

**THE ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER  
AND ITS PLACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
IRISH FREEMASONRY**

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Candidates for Freemasonry are told that no discussion on religion or politics is permitted in Lodge or at Festive Board, to maintain the Peace, Love and Harmony that should always prevail inside the Lodge. However, at one time this was not the case and external Political, Religious, social and economic issues were to cast their shadows within our meetings and nowhere was this more greatly felt than in the Irish Constitution.

When on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1690 (or by the old calendar the 1<sup>st</sup> of July) William Prince of the House of Orange-Nassau, later William III, defeated James II of England (This victory is still celebrated annually throughout "Ulster" and in parts of Scotland, by the Orange Order, even today) both victor and vanquished left Ireland never to return. Not all James' Irish supporters followed him into exile and there was still strong support for the Jacobite cause in Ireland which was to have an effect on Freemasonry in Ireland up to the final defeat of Charles Edward at Culloden in 1746.

According to the French Grand Orient it was from among the Irish supporters of the exiled King James that the first Masonic Lodge in France was formed, most probably from the ranks of Welsch's regiment. If the first French Freemasons had been loyalists over the next century many gradually lost their trust in not only the King but in the Church. Therefore when the Paris mob stormed the infamous but empty Bastille on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789, which marked the start of the French revolution, many of its leaders were also Freemasons. The republican sentiments of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" were to spread all over Europe like wildfire and an age of revolution was born. "Liberty" especially for the disenfranchised in Ireland was to lead to the formation of the United Irishmen and a split within the membership of Grand Lodge. Under such leaders as Lord Fitzgerald, in the South, younger brother of the Duke of Leinster Grand Master of Ireland and Brother Henry Joy McCracken in the North they rose in an ill conceived revolt against the Crown. In the North East, especially counties Antrim and Down, the Scotch/Irish Presbyterians and their Catholic neighbours united in the common cause, among them many Freemasons who were to pay the ultimate price for their folly.

The 'Age of Revolution' was to see an attempt made to break the link between State and Church, nowhere was this to be so clearly seen as in the currency of the of the former English Colonies of the what is now called "the United States of America". The majority of the founding fathers of this new republic were Freemasons, Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and Adams (the writers of the Constitution were not only Freemasons but of Scotch/Irish stock). Many researchers have noted certain Masonic Symbols on the Dollar bill especially on the obverse, the wording in 'God We Trust' is the same as we all have used on our entry into the Order but over the truncated pyramid is 'Annuity coeptis novus ordo seculum' (toward a more secular society) and this was to start alarm bells ringing in the Holy See. Freemasonry was to become perceived as the worst threat to the powers of the Vatican since the time of Martin Luther. As a result three Popes had issue Bulls against the order between 1738 and 1821. These had largely been ignored by Catholic Freemasons in Ireland. However, with the appointment of a the new Archbishop, Tory, to Dublin in 1824 the fourth Bull 'Qui Pluribus' issued by Pope Pius IX and 'Humanum Genus' issued in 1825 by Pope Leo XII were vigorously enforced. At one fell swoop the number of Masonic Lodges in Ireland was halved. Masons like Daniel O'Connell, a supporter of the United Irishmen was forced to leave the Order and over the years that followed the effect was far more wide reaching as the two denominations had no longer any common ground to meet and Irish Nationalism was to take on the sectarianism it still has to this day. Freemasonry was not only pilloried by the church but became to be seen as part of the English and Protestant ascendancy. I am pleased to say that gradually over the last few years this is beginning to be rectified and younger Catholics are beginning once again to join the order. Yet another, but natural, disaster that was to have a devastating effect on the whole of the island of Ireland, was the failure of the potato harvest in the years 1845-48, known as the "Famine". Potatoes had long been the staple diet of the poor and peasant classes and the aftermath was wide spread emigration. It has been said that up to 1950 the biggest export from Ireland was her people.

One other feature of Irish Masonry is its rural nature, many halls are in quite isolated locations. The lodge meetings in some of these Halls are still governed by the date of the full moon to enable the members to find their way home by its light. Many of the old minute books make reference to hedge masons, usually when the brother is seeking relief and there is even a suggestion of hedge Lodges (i.e. one not holding a

Warrant from any governing body) a reflection of which is found in the old term of abuse applied to a Brother who was not too good at his ritual "Where were you made a Mason ? Behind a hedge ?" Although most large towns have a Masonic Hall (we rarely use the term Temple) Belfast is the only city to have more than one Hall. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Belfast became not only an important port but the centre of the linen trade. As the industrial revolution evolved, other industries such as shipbuilding and heavy engineering developed, drawing more and more country people into its black embrace.

