateé, a black sash, a belt and sword, a red cap with white Crosse Pateé and two breast jewels.

The Order can be said to consist of three degrees; the first is Induction as a Secret Monitor, the second is Admission as a Prince of the Order and the third being the Installation of the Supreme Ruler. It is noteworthy that, unlike most other Orders, it is not a requisite that the Supreme Ruler must have been through the chair of a Craft Lodge.

The offices in this Order include four "Visiting Deacons", each of whom has the responsibility, to one quarter of the Conclave's membership, "of affording assistance and support to a brother in time of sorrow and distress"

The only regalia worn in a Secret Monitor Conclave is a breast jewel worn on the left breast, which is suspended on different colour ribbons for the first two degrees. Officers wear a sash, in the same colours as the jewel ribbon, and the Supreme Ruler wears a robe.



1st and 2nd Degree Jewels

The only requirement for candidacy into the Order of the Secret Monitor is that the Brother must be a Craft Master Mason.

The Royal Victoria Conclave No. 281 was consecrated in Nassau on 20th September 1977.

MARK MASONRY

The Degree of Mark Master Mason, in which a Brother is said to be “Advanced”, comprises of two parts: the first part in which he is acknowledged as a Mark Man and the second part where he becomes a Mark Master Mason.

The “Mark” referred to in its title comes from the mark or symbol with which a stonemason identified his work and evidence of which can still be found today in many Cathedrals and important buildings. This mark acted as both a trademark and as a form of advertising. Each new member of Mark Mason’s Lodge is assigned his own unique mark, which is created by using the “Masonic alphabet”.

The Degree essentially links to the Second Degree in Craft Freemasonry and involves one of the more dramatic ceremonies in all of Freemasonry. The Ceremony reinforces the dangers that will befall anyone who is unable to prove himself.

The offices are the same as in a Craft Lodge with the addition of three “Overseers”, whose responsibility it is to inspect the candidate’s work and approve or reject it.

It is reputed that this Degree is over 400 years old, with some evidence in a Minute Book of the Lodge of Edinburgh from 1599 which indicated that several speculative Brethren appended their marks after their names. In the early days the Degree was worked in Craft Lodges or Royal Arch Chapters and the first good, recorded evidence of the Degree is from 1769 when it was worked in a Friendship Royal Arch Chapter No. 257, in Plymouth, England

Meetings in this Order conclude with the wonderful Third Point ceremony, which is based on the traditions of hospitality and friendship and symbolises the universality of the Order.

The regalia worn includes a collar to which is attached a jewel. The symbols on the collar and jewel are explained during a Prince's Perfection.



Collar and Breast Jewel

Membership is open to all members of Craft Masonry who profess the Trinitarian Christian Faith. In other words, this Order has a distinctly Christian attitude.

In Nassau, two Rose Croix Chapters meet, the Royal Victoria Rose Croix Chapter No. 692, consecrated on 6th February 1971, and the Bahamas Unity Chapter No. 1102, consecrated on 30th August 1996. Taino Chapter No. 1090 also meets in Freeport.

ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED RITE (ROSE CROIX)

The Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales originated in France in the 1750's when it included 25 degrees. It moved to the West Indies after the outbreak of the French Revolution and from there to Charleston in South Carolina where it became known as "Scottish Rite Masonry". By the end of the 18th century it was extended to the present 33 degrees, before being reintroduced to Europe.

The present governing body in England, the Supreme Council, was formed in 1845 and is located at 10 Duke Street, London, UK. The full title of the Order, which has changed from time to time over the years, is the Supreme Council of 33 Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales and its Districts and Chapters Overseas, but it is usually known as Rose Croix.

Meetings are called 'Chapters' and members of this Order are known as Princes Rose Croix of Heredom or Knights of the Pelican and Eagle, or more succinctly as 'Princes'. The Master is referred to as 'Most Wise Sovereign'.

Although the Rite contains 33 degrees, the first three are equivalent to the three Craft degrees. The next fourteen degrees (Degrees four through seventeen) are known as 'The Intermediate Degrees' and are conferred on a candidate at the beginning of the ceremony. The Brother is then 'Perfected' by going through the beautiful and memorable ceremony that is the eighteenth degree.

The other degrees are awarded as a Prince climbs through the ranks of the Order.

In 1813, the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons came into being, just days after the information of the United Grand Lodge of England and is headquartered at Mark Mason's Hall in St. James' Street, London. Since then, the number of mark Masons Lodges has grown extensively around the world, there now being over 1,200 Lodges in existence under the English Constitution.

The regalia for members consists of an apron and breast jewel. The breast jewel is in the form of a keystone suspended on a ribbon with the same colouring as the apron. The keystone, which bears certain character, play an integral part of the ceremony.



