

## **ROYAL ARCH FREEMASONRY**

The Story of its Emergence and Development to 1817

By L.M. Sherwood

### **PART 1 – PROEM**

Companions, my subject demands that we dissociate our minds from our present practices which are the result of developments made in the last 100-150 years. To facilitate the re-orientation I will give as background a brief picture of England and of Masonry in the early 18th century.

To put things into perspective I mention that Royal Arch Freemasonry was emerging in England at about the time of the birth of English navigator, James Cook, he who discovered our shores in 1769.

It will be recalled that following the mighty constitutional changes effected in England in the late 17th century the rule of law was established. The humanism that resulted secured for the individual freedom from arbitrary interference by authority and religious tolerance. This political revolution was confirmed by the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. In this climate of political stability, in London, in 1717, four Lodges (three of them mainly operative) "constituted themselves into a Grand Lodge" having in mind to organize the enjoyment of Masonry in the cities of London and Westminster.

Following the constitution of this the premier Grand Lodge there arose a great clamour for admission to Masonry. By 1721 seventeen additional Lodges sought admission to the roll. By 1729 the original four Lodges had grown to 54 (42 in London, 11 in the Provinces and 1 in Spain) in 1738 there were 179 Lodges enrolled. This growth continued until, by 1813 there were 647 Lodges. Other Grand Lodges came into existence; two in England that did not flourish (at York in 1724 and South of the River Trent in 1779); in Ireland in 1730 and in Scotland in 1736 both the latter adopted English ceremonies and regulations and prospered. Freemasonry was established in France and Holland by 1725 and had reached America by 1730.

But what of the state of Masonic ceremonies? The view of H. Carr (Q.C. Lodge Summons for 22 June 1972) is that from about the 1300s there had been one degree: that of the "fellow of craft", i.e. a fully trained Mason. There is, he says, reasonable evidence that in the early 1500s there were two degrees; Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft or Master. The third degree made its appearance at some date between c.1711 and c.1725.

All was not happy in English Freemasonry. There were Lodges that refused to acknowledge the Grand Lodge. There were the Traditioners who refused to accept ritual changes ordered by Grand Lodge. More importantly there was a large body of Masons, Irish immigrants, who considered that they had been treated by the premier Grand Lodge with indifference. A schism resulted. The dissidents seceded and, set

up, in 1751, a rival Grand Lodge adhering, they said, to the "Ancient practices". They became known as the "Antients" and, by reflection, the original Grand Lodge became known as the "Moderns". The opposing Grand Lodges united in 1813.

Against this background let us look at the emergence and development of Royal Arch Freemasonry.

My story will be divided into nine parts, namely:

1. Proem
2. The Emergence
3. Source Theories
4. Development to 1766
5. Development after 1766
6. The Union of Moderns and Antients
7. Postscript
8. Epilogue
9. Bibliography

It will be noted that in this paper I have referred to the Royal Arch as a degree thereby following New South Wales and Scottish practice. England now refers to it as an Order.

## **PART 2 - THE EMERGENCE**

The emergence will be portrayed chronologically by list cardinal dates:

1717: To this date there had been no reference in any surviving Masonic document of the Royal Arch (or the Hiramic) legend.

1720: A great burning of Masonic records (Anderson's 1738 Constitutions p.111) that may have destroyed early definite references to the Royal Arch.

1720-1732: Indications in catechisms and other writings that something was taking shape that might have been the Royal Arch in embryo. Knoop and Jones, on p.282-4 of "The Genesis of Freemasonry" refer to such. They are discussed also in Section 3 of B.E. Jones's "The Book of the Royal Arch".

1723: Anderson (1723 Constitutions Regulation 11) referred to the authority of a Master of a Lodge to form its members into a Chapter. But this is now believed to be no more than a dissociation of the 1723 Lodges from the "confederacies made by the masons in their chapters assembled" prohibited by the mediaeval ordinances of Edward IV and Henry VI. In any case, 1723 Regulation X makes Chapter and Lodge synonymous.

1726: The year of the Graham MS which gives evidence of the existence of the Royal Arch element in Freemasonry (Grantham: A.Q.C. lxxiii, 73).