It is against this historical background that a Grand Lodge was to operate from its founding in Dublin, in 1725, (the title of the Grand Lodge of Ireland was not used until 1729) but there is good evidence to suggest that Freemasonry was being worked prior to that date. The Baal's Bridge Square discovered in the foundation of a bridge, of the same name, in Limerick in November 1830, dating from 1507, which bears the following inscription:

' I will strive to live with love & care  
upon the Level and the Square'

That great Irish Masonic Historian Brother Chetwode Crawley discovered the existence of a "speculative" Lodge in Trinity College Dublin as early as 1688. Proof is to be found in the 1688 'Tripos' prepared and read by a Candidate bachelor called John Jones a close friend of Dean Swift ( perhaps better known as Jonathan Swift the author of Gulliver's Travels) which contains the famous line:

'... for Sir Warren, for being made a Freemason the NEW way, five shillings'.

Swift himself is credited with being the author of many Masonic pamphlets a line of one reads:

'Mathematics resembles a well built Arch, Logic a Castle: and Romances Castles in the air' .

Although officially the Grand Lodge, in Dublin was formed in 1725, Lepper and Crossle in their book the 'History of the Grand Lodge of Ireland', suggest that the date may be as early as 1721/22, The date of 1725 is taken from a newspaper of the day, 'The Dublin Weekly Journal' No.13 issued 26<sup>th</sup> June 1725, and mentions the installation of a new Grand Master.

Many of the early records of Grand Lodge were lost, during what was to become known as 'the Seton revolt' when the then Deputy Grand Secretary, Alexander

Seton set up a Rival Grand Lodge 'The Grand East of Ulster' in Dungannon (Co. Tyrone). Grand Lodge may have lost its early records but the Ulster dialect gained a phrase "Come in Dungannon, I know your knock". It must be remembered that Dublin, in 1725, was the seat of the government in Ireland and any Freemasonry within the city and the Pale would have been strongly influenced by the English workings of the day. However, this new Grand Lodge met with no opposition, which is surprising, as the province of Munster was to form its own Grand Lodge a year later 1726, this Grand Lodge did not unite with the body in Dublin until 1730. Brethren, to this day the Masonic Province of Munster has its own working and any Scottish mason who visits will immediately feel at home. The port of Cork had long establish trading links with Bristol which as English Masons will know also has different workings to that found in the rest of their Constitution!

The first Grand Master of Ireland was Lord Kingston and if we look at his Masonic career we might be able to discern in it the reason that the formation of Grand Lodge went so smoothly. Lord Kingston was initiated at the 'Swan and Rummer' in 1726 by Dr. Desaguliers and during the period 1729-1731 he served as Grand Master in England, Munster and Dublin. Perfect uniformity of working between these three bodies, when one and the same man could simultaneously preside over the three constitutions, must not be deemed to have existed but the essential points of each degree must have been in harmony so that an English Brother could prove his status to an Irish brother and vice-versa. Much the same position occurred during the schism in the Grand Lodge of England when both Ancients and Moderns were permitted to visit Irish Lodges.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century all degrees were worked under the Blue Warrants, this included among others the Royal Arch and Knight Templar degrees and there are many certificates still in existence with the appropriate Blue, Red and Black ribbons and seals attached.

The degree of Royal Arch Chapter was well established in Ireland by 1754 as recorded in 'Faulkner's Dublin Journal' 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> July under the heading 'St John's Day celebration by the Lodge in Youghall No21':

*'Imprimis*, Sword drawn. The first Salutation on the Quay of Youghall, upon their coming out of their Lodge Chamber, was the Ships firing their guns with their colours flying,

*Secondly*, The first was a Concert of music with two Sentinels with their Swords drawn,

*Thirdly*, Two Apprentices, bare headed, one with a twenty four Inch gauge, the other a common Gravel,

*Fourthly*, The Royal Arch carried by two excellent Masons Etc.'

One of my predecessors in the Irish Lodge of Research, V. Ex. Comp. Crossle , published in the 1923 'Transactions' of the Irish lodge of Research No.200 presented the definitive analysis of early Irish workings and it is worth quoting these at some length as it shows that in Ireland at a surprisingly early date not only was the Hiramic legend and the Royal Arch degree being worked, but also a separate Chair degree. Crossle set out three distinct periods for the expansion and working of the various degrees in Ireland.

