

Details concerning the constituent Councils are given in the Masonic Year Books. Candidates for admission into the Order must have been exalted in a Royal Arch Chapter and Advanced in the Mark Degree. It is not necessary, however, that candidates should have reached the Chair in Craft or Royal Arch Masonry or in the Mark Degree.

Application for membership can be made through the Recorder of a relevant Council or the District Grand Recorder.

Contact districtrecorder@rsm-southwales.org.uk for more details

COUNCILS IN THE DISTRICT

Council	No	Meeting Place
Glyntaf Council	40	Cardiff
Merthyr Tydfil Council	120	Merthyr Tydfil
St. Augustine Council	122	Penarth
Henfynyw Council	137	Aberaeron
Prince of Wales Council	140	Llanelli
Port Talbot Council	147	Port Talbot
Cartref Council	169	Swansea
Mynwy Council	196	Newport
Giraldus Cambrensis Council	225	Llanelli
Ambat Zaphan Council	287	Swansea



**DISTRICT OF SOUTH WALES
ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS**
www.rsm-southwales.org.uk



THE DEGREE OF ROYAL & SELECT MASTERS

The Order of Royal & Select Masters was constituted in England in the early 1870s. The first book of Constitutions and Regulations being issued in 1874. The Order of Royal and Select Masters of England and Wales, and its Districts and Councils overseas, is governed by the Grand Council which meets annually in April at Mark Masons' Hall, London, from which it is administered, with powers deputed to District Grand Councils.

This order originated from four degrees earlier worked in America. These four degrees were the Most Excellent Master, Royal Master, Select Master and Super excellent Master. Collectively they form a connection between Craft, Mark and Royal Arch Degrees.

The Royal & Select Degrees continue the Solomonic story for a period of approximately four hundred and twenty years from the period when the Word was lost until it was recovered in the manner explained in the Holy Royal Arch Chapter. Originally, these degrees, also known as the Cryptic Degrees because of their association with the secret vault or crypt, were not communicated in chronological order. In the 1990s the order in which the degrees were communicated was revised and re-arranged in a strict chronological order which enables the meaning to be more clearly appreciated and assimilated.

Cryptic Masonry, as with so many Orders and Degrees in Masonry, encompasses the main steps in the allegory of the Lost Word and deals with certain aspects of the Hiram Legend not dealt with elsewhere. It is enriched by many passages of beautiful and moving ritual equal to that of any other Degree and is commended by students of Masonic ritual as one of the Orders not to be overlooked in the search for Masonic knowledge.

Having been Raised a Master Mason, Advanced as a Mark Master Mason and Exalted as a Companion of the Holy Royal Arch of Jerusalem, worthy Brethren may perceive a gaping omission in the

chronology lent to the legend of the building, destruction and rebuilding of the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. Within the ritual of the Craft in general and the Third Degree in particular, we are informed of the loss of the Word, brought about by the untimely demise of Hiram Abif, one of the three Grand Masters, shortly before the completion of the first edifice. The quest for the Word, the Tetragrammaton, or at least the pronunciation thereof, is the essence of Masonic ritual.

The Degree of Mark Master Mason, as a natural continuation of the Fellow-craft, culminates in the symbolic completion of the Temple with the placing of the all supporting keystone in the principle arch. Following a period of 470 years and the release of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, a discovery of some importance is made by Three Sojourners whilst preparing the ground for the second temple. The story unfolds through the ritual of the Holy Royal Arch of Jerusalem.

The Order of Royal and Select Masters, also referred to as 'Cryptic' Masonry, goes some way to provide the vital missing link, by explaining the measures taken by the two remaining Grand Masters not only to preserve the means of pronunciation, but also to safe-guard the Holy Vessels and Sacred Treasures from the catastrophe prophesied to befall the city of Jerusalem and its fabled Temple.

The Order of Royal & Select Masters consists of four Degrees and the present order of conferring the degrees is Select Master, Royal Master, Most Excellent Master and Super Excellent Master and the historical period covered by these degrees is ended shortly before the period spoken of in Royal Arch Chapter. On admission, one is said to be "Chosen" as a Select Master and during the ceremony the candidate is decorated with the breast jewel of a Companion of the Order. During the fourth and last Degree, one is invested with the distinctive, triangular apron of the Order. A Companion reaching the Chair of Council is styled "Illustrious" and one year after leaving the Chair is eligible for appointment as an Officer of District Grand Council.



The degrees may be briefly explained thus:

Select Master: The most important Holy Treasure in the Temple, which plays an intrinsic part within the ceremonies, was the Ark of the Covenant. A copy of this and other treasures were eventually to be placed in the into the Secret Vault, or Crypt, whose very existence was known to but a Select few involved in its construction, beneath the Holy of

Holies.

Royal Master: Work on the Temple is nearing completion and some of the Overseers are anxious as to when they will receive the Master Word. A certain favourite ventures to enquire of our Grand Master, Hiram Abif. The disquisition that ensues is rightly regarded, by those duly qualified to pass comment, as the most enthralling and spiritually uplifting passage of ritual to be found anywhere in the whole of Freemasonry.

Most Excellent Master: Our Grand Master has been murdered and indecently interred according to ancient usage. - but life goes on. The Temple has been completed and the Ark of the Covenant installed in the Holy of Holies. King Solomon prepares to consecrate and dedicate the edifice to the Deity in all its glory and beauty. It is an appropriate time to bestow a distinguishing mark of approval for services rendered.

Super Excellent Master: Time has moved on nearly 400 years and the fortunes of the Israelites take a downturn. With the vast Babylonish forces of Nebuchadnezzar threatening Jerusalem, the vassal King Zedekiah and his subjects make their respective plans for their inevitable fate.



In structure the Order has Councils which are arranged in Districts, each under the aegis of a District Grand Master who is responsible to the Grand Master and Grand Council. The Order is administered from Mark Masons Hall. The District Grand Council for South Wales covers the three Craft Provinces of South Wales Eastern Division, South Wales Western Division, and Monmouthshire. The District of South Wales consists of 10 Councils situated in Swansea, Llanelli, Aberaeron, Port Talbot, Merthyr Tydfil, Penarth, Cardiff and Newport.