1743: Something called a "Royall Arch" was carried in procession by two "excellent" masons at Youghal in Ireland (Franklin's Dublin Journal, 10/14 January 1743). It has been suggested that what was carried was a small ark common among early Royal Arch furnishings. However, the Youghal minutes make no reference to the Royal Arch. 1743: There is a writing purporting to be a copy of minutes of Lodge Stirling Kilwinning (in Scotland) of 30 July 1743 recording the admission of two brothers as Royal Arch Masons. Geo. Draffen, Librarian of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, has searched other old records and believes the aforesaid minute to be genuine (B.E. Jones: Book of the Royal Arch 1957, p.47).

1744: The year of the earliest positive written record. Dr. F. Dassigny in his "A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the cause of the present decay of Freemasonry in the Kingdom of Ireland" referred to "a certain propagator of a false system" who promulgated a "ridiculous innovation" available only to those "who have passed the chair" under title of Royal Arch Masons. From this document it is also learned that in 1744 (and probably earlier) Royal Arch Masonry was worked in London, was known in York and was introduced lately into Dublin. Although Dassigny was not a man held contemporaneously in high esteem yet most Masonic scholars seem to accept his statement concerning the Royal Arch as authentic, in particular Hughan. As Eric Ward says, it is almost a breach of Masonic tradition for a writer on this subject not to quote Dassigny at length but I have a time factor (and printer's costs) to consider. Instead I would refer interested Companions to Hughon's "English Masonic Rite" p.74-5 and, for a less full quotation, to the readily obtainable B.E. Jones's "Book of the Royal Arch", p.45.

1745: A copy of the By-laws of Stirling Kilwinning Lodge dated 14 May 1745 prescribes the fees for conferring the Excellent and Super- Excellent Degrees (which qualified for the Royal Arch). This proves conclusively that the Royal Arch in its essentials, if not in name, was known to Lodge Stirling Kilwinning at that time (Saunders: A.Q.C. liii, 42 and Knoop ibid p.121).

1746: Lawrence Dermott (later the most prominent member of the Antients Grand Lodge) became a Royal Arch Mason in Dublin (Hughan: "English Rite" p.121).

1751: The Royal Arch was adopted by the Antients Grand Lodge on its inception. (They are said to have worked it first in 1756.)

1752: First Antients written references to the Royal Arch. On 4th March and 2nd September "every part of real Freemasonry was traced and explained, except the Royal Arch".

1753: A date in every American history of the Royal Arch. On 22 December 1753 three Brethren were "raised to the Degree of Royall Arch Mason" at Fredericksberg, Va.

1754: The year that Dunkerly, prominent Moderns Freemason, said (in 1792) that he had the Royal Arch Degree conferred upon him.

1757: 2nd March: A summons to "the Masters of the Royal Arch".

1758: 7th August: The earliest record of an actual working in England in a Bristol minute book.

From the above list of cardinal dates it will have been observed that there were several references to the practising of the Royal Arch degree in the 1740s. This was in places far apart when considered in the context of the slow communications of that time. I think that this, coupled with the earlier allusions to what may have been the embryo of the degree, must be accepted as evidence that the degree must have existed previous to the 1740s possibly as something complementary to an inconclusive and, therefore, unsatisfactory third degree.

### **PART 3 - SOURCE THEORIES**

The Royal Arch Degree emerged and spread in the first 60 years of the 18th century. This also was the period when many hundreds of new side degrees and rites unfolded. There can be little doubt that most of these were fabricated. Some of the theories of the source of the Royal Arch suggest similar invention. I have classified the source theories into eight groups each of which will be discussed below:

#### **The Theory of English Origin:**

As Speculative Freemasonry evolved there was available to it a fund of legends which could be drawn upon to inculcate some lesson or to justify some ceremonial act. For example, F. Radice (A.Q.C. lxxvii, 202-5) suggests that the Hiramite degree and the Royal Arch were derived from a common source but developed on different lines. In support of this he quotes indications of such in the Graham MS of 1726. He also gives a list of 24 items of evidence of early existence in England of essentials of the Royal Arch.

Ward (A.Q.C. lxxv, 131) also believes that the Royal Arch took shape in England partly by resurrecting old legends to which new material was added. He refers to Lawrence Dermott's confidence that the Royal Arch preserved ancient practice.

Songhurst (A.Q.C. xxxiv, 5) evolved a chain of evidence suggesting that in 1717 England had some knowledge (which was subsequently lost) of what was to become the Royal Arch degree.

