



Province of Northamptonshire & Huntingdonshire



Royal Arch Province of Northamptonshire & Huntingdonshire

2024/25 Newsletter Number 1

To: All Royal Arch Companions

1. SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER ANNOUNCES NEW GRAND SUPERINTENDENT

SGC have announced that E Comp Mark Constant, PDepGSwdB, P3rdProvGPrin, Craft PGM will succeed E Comp Jim Boughton as Grand Superintendent on 1st February 2025. E Comp Jim Boughton will step down as MEGS on 31st January 2025. No Investiture date for our new MEGS has yet been set.



E Comp Mark Constant was Exalted in to Royal Arch Masonry and Euston Chapter in 1998, serving as Euston Chapter's MEZ in 2008. Also a member of our First Principals' Chapter 3422, he served as its MEZ in 2023. E Comp Mark served as Third Provincial Grand Principal (3rdProvGPrin) from 2015 to 2018.

A strong supporter of the Royal Arch E Comp Mark is, of course, currently Provincial Grand Master of the Craft Province.



E Comp Jim Boughton was Exalted in to Royal Arch Masonry and Pemberton Chapter 3039 in 1997, serving as its MEZ in 1996. He is also a member of Whytewell Chapter 8400, serving as its MEZ in 1995 and our First Principals' Chapter 3422, serving as its MEZ in 2022.

E Comp Jim was appointed Second Provincial Grand Principal (2ndProvGPrin in 2017 and Grand Superintendent (MEGS) in 2018. During his term in office as MEGS he has shepherded the Province through the COVID-19 shutdown, implemented the Royal Arch Ambassador scheme, and most recently introduced a new Exaltation ritual, which has been approved by SGC for limited use within the Province.

2. MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Companions,

You will have read earlier in this newsletter that I will be standing down as your Grand Superintendent on 31st January 2025 and I offer my congratulations to E Comp Mark Constant on his forthcoming appointment.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as your Grand Superintendent and will always be grateful for all the goodwill and support extended to me during my tenure. However, all good things come to an end and after some 17 years working at a Provincial level, including 4 as a Craft AsstProvGM, a year as 2ndProvGPrin and 7 years as your Grand Superintendent, I felt that the time is right to step down.

Anyway, back to business. The Festive Season is almost upon us.



One Journey One Organisation



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Prostate Cancer Testing Session Ellindon Centre, Peterborough Saturday 8th February 2025



Prostate Cancer Testing Session Corby Masonic Centre Saturday 5th April 2025

Yes, are we into December already, the man in red is checking his sleigh and reindeer and school plays are all around us, time really does fly by, or is that just because I am getting old! I would rather like to think that it is because we are enjoying ourselves., something we should all strive for within our Chapters and for me a deeper understanding of our ritual, ie what an earth is it all about?, always helps with enjoyment.

To this end may I suggest one seriously considers the article by Dr Christopher Clark. There really is some good stuff in Solomon.

Well, what has been happening during the first part of this season.

Northants and Hunts Restructured Ritual

Back in May I wrote of my reconstructed Exaltation Ceremony that had gained much interest and support from members of the High Rulers Executive at Supreme Grand Chapter. Some will already be aware that I have subsequently been given permission to use it within this Province albeit with a careful and well structured adoption pathway. The first Exaltation using the Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire Ceremony took place on 9th September at Pemberton Chapter, my Mother Chapter. 65 Companions witnessed what for me was a very special moment and to date all comments have been very favourable as there is no new wording to learn, the 'story' is more coherent and it can all be done in less than 45 minutes. Supreme Grand Chapter are in regular contact with me and are watching with interest. During my recent conversations in Great Queen Street I was informed that of the numerous alternative submissions mine was the only one to be given permission for a trial. I did indicate that I had a number of Chapters keen to adopt it, however, it was also suggested that I should not go 'rogue' Therefore the structured adoption plan suggested by Supreme Grand Chapter will continue and I ask that those Chapters keen use it be patient.

Archway

At a recent meeting of Principals and Scribes E from across the Province I introduced 'Archway'. This is an interactive support tool created by Supreme Grand Chapter who are keen to see its' adoption and use by Chapters and Provinces throughout the Constitution. It is designed to assist Companions in ascertaining the 'health' of their Chapter and subsequently offers suggestions as to what might be done, via examples of good practice from around the Constitution, in order to improve. I strongly encourage all Chapters to investigate the potential of this aid designed and promulgated by Supreme Grand Chapter and look forward to receiving, via the Companion nominated as the Chapter Single Point of Contact, their considered response to this initiative from Supreme Grand Chapter.

