

The Order of Royal and Select Masters is open to all Master Masons who are also Companions of the Royal Arch and Mark Master Masons.

The four Cryptic Degrees, conferred in a Council, are described as follows;

Select Master

This builds on the Mark Degree. It explains the background to the construction of a secret vault (or crypt) directly beneath the Holy of Holies of the Temple. In this vault copies of the most sacred treasures were to be placed to preserve them in the event that the Temple should be destroyed. The construction of the vault is carried out by a few Select Masons, sworn to secrecy and appointed by the three Grand Masters.

Royal Master

This takes place within the Holy of Holies very shortly before the completion of the Temple. Hiram Abif inadvertently explains to one of those Select Masters, Adoniram, why the Master Word will never be lost. This disclosure is made in what many consider to be the finest and most beautiful piece of Masonic ritual.

Most Excellent Master

This degree covers the final stages in the construction of King Solomon's Temple and its dedication. King Solomon rewards those most skilful workmen, including those who assisted in the construction of the secret vault, with the title of Most Excellent Master.

Super Excellent Master

This degree covers the invasion of Jerusalem, the siege and fall of the city and the eventual destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews are removed to Babylon where they remain in captivity. After a period of seventy years the Jews eventually return to Judah to begin the construction of the second Temple as described in the Holy Royal Arch.

Regalia of the Order

The Regalia of the Order of Royal & Select Masters is unique from other degrees in Freemasonry due to its triangular form. The Triangle is of course an emblem of the Deity and holds particular significance for Freemasons.

On completion of the first Cryptic Degree, Select Master, a Companion is invested with the jewel of the Order, pictured right, which consists of a skeleton equilateral triangle of white enamel, surmounted by a gold Imperial Crown suspended from a crimson ribbon.



On completion of the remaining three Cryptic Degrees, he is entitled to wear the distinctive triangular apron of the order, pictured left, which is of white kid with a border of crimson silk edged with gold braid.



Officers of private Councils wear crimson collars, from which is suspended a gilt jewel of the emblem of their office. As pictured right.

The Thrice Illustrious Master of a Council wears a similar apron with the emblem of the office of Master embroidered in the centre. The apron of a Past Master has a slightly different emblem. A District Grand Officer wears a crimson collaret, from which is suspended a gilt jewel of the emblem of their office, pictured on the right.



A Grand Officer's apron (*embroidered with the badge of his rank*) and collar are edged with gold lace. The ribbon of the breast jewel is edged with white.

The Order of Anointed Kings More commonly known as The Order of the Silver Trowel

The Order of Anointed Kings degree, more often referred to as the Order of the Silver Trowel, was introduced to this country in 2009. Membership of this Order is restricted to those who have been installed as Thrice Illustrious Master. The District Grand Master recommends one Installed Master from each of his District Councils, and each of his recommendations has to be personally approved by the Most Illustrious Grand Master.

Within the North Midlands District this degree is worked and conferred at a regular meeting of the Emeritus Council of Past Masters No 244 of the Derbyshire District, recipients of the degree are entitled to wear a hallmarked Silver Trowel pinned to the flap of their apron, point downwards.



Chronologically, the Order of the Silver Trowel degree precedes the Select Master degree. It covers the final, and dying, days of King David and his desire that his son, Solomon, should be anointed King after him. The lesson taught in this degree is Truth and Fidelity.



Excellent Master Degree

It has been agreed with the Masonic authorities in Scotland that the Degree of Excellent Master, otherwise known as the Passing of the Veils, may be conferred under Grand Council of the Order of Royal and Select Masters.

The ceremony may be considered as emblematic of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and of their return from Babylon to Jerusalem. The decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild their Temple was given in 538BC, the year after he had taken Babylon and is the setting for the Excellent Master Degree

Candidates for the Degree in this Order must have previously received the Order of the Silver Trowel. Admission to this degree is strictly limited and by invitation only. All prospective candidates must have the approval of the Grand Master.

Those members of the Royal and Select Master, who have previously taken the Excellent Master Degree elsewhere, such as Scotland, are able to "affiliate". Application may be made to Mark Masons' Hall for a fee, and it will be necessary to produce a copy of the certificate received from the Masonic authority which conferred it.



words "Excellent Master".

Those who have the Degree conferred upon them by the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters, as well as those who affiliate, will be presented with a breast jewel. This jewel, which is worn to the left of the Royal and Select Masters jewel and consists of an interlaced five pointed star suspended from a ribbon, striped white, light blue, crimson, purple and white, with a Royal and Select skeletal triangle superimposed and bar at the top with the

Councils within the District

Nottinghamshire Council No. 81
Goldsmith Street, Nottingham

Lincolnshire Council No. 82
Sleaford, Lincolnshire

Sword and Trowel Council No. 129
Gainsborough, Lincolnshire

Philadelphia Council No. 144
Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire

Hirst Priory Council No. 229
Crowle, Lincolnshire

Major Oak Council No. 230
Worksop, Nottinghamshire

Trent Council No. 242
Chilwell, Nottinghamshire

Alford Council No. 326
Alford, Lincolnshire

Prince Rupert Council No. 385
Newark, Nottinghamshire

Emeritus Council of Installed Masters No. 244
District of Derbyshire is open for Past Masters of
the North Midlands District
Belper, Derbyshire

For more information Contact

The District Grand Recorder
III.Comp. G.E.Jones

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Tel; 0115 920 0109

District Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters; North Midlands District



The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of England and Wales and its Districts and Councils Overseas was formally constituted on 29th July 1873 by four Councils, chartered just two years earlier, by the Grand Council of New York. They

organised themselves into a Sovereign body under the Patronage of the Rev. Canon G.R. Portal, a Past Grand Master of Mark Master Masons, who was Installed as the Grand Master of the Order. By the turn of the century there were twenty seven Councils and a similar number Consecrated by the end of the second world war. The Order then grew rapidly, the number of Councils on the roll in 2018 being over 340.

The degrees of the Order are often referred to as the 'Cryptic Degrees', and the Order sometimes as 'Cryptic'. The ceremonies complete the Solomonic legend as they prove the essential link between the degrees of Mark Mason, the Raising in Craft, and The Royal Arch.

The degrees in date sequence are:

974–967 BC	Preparation of materials and the start of building of the Temple; [Mark]
969–968 BC	Building progressing and construction of a secret vault; [Select Master]
968 BC	Death of Hiram Abif; [Royal Master and Raising in Craft]
967 BC	Dedication of the temple; [Most Excellent Master]
586 BC	Destruction of Temple, the word is lost; [Super-Excellent Master]
538 BC	Return to Jerusalem and Rebuilding of the Temple; [Excellent Master]
534 BC	Discovery and Recovery of the word; [Royal Arch]