Hughan (English Masonic Rite, pp.73 and 90) says the Royal Arch working indicates early 18th century characteristics. He says that the germs of the Royal Arch were included in the Master Mason degree which was elaborated between 1717 and 1735 contemporaneously with the development of the Hiramite Legend. However, B.E. Jones (Book of the Royal Arch, pp.20 -3) argues that the source of the Royal Arch degree was not the English Master Masons degree. I like the compromise suggestion already quoted that the origin was English and that it was evolved to complete an unsatisfying third degree.

### **The Theory of Scottish Origin:**

Knoop and Jones ("Genesis of Freemasonry, 280-1) theorize that the germ of the Royal Arch degree may be found in the secrets and ceremonial connected with that part of the Scottish Mason Word which Masters had restricted to themselves.

### **Rosicrucian Origin:**

The original Rosicrucians were in England in the 17th century. The rite died concurrently with the birth of Speculative Freemasonry.

Two items have suggested a Rosicrucian source for the Royal Arch. Firstly several R.A. symbols were also Rosicrucian symbols. Secondly, the Rosicrucians used the secret vault story of Philostorgius (364-425 A.D.) which has a remarkable similarity to the Royal Arch vault story as we know it. But, in so far as that Philostorgius's story was published also (in Latin) by Callistus in 1551 and in English in Lee's "Orbis Miraculum or The Temple of Solomon Pourtrayed " in 1659 it need not necessarily have come from the Rosicrucians.

### **Continental Origin:**

There have been many suggestions of a Continental origin, with and without amplification in Britain later. For example: the Royal Order of Scotland emerged at about the same time as the Royal Arch. Coil, ("A Comprehensive View of Freemasonry", 1954, p.98) suggests that both probably originated in France as adaptations of other side degrees. He says: the basic theme of the English Royal Arch and the 13th degree of the Royal Order, called the Royal Arch of Solomon, are the same but the rituals are dissimilar.

H. Carr ("The Early French Exposures", 1971, pp.318 and 332) refers to allusions in two exposures (of 1747 and 1745) that could refer to the Royal Arch.

B.E. Jones states that through many of the new French degrees there ran a vault story and the Ineffable Name ideas that some English editor might have taken to innovate a Royal Arch rite, Jones also points out, as does Refern Kelly (A.Q.C. xxx, 12) the resemblance of certain degrees of the 25 degree French Rite of Perfection (now called the Antient and Accepted Scottish Rite of 33 degrees) to the Royal Arch degree, a similarity that may not be purely fortuitous.

Dr. Oliver, notably a prolific Masonic author who, according to one caustic commentator, "got some things right", asserted definitely that the Royal Arch degree was fabricated by Chevalier Ramsey, an active Scottish Mason who spent many years in France, who brought it to England about 1740. H.W. Peck (1xxx, 31) though recognizing his unreliability, sees no reason to doubt that Oliver might not be right in thinking that Ramsey came to Britain from Paris about 1740 with news of the Royal Arch which he put before the dissident Brethren who afterwards became the Antients. However, Batham (1xxx, 314) says Ramsey had severed his connection with Freemasonry some years prior to 1740. Ramsey's name was also connected with the Royal Arch through two versions of his Oration (1736 and 1737) wherein he referred

to the Israelites building the Second Temple at Jerusalem at the same time as they had to defend themselves "with the sword and buckler" (Batham A.Q.C. lxxxix).

Haunch (A.Q.C. lxxxix, 79) points out that the records of the Portuguese Inquisition indicate clearly that Coustos "knew nothing of anything like the Royal Arch degree otherwise one feels he would have elaborated on what he said". This fact seems to give the lie to the theory that the Royal Arch degree was developed in France sometime before 1740s. Coustos, an active Mason, had lived in France sometime before he proceeded to Portugal where he was arrested in May 1739 for breach of the 1738 Papal Bull in that he practised Masonry. After imprisonment and torture he was tried before the Inquisition starting in 1743. Not long ago the full report of that trial was made available to English Masonic students.

Furthermore there is no extant record of early working of the Royal Arch degree in France; indeed, the Royal Arch never at any time flourished in France (or Germany).

Thus the one time popular theory that the Royal Arch had its source in France would seem to be unfounded. The most that one could say would be to agree with Carr (A.Q.C. lxxxix, 214) that certain characteristic features of the Royal Arch ceremony were known on the Continent before 1745, in the middle of the period of extensive invention of new degrees.