PSA Screening

I am grateful to Graham Minett, PGStB, ProvGChStwd and his team for once again organising and running our annual PSA testing for signs of Prostate Cancer. Please make sure that, one way or another, you get screened for this common cancer among men. Early diagnosis saves lives.

Recruitment

We continue to encourage more and more MM's to complete their journey through Pure Antient Freemasonry and I offer my sincere thanks to all who are out and about talking to MM's about the Royal Arch. Our Royal Arch Ambassador Scheme is now fully embedded with every Lodge having a dedicated Ambassador assigned to it, identifiable by the new lapel badges (see below). However, the recruitment of new Companions is not the sole prerogative of the Ambassadors and we must all continue to strive to maintain, or indeed increase, this steady stream of new members whilst at the same time doing all in our power to reduce our losses if we are to succeed in our Membership Challenge (see below). To this end we must all keep an eye out for the tell-tale signs of an imminent resignation, to make contact with a Companion whose attendance is, shall we say, irregular or indeed non-existent; simply to enquire if all is okay, to demonstrate that we care.

Festive Board

By now you may well have heard of the change to the first Toast at the Festive Board.

'The King and Pure Antient Masonry'

This is in response to a request from the Pro.1st Grand Principal who is keen to demonstrate the indissoluble link between the Craft and the Royal Arch, One Journey – One Organisation'. The wording of the Toast was confirmed personally by the Pro 1st Grand Principal on the 12th November. He has charged this Province with trialling this Toast and the PGM and I are pleased to support him.



Supreme Grand Chapter
Annual Investiture
London
Thursday 1st May 2025



Provincial Grand Lodge
Thursday 15th May 2025
Sheaf Close, Northampton



Provincial Grand Chapter
Monday 16th June 2025
Sheaf Close, Northampton



I think that about covers it all and it only remains for me, on behalf of the Executive, to wish you all a peaceful and enjoyable Festive Season and we look forward to seeing you again in the New Year.

3. NEW RA AMBASSADORS' LAPEL BADGE



Royal Arch Ambassadors may now more easily be identified. A new lapel badge specially designed for their role has been issued to them.

The badge is of an eye-catching design, symbolising the indissoluble link between the Craft and the Royal Arch, and was created by E Comp Mike Walsh, ProvGStwd of St John's Chapter 3972.

RA Ambassadors provide a valuable link between Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters. They offer advice and guidance on the Order in general and Chapters in our Province in particular.

4. MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE UPDATE

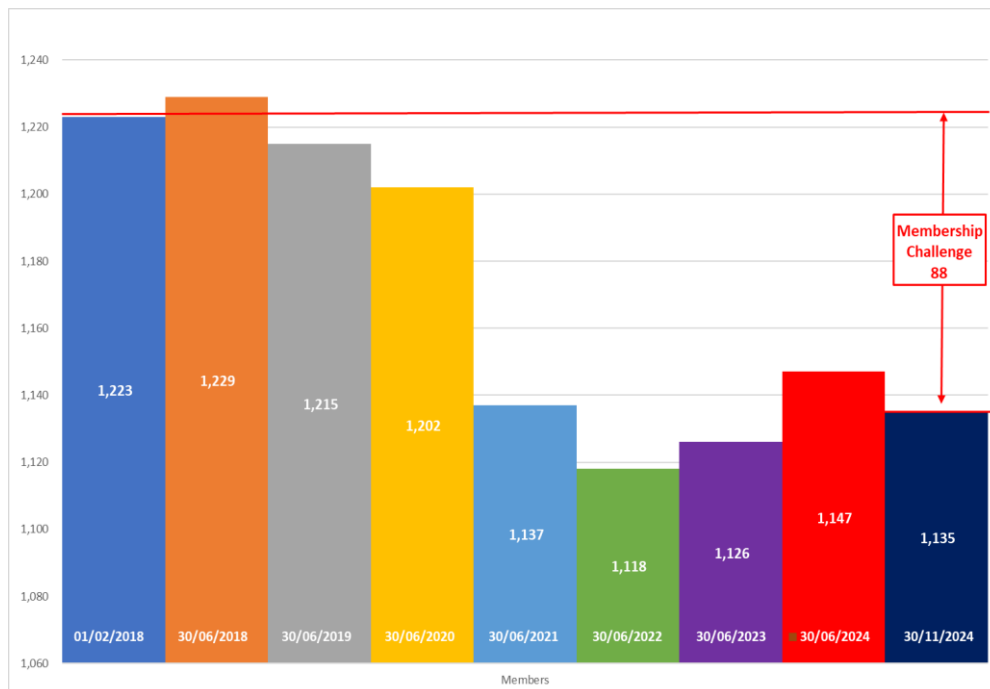
In 2022, the Pro First Grand Principal launched the Membership Challenge across Freemasonry. The Membership Challenge measures the gap in membership from a predetermined point in the past to the current day.