### **First Period**

This refers to a system first described by Pennell in his 1730 Constitution where three grades or degrees were worked thus:

1. Apprentice or Brother ,
2. Fellow Craft ,
3. Master's Part, not confined to the chair .

Numbers 1 and 2 seem to have embraced ceremonies up to and including the Hiramic degree. That is Pennell's agreeing with our present Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft: and his Fellow Craft with our current Master Mason Degree. Indeed if one thinks about it, in to-days M.M. degree we are really a lodge of Fellow Craft. Number 3, Pennell's Master's Part apparently comprised the essentials of a ceremony subsequently elaborated into our present Installed Masters degree, the Royal Arch and the Red Cross Mason Degree (Perhaps better known to Scottish and English Masons as the Red Cross of Babylon or the Red Cross Knight or Babylonish Pass) .

## Second Period

As the royal arch grew in importance in Ireland, the above degrees were maintained, but their names were changed. These changes are first noted in Dublin between 1750-1760, slightly later in the more rural areas. The names of the degrees were as follows:

1. Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft (one degree) more usually referred to as Entered and Crafted,
2. Master Mason,
3. Royal Arch.

Here we still have a system of three degrees only Pennell's 'Apprentice' became known by a composite name. His 'Fellowcraft', having lost its former significance, ceased to represent a specific degree. The name only, was joined to the first degree merely to preserve it from becoming extinct. Number 2, Pennell's 'Fellow Craft' was re-christened the 'Master Mason' while Number 3, the Masters Part was also re-christened Royal Arch.

The purport of the degree which we in Ireland, now call the Installed Master's Degree, must have been a portion only of Pennell's 'Master's Part' and appears to have been merged in the ceremony known by the general name Royal Arch. The Ancients, in England set such store by the Chair Degree, that they refused to confer the Royal Arch upon any Mason who had not previously been installed as a Master, it must be remembered that their Grand Secretary Laurence Dermott was an Irish Mason and that this same regulation was abolished in the Irish Constitution in 1864. The writer goes on to draw attention that the Mark Degree was not known in 18<sup>th</sup> century Ireland! The degree was introduced to Ireland by John Fowler after a visit to America and was first worked by Lodge No.2 in Dublin.

## Third Period

This is the period when our Deputy Grand Secretary was Rt. W. Bro. John Fowler, of whom I will have more to say later but suffice to say he carried out a series of drastic reforms to the Irish Degree system these only came to an end in the late 1840 with four major groupings of Irish Degrees. These developed as follows. I will deal only with the first three as they are germane to, to-day's paper:

1. Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason ,

2. Past Master Excellent Mason, Super Excellent Mason, Arch Mason  
Royal Arch Mason ,
3. Ark Mason, Mark Fellow Mason, Mark Mason, Link Mason or  
Wrestle, Babylonian Pass ( or the Red Cross of Daniel ), Jordan Pass,  
Royal Order ( or Prussian Blue ) ,
4. High Knight Templar etc.

Of the degrees named in the above table, the Past Master, now known as the Installed Master, is only conferred upon a Master Elect of a Lodge as he is installed. In the chair of a Lodge. The degrees of Excellent and Super Excellent are now incorporated into the veil ceremony of our Royal Arch Chapter Degree. Of the third series only the Degree of Mark Master Mason is still worked, all other degrees have long ago fallen into disuse, however some have found their way into the Black Institution which constitute the Higher Degrees of the Orange Order. The above appears to bear out the conclusion of Brother Revd. Neville Barker Cryer that, at one time the Royal Arch Degree may have formed part of a more elaborate 'Chair' degree. It may be considered the conclusion of the Third Degree agreeing with with 'the Concordat' that ancient masonry consists of three degrees, the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, the Master Mason and the (Holy) Royal Arch.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century was a momentous one not only for Ireland but for Irish Freemasonry, with the 1800 Act of Union, Ireland would no longer have her own Parliament but be ruled by a Viceroy from Dublin Castle which resulted in Irish and English Masonry becoming more closely linked. In the past decades it had not been unusual for the two Grand Lodges to have alternated Grand Masters (As I have already shown). The closeness of this link has cause many to remark that if the United Grand Lodge catches cold the Grand Lodge of Ireland sneezes! But this is not exactly true!