### **Royal Arch a Replacement of the Scots Master Degree:**

There was a Scots Master Degree born in France in Jacobite (therefore, Roman Catholic) circles. It appeared in Southern England in the 1730s. The theme of the degree was the discovery of a lost word in a vault. The political climate in England at that time was not favourable to anything of Jacobite origin so the degree was dropped. Immediately the Scots Master disappeared the Royal Arch emerged.

Some students theorized that some essential material from the Scots Master passed into the Royal Arch. But there seems to be little evidence to authenticate the theory.

(References: E. Ward, A.Q.C. lxxv, 160-3; J. Stokes, "Royal Arch Masonry" 1924; B.E. Jones, "Book of the Royal-Arch" p.40; R.F. Gould, "History", ii, 457.)

### **A Templar Succession:**

In the first half of the 18th century there were vague references to an association between the original Order of Knights Templar and Freemasonry, e.g. in Swift's "Grand Mistress" of 1731 and in Ramsey's Oration of 1736-7. Klein (A.Q.C. xxxii, 42) says that there is much in the ceremonies of the Royal Arch and the Masonic Templars that indicate at least that both were derived from the same source; i.e. the Knights Templar of the Crusade times.

Later the Masonic Templars who had no supervisory body (hence no charter or warrant) tended to gravitate towards the Craft Lodges that they might have attachments of stability. The Grand Lodge of York after its revival in 1761 permitted a Templar degree to be worked in Lodges with the Royal Arch, making five

recognised degrees. The Templar degree was worked unofficially in other English Lodges. But nowhere was there such close association between the Templar and Royal Arch degrees as in Scotland. This obtained despite the displeasure of the Grand Lodge of Scotland which had censured its Lodges for working Templar degrees, even for associating with Templars at the Masonic laying of a foundation stone (Gould: History iii, 67 and 72). "In Scotland the additional degrees were in the first instance wrought by Lodges and afterwards more often in Encampments" (Gould: History iii, 73). The 16 degrees concerned (named in Gould *ibid.* 74) were divided into groups which were distinguished as blue, red, green, black and white Masonry. When in 1817, the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland was formed, the Grand Chapter took over the management of the non Christian degrees that had been contained in the series known as red and green (hence the two Great Banners seen in Scottish Chapters are red and green). The Christian series, i.e. the remaining groups, came under the charge of the Templar Encampments. Additionally, for some years, the Encampments also conferred the Royal Arch degree. (From 1845 the Scottish Grand Chapter included also the Mark degree.)

A further indication of the close association of the Templar degrees and those of the Craft and Royal Arch is contained in Article II of the Union of the Antients and Moderns Grand Lodges in England which provided that any Lodge or Chapter might hold a meeting in any of the degrees of the orders of chivalry according to the constitution of such orders.

This persisting close association between the Masonic degrees of Royal Arch and Templar and certain similarities in workings has led many students to look for a common origin, that of the Order of the Temple, 1118-1314. Thus arose the phrase, Templar Succession.

### **Summary:**

Just as children of our generation were curious to know where their younger brothers and sisters came from so the relatively young Freemasons of yesteryears were intensely interested in from where the much loved sister degree of the Royal Arch issued. All the source theories summarized in this Part makes clear the existence of such curiosity. For myself I am happy to accept the observation of Chetwode Crawley, quoted in MacKay's *Encyclopaedia* (1956) ii, 883: ... "It (the Royal Arch degree) is not a separate entity, but the completing part of a Masonic legend, a constituent ever present in the compound body, even before it developed into a degree. If the Royal Arch fell into desuetude, the cope stone would be removed and the building left obviously incomplete."

### **PART 4 - DEVELOPMENT TO 1766**

It is time to introduce Lawrence Dermott: Born in Dublin in 1720, initiated 1741, Master 1746, Royal Arch Mason the same year, all in Dublin. He came to London in 1747 or 1748 and immediately espoused the cause of the dissident Irish Masons already in England. The dissenters opposed principally the transposition of the pass

words of the first and second degrees (aimed to counteract the irregular making of Masons with the help of the exposures) and disapproved of the premier Grand Lodge's refusal to recognise the Royal Arch degree. They had begun to organize themselves about 1739, set up a Grand Committee in 1751 which became a Grand Lodge in 1753 with the installation of a Grand Master. Dermott was Grand Secretary.