We have started our Membership Challenge from February 2018, the point at which our current Grand Superintendent took office. The Covid years took a heavy toll on our numbers and although there was a modest increase initially, there followed a drop of some 8.5% in the first 5 years, the bulk occurring during the cessation of Masonic activity during 2020.

As we approach the mid-point in our current season, I can advise you that our membership now stands at 1,135.

Below is a plot of how we have progressed as a Province since we started our Membership Challenge.

I know there are many Exaltations in the pipeline with many of our Chapters. Indeed, we have a total of 47 Candidates showing on Hermes. If we can Exalt just 2/3rds of these this year and limit our losses to the bare minimum, we will have significantly clawed-back on our losses of the early years.



I am delighted to advise you that we now have NINE Chapters who have beaten their Membership Challenge:

Socrates	373	Euston	2283	Thistle and Rose	6644
Montagu	466	Gildenburg	2533	Piscator	7557
Chicheley	607	Pemberton	3039	Buckby Castle	8932.

Two other of our Chapters – St Peter’s 442 and Waynflete 4452 – are currently matching their membership number from 2018, so have a zero Challenge.

As we head to the Festive Season spare a thought for those members we have not seen for a while. Are they well? Why not contact them? I’m sure they would welcome a contact from their Companions. We miss their company.

Finally, Companions, have a great Christmas, New Year and a happy and healthy year ahead.

E Comp Mike Binsted, PGStB

Second Provincial Grand Principal

5. SOLOMON - FOSTERING CURIOSITY, DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING

Solomon: ‘**Learning – Education – Personal Development**’


2025 challenges and opportunities – Solomon developments and redesign

As the **Royal Arch** successes and achievements of 2024 fade from our memories we can look forward to the new challenges and opportunities that await us all in 2025. For many, the new season will include the completion of their masonic journey from the **Craft** to the ‘delights and enlightenment’ of the **Royal Arch**. For those already in the **Royal Arch** we have a year ahead with challenges and opportunities in our Chapters.

The entry point of **solomon.ugle.org.uk** takes the user directly to **Solomon**, or to the registration section for any new user to create an account to access the full and extensive array of material contained within Solomon.

Within Solomon (at **solomon.ugle.org.uk**) there are many links for the user to further review the various elements of their own personal journey through the **Craft** to the **Royal Arch**. Yet for any **Solomon** user who is part-way through their masonic journey, the request or suggestion is to go only into those modules (in **Solomon**) you have already covered in your masonic journey, so as not to ‘spoil’ what is yet to come!

The demonstration of the continuous link and pathway from the **Craft** to the **Royal Arch**, to form that essential and combined journey for us all through Pure Antient Masonry, can be readily be seen with the logo interlinking the chain of natural progression from the **Craft** to

the **Royal Arch**  which is being used on many documents within this Province and across Freemasonry in general, and readily demonstrates the ‘**One Journey–One Organisation**’ we are all on and through to our ‘essential’ **Exaltation** in to the **Royal Arch**!

The elements of the **Members Pathway: Plan, Attract, Engage, and Retrieve**, being part of the direction developed in the **Craft** recently, can also be seen in the extension to the **Royal Arch**, for all **Craft** masons, through **Archway**, as launched by SGC – but more about this in the months and year ahead!

It is hoped you enjoy the Christmas and New Year break before the work for 2025 is upon us all, and in the meantime that you also enjoyed the updates and new elements contained within **Solomon** (at **solomon.ugle.org.uk**).

E Comp Dr Christopher R Clark, PGStB

Provincial Grand Mentor

You can keep abreast of matters Royal Arch (and Craft) in the Province by signing-up to the Provincial website. Not already signed-up? Here is the web address you need:

[//www.northants-huntsmasons.org.uk](http://www.northants-huntsmasons.org.uk)

The next Royal Arch Newsletter will be published in March 2025

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