Apron and Breast Jewel

The qualification for becoming a Mark Master Mason is that one Must be a Craft Master Mason.

The Royal Victoria Mark Lodge No. 1368 was consecrated in Nassau on 14th February 1970. Mark Lodges also meet in Freeport, Lucayan No. 1552, and Grand Turk, Forth Lodge No. 1553

ROYAL ARK MARINER

The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners, more commonly known as RAM or Mariners, has been under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons since 1871 and is governed by the Grand Master's Royal Ark Council. Lodges are attached to mark Lodges, assuming their Number in Roll.

However, the content of the Royal Ark Mariner degree actually precedes Mark by hundreds of years because it relates to the building and voyage of Noah's Ark and the Great Flood. It is thought that it was a degree specifically for carpenters and woodworkers as in the past those trades were closely associated with stonemasons. The ceremony, in which a Brother is said to be "Elevated", is taken from the VSL and symbolizes wisdom, strength and beauty, which are relevant not only in the construction of the Ark but also in their moral significations to the candidate. The tracing board of the degree is unusual in that it contains symbols of many other orders in Masonry.

The regalia consists of an apron and breast jewel. The apron is bordered by a rainbow ribbon with similar rosettes and the jewel is of a dove bearing an olive branch suspended from a rainbow, attached to a rainbow coloured ribbon

The regalia worn consists of a uniquely triangular apron bordered with red, and a breast jewel consisting of a white triangle surmounted by a crown, hanging from a red ribbon.



Apron and Breast Jewel

A candidate for the Order of Royal and Select Masters must be a Royal Arch Companion and a Mark Master Mason.

The Royal Victoria Royal and Select Masters Council No. 119 was consecrated in Nassau on 23rd January 1978.

ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS

This Order is commonly referred to as the “Cryptic Degrees” as three of the four degrees contained refer to a crypt. The Order is governed by the Grand Council of England and Wales and its Districts and Councils Overseas, from Mark Masons Hall in London.

In the early nineteenth century the degrees were worked in the United States of America as part of the sequence in the “York Rite”. Some degrees of the rite, however, were also worked in the North of England around the same time. The oldest recorded working being a Council in Newcastle which was worked under a Templar warrant prior to 1830.

The Order became formalized in England when the Grand Council of England and Wales was constituted on 29th July 1873 by four Councils chartered earlier by the Grand Council of New York.

Like the Allied Masonic Degrees, bodies in this Order are called “Councils”. The Master is referred to as “Thrice Illustrious Master”.

The four Degrees contained in the Order are:

1. Most Excellent Master, in which Council business is conducted
2. Royal Master
3. Select Master
4. Super Excellent Master



Apron and Breast Jewel

Membership of this Lodge requires that candidates are Mark Master Masons.

The Royal Victoria Royal Ark Mariners Lodge No. 1368 was consecrated in Nassau on 1st May 1972. Royal Ark Mariner Lodges also meet in Freeport, Lucayan Lodge No. 1552, and Grand Turk, Forth Lodge No. 1553

ORDER OF THE ALLIED MASONIC DEGREES

In the early part of the 19th Century, after the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813, many “additional” degrees were worked in England. Groups of degrees were gradually organized into separate Orders, each with their own governing bodies. However, well into the second half of the century there still remained a number of degrees being worked in various parts of the country without any allegiance to a centralized authority.

In 1879, the Grand Council of the Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees, with headquarters at Mark Mason’s Hall, was formed to give some cohesion to the administration of these degrees and to ensure standardization of their rituals.

The number of degrees worked by the Allied Masonic Degree Council has varied over the years and the Council has a complicated history. However, in an agreement reached in 1931, some degrees which had been included, such as the Order of the Secret Monitor, became independent and it was determined that the Allied Masonic Degrees would consist of the following five degrees:

1. St. Lawrence the Martyr, which is the first degree taken by all candidates, followed by the following four degrees which can be taken in any order. All Council business is conducted in this degree.
2. Knights of Constantinople
3. Grand Tylers of Solomon
4. Red Cross of Babylon
5. Holy Order of the Grand High Priest

Apart from officers’ collars, the only regalia worn is a pentagonal breast jewel which is awarded on completion of all five degrees. A more expensive version is available which consists of 5 miniature jewels, each suspended from its own ribbon, and which can be awarded separately, suspended from a bar.



Breast Jewel

A candidate for the Order of Allied Masonic Degrees must be a Royal Arch Companion and a Mark Master Mason.

Meetings are held in “Councils” and the Royal Victoria Allied Masonic Degrees Council No. 87 was consecrated in Nassau on 24th January 1978. The Grand Bahama Council No. 232 also meets in freeport.