The new Grand Lodge had the abbreviated name of Antients and the original Grand Lodge came to be called the Moderns. This schism affected greatly the rise and development of the Royal Arch because of the opposing attitudes adapted to the degree.

### **Attitude of the Moderns:**

The premier Grand Lodge consistently refused recognition of the Royal Arch degree as being part of Ancient Masonry holding it to be an unapproved innovation and contrary to the Grand Lodge resolutions of 24 June 1723 and 21 November 1724. The first outlawed "any alteration or innovation in the Body of Masonry" and the second condemned Brethren who met irregularly.

The following story exemplifies the attitude of the Moderns. In 1759 a Brother applied to the Moderns Grand Lodge for relief and, thinking it would strengthen his case, stated he was a Royal Arch Mason. This is the reply that he received from the Grand Secretary, Samuel Spencer ... "You being an Antient Mason you are not entitled to any of our charity. The Antient Masons have a Lodge at the Five Bells, in the Strand, and their secretary's name is Dermott. Our society is neither Arch, Royal Arch, or Antient so you have no right to partake of our charity."

### **Attitude of the Antients:**

The Antients adopted the Royal Arch degree from their inception in 1751. This is proved from their records dated 4th March 1752 and September 2nd 1752. In 1756 Dermott said: "The Royal Arch I firmly believe to be the root, heart and marrow of Masonry, the perfection and consummation of the third degree".

Ahiman Rezon, their Book of Constitutions, described the Royal Arch as a fourth degree: ... "This degree is certainly more august, sublime and important than the three which precede it and it is the summit and perfection of Ancient Masonry. It impresses on our minds a more firm belief of the existence of a Supreme Deity without beginning of days, or end of years, and justly reminds us of the respect and veneration due to that Holy Name." (Quoted from edition of 1807.)

Also the degree was considered an asset by the Antients in so far as they were able to offer candidates four degrees as an integral part of Craft Freemasonry in contrast to the three offered by the Moderns.

### **The Popularity of the Royal Arch Degree:**

Antients Masons delighted in the degree. Members of Moderns Lodges and of independent Lodges that acknowledged jurisdiction by neither Antients nor Moderns

Grand Lodges also were attracted. Sundays were the popular days for Royal Arch meetings and remained so until 1811.

Gradually Moderns Lodges began to work the Royal Arch. Their Grand Lodge was not at all hostile (its enmity was all for the Antients Grand Lodge). This lack of hostility to the degree was evidenced by the large number of prominent Moderns Masons who took it including Grand Secretary Spencer and, on 11 June 1766, the Moderns Grand Master, the 9th Lord Blaney.

The need for organization of Royal Arch matters soon became obvious to the many Moderns who were also Royal Arch Masons. Accordingly, a former Antients Lodge, called Caledonian, was given a Craft charter by the Moderns Grand Lodge in 1764. Attached to this Lodge was a Royal Arch Chapter also called Caledonian; the Chapter probably ante-dated the Lodge. Caledonian Chapter had a short life but a successor was born. At first this new Chapter had no name but it came to be called the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter. The first minute book of the E.G. and R. Chapter starts on 22 March 1765. By-laws were made on 12 February 1766. In the early pages of the minute book is a self-conferred charter indicative of thoughts of Grand Chapter status. (The story of the Excellent and Grand Chapter is to be found in A.Q.C. lxii, 165-182 and lxiv, 136-7 and Jones "Book of the Royal Arch, Section Six.)

The Moderns had substantially the same workings as the Antients, the Zerubabel rebuilding. (Knoop liii, 33) says the different legend now associated with the Irish Royal Arch probably was not adopted until after 1751 because, had the Irish worked the Josiah legend then, the Irishman Dermott surely would have adopted it for the Antients. (Another source says the Irish adopted the Josiah story in 1757.) B.E. Jones remarks that in the 18th century the degree had a decidedly Christian character and continued thus right into the 19th century; indeed even to-day discernible traces of Trinitarian influence remains in the current rituals.

By the 1760s the Royal Arch was well established in York, London and Lancashire in England, in Ireland and Scotland and in Boston, America. Even Glasgow had a Lodge called Royal Arch, chartered in 1755 by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, but to its members' disappointment it was not permitted to work the Royal Arch degree.

At this time the degree was still worked in Lodges, the principal officers of the working being Master, Warden and Secretary. We get the first mention of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in 1765 but its members were not referred to as Companions for another 10 years.