In the 1800's the popular theory was that the Royal Arch was invented by Laurence Dermott, in England, to enhance the prestige of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, and the material was obtained by mutilating the original third degree, but this is now completely discredited. Dermott, was born in Ireland in 1720, on reaching the age of 20 was initiated into Lodge No.720 Dublin, and was Master of the Lodge in 1746, receiving his Royal Arch degree the same year. The text of Dermott's book 'Ahiman Rezon' was adopted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland and up to 1820 all Irish Constitutions were published under that name.

All the earliest evidence concerning the Royal Arch so far discovered, is from Irish sources. Scotland however claims that Stirling Royal Arch Chapter has been working since 1743, but there is little evidence to back up their claim. The Grand Lodge of Scotland did not originally recognise the Royal Arch degree, and the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter was formed mainly by Companions who had received their degree in bodies warranted by the Early Grand Encampment of Ireland.

In England, however, the position is different, as the Craft and Holy Royal Arch are very closely associated. Our own rulers like those of Scotland appear to have forgotten that all three Grand Lodges are still bound by the International Compact of 1814,

'... pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, namely, the entered apprentice, fellow craft and Master Mason including the Supreme Order of the (Holy) Royal Arch.'

In Ireland for many years after the establishment of Supreme Grand Chapter the Principals of Grand Lodge, if Royal Arch Masons, were ipso facto the Principal officers of Grand Chapter Today this is not the case, although I am at a loss to know why a change was made there may well have been a valid reason at the time.

In 1805 the Grand Lodge of Ireland tried to exercise more control over the Higher Degrees being worked on the Craft Lodges by introducing Warrants to operate the same. The project of forming governing bodies to for these higher degrees including the Royal Arch Chapter was generally unpopular through the whole country however some of the oldest and most notable Lodges in Dublin, supported the motion and applied to Grand Lodge for Royal Arch Warrants. The numbers of these Lodges were, 6, 173, 141, 189, 190, 198, 202, 207, 324, 348 and 930. Of these 190 and 198, both founded in 1749, were each known the 'Royal Arch Lodge'. We may assume that all of these Lodges, twenty five in number, saw some necessity for introducing a controlling body. Grand Lodge issued a long circular, stating the reasons that had induced the Grand Lodge to take the higher degrees under its control and set a schedule of resolutions agreed to in September 1805. This schedule, was principally concerned with the government of the new Bodies to be called into existence. Many of the Northern Brethren had opposed these moves and twenty four years were to elapse before on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1829, a stated convocation being assembled in the Grand Lodge Room, according to notice some one hundred and sixty nine Dublin Lodges all with Chapters attached, formed a Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter, with the Grand



Master the Duke of Leinster as its 1<sup>st</sup> GRAND PRINCIPAL, John Norman, as GRAND SECOND PRINCIPAL, and William White as GRAND THIRD PRINCIPAL. It is interesting to note that up until 1958, the names of the Grand and District Grand officers were always 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> principals.

One Companion was to have a profound effect on Irish Masonry namely John Fowler. Fowler had already served as Deputy Grand Master between 1818 and 1824, and was to become Deputy Grand Secretary in 1834 from then until his death in 1856, was to become a veritable dictator on all matters of ritual. It was he who in 1814 took the initial steps towards safeguarding our ritual with the establishment of our Grand Lodge of Instruction on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January of that year at a meeting held on his own home No.106 Mecklenburg Street, Dublin .

The Dublin, Kingston Railway was opened, soon all parts of the island would become accessible from Dublin, bringing all subordinate Lodges more directly under the control of Grand Lodge. Before 1829 most Lodges had worked the Royal Arch Degree under their Blue warrant and it was not until 1856 that the last Lodge stopped this practice.

It was not until the year 1844 that the Grand Chapter took the Mark Master Degree under its control. Today the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter with its Head Quarters in 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin is still the governing body for the Irish Royal Arch Chapter with ten District Royal Arch Chapters in Ireland under its direct control as well as five overseas.

To-day the Mark Master Mason Degree is still the precursor to the Royal Arch Degree The workings are similar to those used in the other two Home Constitutions. From 1991 the Supreme Grand Chapter of Ireland made a change in the ritual, whereby a separate ceremony and night was introduced for the working of the Mark, degree at which **all** the Officers were installed and invested. Up until that date only the Very Worshipful Master had been installed, all other officers simply taking their places as shown on the circular, the Mark Degree only being worked as and when necessary.