## **PART 5 - DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1766**

Immediately after his exaltation by Thomas Dunkerley Lord Blaney, G.M. became, by an unrecorded resolution or automatically, First Principal of the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter. He presided over the next three meetings, all held in July 1766. It would seem that at the meeting of 22nd July a Charter of Compact was agreed upon. Subsequently it was engrossed and signed at various times by 30 Excellent Masons

including the Dukes of Manchester and Pignatelli who were not exalted until February 1778. After the meeting on 30 July 1766 Blaney did not attend the E.G. and R. Chapter again. Nevertheless a precedent was established - the Grand Master could also be Head of the Royal Arch, as has been the case in England ever since 1817.

The Charter of Compact was a manifesto instituting and protecting The Grand and Royal Chapter of the Royal Arch of Jerusalem in the work of a grand chapter. (A picture of portion of the Charter with its irradiated triangles may be found facing p.172 of A.Q.C. lxiv; a transcription of the manifesto may be seen at A.Q.C. lxiv, 173-5 and in Jones "Book of the Royal Arch pp.272-5.) There had been some monkeying with the date of the Charter of Compact and for many years it was thought to have been signed first on 22nd July 1767 but Dashwood's scrutiny of the E.G. and R. Chapter minute book proved conclusively that 22nd July 1766 was the correct date.

No use was made of the Charter of Compact for nearly three years. At the meeting of the E.G. and R. Chapter on 14th October 1769 the Charter was resurrected. Laws and regulations were promulgated in preparation for the issue of charters to new chapters. Of the first four Chapters chartered on 14th July 1769 two are still working; three others were chartered later in 1769 and these too are still working (A.Q.C. lxxi, 56). It is of interest to note that each Chapter was also called a Lodge:

The Cana Lodge or Chapter of the First Miracle;

The Bethlehem Lodge or the Chapter of the Nativity;

The Lodge of Intercourse or Chapter of Unanimity;

The Lodge of Hospitality or Chapter of Charity.

It is also of interest to note that the first minute book of the E.G. and R. Chapter nowhere alludes to the necessity for an exaltee to have been Master of a Lodge but at that time all Chapter members had been Masters. Nevertheless most Moderns Chapters were satisfied with a Master Mason qualification.

By 1785 the Royal Arch degree had spread steadily. Dunkerley had done much to promote it between 1778 and his death in 1795. For example, in those years he had ruled over 18 Provinces as Grand Superintendent and held that office in 17 Provinces at his death. Dunkerley was also prominent in the affairs of the Moderns Grand Lodge and in recognition thereof was awarded the rank of Past Senior Grand Warden in 1786. Yet the Moderns Grand Chapter was completely separated from the Moderns Grand Lodge.

By 1785 the E.G. and R. Chapter saw a need for the separation of its two functions, i.e. (1) that of a private chapter and (2) that of a Grand Chapter warranting private chapters. Accordingly it revived the moribund Restauration Chapter as an exalting Chapter and styled itself 'The Grand Lodge of Royal Arch Masons'. In 1801 this title was changed to 'The Supreme Grand Chapter'. But when, in 1810, the Duke of Sussex became head of the order he was styled 'The first Grand Master of Royal Arch Masons'.

At the end of the 18th century there were 126 Moderns Chapters (against 83 Antients) but some Craft Lodges were still working the Royal Arch.

Even so on 21 November 1792 the Grand Lodge of Moderns resolved "that the Grand Lodge of England has nothing to do with the proceedings of the Society of Royal Arch Masons". In reply the supreme chapter ruled that no Royal Arch Mason who had been exalted in a Lodge could be admitted as a member of or visitor to a Chapter under its jurisdiction. Yet, as Part 6 will tell, official hostility was greater than that of the body of Masonry.

### **The Antients Grand Chapter:**

Within the Antients Grand Lodge the affairs of the Royal Arch degree were supervised by a committee. But the Moderns having set up a governing body, the Antients felt compelled to do likewise. Accordingly, a nominal Grand Chapter was established in 1771 but there are no minutes relating to its meetings until 1783.

Lawrence Dermott, mentioned in Part 4, was pre-dominant in the Antients affairs; he was Grand Secretary 1752-71 and later Deputy Grand Master for 11 years. He died in 1791.

The government of the Royal Arch by the Antients was by Grand Lodge through the Grand Chapter. The Grand Chapter had no independence of action. The following Grand Lodge minute of 4 December 1771 exemplifies this: "... expatiated for a long time on the scandalous method pursued ... in passing ... Brethren through the Chair on purpose to obtain the Sacred Mystry's of the Royal Arch. And proved in a concise manner that those proceedings were unjustifiable ...", yet the Antients maintained the "Passed the Chair" qualification for exaltees.

In 1793 a Chapter calling itself 'The Grand and Royal Chapter of Emulation' set itself up to take over from the Grand Lodge "the management of Royal Arch Masonry". The attempt proved abortive and the G. and R Chapter of Emulation disappeared.

From 1770 onwards the influence of the Antients became paramount in America and hence the early spread of the Royal Arch across the Atlantic. The first Grand Chapter in the United States was formed in 1798. The Antients requirement of a "passed the Chair" qualification continues in some American jurisdictions.

### **At York:**

The Grand Lodge of All England at York (constituted 1724) was revived in 1761. It lingered on until the end of that century. It recognised the Royal Arch degree as part of Craft Masonry thereby permitting it to be worked in Lodges.

### **In Ireland and Scotland:**

The Royal Arch existed in Ireland in the 1740s. Despite its popularity in Ireland no Grand Chapter came into being until 1829. An attempt to give the Irish Grand Lodge control of the Royal Arch degree in 1805 failed. It was not until 1931 that the Grand Lodge of Ireland (formed 1725) did acknowledge the Royal Arch as part of "Pure

Ancient Masonry". However, there existed a close association between the Lodges that worked the Royal Arch in Ireland and the Antients Grand Lodge in England.

It is known that there was a Royal Arch Lodge in Scotland in 1743. The Scottish ceremonial is believed to have been imported from England. The Grand Lodge of Scotland, like the Grand Lodge of Ireland, was hostile to the Royal Arch. Because of such hostility there was no Grand Chapter in Scotland until 1816 when it brought under one management:

(1) the Chapters working in connection with Craft Lodges and

(2), as said earlier, the Royal Arch and allied degrees worked by the Templars.

The Grand Chapter of Scotland excluded Chapters working in Scotland under the jurisdiction of English Grand Chapters. The latter operated independently until 1861 by-when all had been dissolved.

### **Elsewhere:**

Except that the Royal Arch was worked in Portugal, Spain and Rumania in the 19th century (and later in Central and South America, Guam and Japan) it had little attraction for people who did not speak English. Chapters in France and Germany, for example, did not survive for long.

## **PART 6 - THE UNION OF MODERNS AND ANTIENTS**

Though the official attitude of the Moderns Grand Lodge was one of enmity to the Antients Grand Lodge yet the acceptance, in fact, of the Royal Arch degree by members of both Grand Lodges did much to reduce the fundamental differences between them.

By 1790 moderate Masons began visiting Lodges of the second jurisdiction. Thoughts of union were spoken. Prominent in this regard was Lord Moira.

After the Moderns, in 1809, re-transposed the pass words of the first and second degrees back to their original positions union of the two Grand Lodges was discussed as "a most desirable end" and serious negotiations began.

In November 1813 the intention to amalgamate was announced. On 27th December of the same year Articles of Union were signed. The Royal Arch was acknowledged but no provision was made for the governing of the Royal Arch. Both Grand Chapters had disappeared with the union of the two Grand Lodges.

During the period November 1813 to March 1817 there was no meeting of any Grand Chapter in England but subordinate Chapters continued to meet and to exalt candidates. There was in fact opposition to a union of Grand Chapters and it was not until 18 March 1817 that differences were resolved and union effected. The Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England came into being. Its rules provided that every Chapter must be associated with a Craft Lodge and none but those who had "passed the Chair" might become Principals of Chapters. That still obtains. Also, up

to 1902, only Principals and Past Principals might be present at the opening of a Chapter.

At the Union the masterly method of reconciling the opposing views relating to the status of the Royal Arch is worthy of comment. The relevant declaration said: firstly, Pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more; and then includes a fourth, namely, the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch. Such satisfied the Moderns who did not recognise the Royal Arch as a fourth degree and satisfied the Antients in that it gave recognition to the Royal Arch. The choice of words which imply that the Royal Arch is part of the three degree system were adept in that they provided the elixir of life and philosopher's stone that promoted union. Nevertheless, some of the English workings provide that it shall be said to the candidate at a concluding stage in the ceremony: ... "You may perhaps imagine that you have this day taken a fourth degree in Freemasonry; such, however, is not the case, it is the Master Mason's completed." The same caution is to be found in the Installation Ceremony in Lodges where the "Extended Workings" are used (e.g. Revised Ritual pp.286303). When the Master Elect is presented to the Bd. of I.M. the Installing Master must warn the candidate that he is not about to have an additional degree conferred on him. To emphasize this point no certificate is issued to an English Installed Master. However, both Moderns and Antients issued Royal Arch certificates and this has continued after the Union (II Misc.Lat.xvi,24).)

## **PART 7 – POSTSCRIPT**

The Supreme Grand Chapter of New South Wales was constituted on 25th June 1899. It succeeded the English Constitution District of New South Wales. The first English Chapter dated from 1854 and the District from 1861. When the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales was set up in 1888 the English Lodges were absorbed. Thus there being no English Lodges in N.S.W. with which the Chapters might be affiliated the English charters were withdrawn and those Chapters came under the jurisdiction of the new Supreme Grand Chapter of New South Wales. Because the source of our Grand Chapter was the English Royal Arch a few additional remarks about English Royal Arch after 1817 might be appropriate.

Of the 372 Royal Arch Chapters in England at the time of the Union only 120 survived. Following an initial regression numbers began to increase. In 1971 there were 2776 E.C. Chapters operating, 149 having been added in the previous 10 years (1971 Masonic Year Book).

The attachment of English Chapters to Lodges has had the effect that nearly 40% of Master Masons become also Royal Arch Masons; compare this with about 13% in New South Wales, a number too small to be divided between two jurisdictions? The qualifying period in England was 12 months a M.M. until 1893 when it was reduced to 4 weeks. It is, I believe, only in England that there is a nexus between Craft Lodges and Chapter jurisdictions, in all others the two jurisdictions are completely separated. It certainly is so in Scotland, Ireland, the United States and most Australian States.

Despite the Union there is no unanimity in England in respect of ritual. Following the Union a Dr. Browne was given the job of re-casting the ritual in 1834 but his version had little acceptance. Twenty years later a Chapter of Promulgation to spread Browne's ritual was set up but it had no better success. The result is that to-day England has six principal workings (Aldersgate, Standard, Domatic, Metropolitan, Complete and Midland); seven minor workings (Bristol, Emulation, Stability, Logic, West end, Oxford and Genesius) and about seven other lesser known formularies. No one ritual is granted greater authority than another but if adopted must be worked without addition to or subtraction from it. The differences in working one from another are of a minor and unimportant nature as are the differences between the 30 or 40 extant English Craft Rituals. N.S.W. Supreme Grand Chapter adopted the Oxford ritual in the belief, G.S.E. told me, that it was THE English ritual. It is likely that the English Chapters in N.S.W. had the Oxford working and this was the source from which that working passed to the N.S.W. Supreme Grand Chapter.

## **PART 8 – EPILOGUE**

Royal Arch Freemasonry to-day is a highly respected world-wide observance yet like other rites of Freemasonry it possesses a paucity of reliable records through which its origin may be verified exactly. For example, it cannot be established whether the Royal Arch was fabricated out of existing degrees or whether it was a new creation in England or whether it was imported thither.

If it were a new creation or imported, did it incorporate old-time legends known to the Masonic fraternity? We do not know definitely.

If it were a development out of an existing degree or degrees, was it the original concluding part of the Master Mason degree? Of this I think we can be sure. It was not. If it were so the Moderns would have worked the Royal Arch in fact, though there were differences in detail the M.M. degree was much the same in each the Moderns and Antients Lodges. Secondly, the 18th century exposures would at least have given an indication that such was the case.

Finally, did the Royal Arch, like the first two Craft degrees, issue from Operative Masonry? It is thought not.

Perhaps one may surmise that at the time the 1717 Grand Lodge came into being there was considerable variations in ceremony, in traditions and legends and perhaps much dispute in respect of what was proper. Inevitably, attempts to co-ordinate matters would lead to compromise and so, perhaps, give birth to essential elements of the third degree or Royal Arch or both. The ultimate result has been the perfection of the Master Masons degree.

My last sentence shall be to applaud the zeal of the Antients in their promotion of the degree in the second half of the 18th century, culminating in 163 Chapters being warranted between 1800 and 1813 and the acceptance by and continued promotion of the Order by the United Grand Lodge of England.