Let us now consider the Irish Royal Arch Chapter as worked today. The only qualification is that the candidate has been a Master Mason of at least twelve months. The Irish Royal Arch Chapter as worked to day, is set at the repair of the Temple under Josiah, about 620BC, and is thus more true to the Biblical text of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles Chpt. 34 Verses 1-14. Companions, this is the reason that Irish Masons wear their

Aprons under their jackets as the repair took place at a time when Israel was at peace (a rare occurrence even to this day) we remove our Jackets, when we go to work. The other two Supreme Bodies set the degree some 100 years later when the Jews having received their freedom from Cyrus (King of Persia), return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel (this episode of Jewish history is worked in Ireland under the Grand Council of Knight Masons).

In Ireland most Halls follow the same design with the Lodge Room on the upper storey and a Dining Room and Kitchen on the lower. Therefore the Lodge Room will be changed to suit the Chapter working The room will be divided by four coloured veils blue, purple, scarlet and white, which are hung North South, and divide the room East to West. The colours not only parallel those of the Tabernacle the tent like structure that housed the Ark of the Covenant during the Children of Israel wandering in the wilderness but also the four ancient elements, air, water, fire and earth. All are guarded by Captains except the Captain of the White veil who is however known as the Royal Arch Captain. All have small Banners similar to the colours of their respective veils, on these banners is a six pointed star in the centre of which is a triple tau n.b. these are the **only banners** in an Irish Chapter. The white veil separates the Council Chamber from the rest of the room, the Superintendent of the Tabernacle sits inside the Council Chamber within the White veil and the Captain of the Host sits in front of the three principal Officers, named as the Chief Scribe, High Priest and the Excellent King, these represent Shaphan, Hilkiah and Josiah although they are never named in the ceremony. The altar is in its traditional place in the centre of the Lodge Room and will have a special compartment let into the top this will have a lid with a ring fitted to enable the crow bar to be inserted. Some Halls have a proper vault in the floor, unfortunately due to health and safety considerations they are rarely used to-day as they were intended. However, there is always a light to illuminate the magnificent plate of gold!

The ritual may appear simple to Scottish and English Companions, but it is worth giving a brief outline; before the chapter is opened the Ex. King will instruct any who are not Royal Arch Masons to retire, this is obviously retained from the time all degrees were worked under the Craft Warrants. After proving the Chapter tyled and guarded next the Captain of the Host is asked if he can vouch all present as Royal Arch Masons (No password is given) when the Captain of the Host gives this assurance the Officers of the Chapter are asked to take their places. The Captain is

next instructed to announce to the Companions to divide the word, **all** divide the word. In Ireland the word is the old tripartite one despite a move to change to the one now used in England and Scotland, a ground swell of opinion from the Irish Companions stopped this change. The Captain of the Host will have to assure the Ex. King that the symbols use in our ceremonies are safely preserved and duly deposited. After a prayer, during which the banners are lowered, the Chapter is declared open.

The degree is divided into two parts, Reception and passing the Veils and the Degree of the Royal Arch. The Candidate(s) are hoodwinked on entry into the chapter room, (it is preferable to have three candidates but a Companion can make up the number) they then pass under an arch made with the hands of the Brethren, then they take an obligation as a Royal Arch Mason after which they are conducted to the Blue veil where they are challenged by its Captain for the password, this being given by his conductor they are now admitted and instructed in the password and sign for passing the veil, This ceremony is repeated for the purple and red veils. The candidates are now admitted into the Council Chamber where they express their desire to help with the work of repairing the Temple the candidates having received permission to assist with the work leave the room. They return in the attire of workmen i.e. they are in their shirt sleeves and commence to clear the rubble with a spade, and discover the secret vault when the pick strikes its top to produce a hollow sound, and lift the ring in the top with the crow bar, if there is one candidate he will be figuratively lower into the vault to discover the items left there by our three Grand Masters which will be explained to him by his conductor. Brethren this is a much truncated version of the degree, there are no ceremonies at the festive board as in England ( I have attended the Aldergate Chapter as a guest of its former Scribe E.)

It is common to hear the Chapter referred to as the red, as the regalia as worn in the Chapter is **all** red and consists of an apron and sash worn from right shoulder to left hip, and in certain Chapters white gloves. As in the two other Home constitutions a member Jewel on a white ribbon may be worn but it is more usual to see the Past Kings one on a red ribbon and since 1991 a past V. W. Masters jewel is also permitted in Chapter but **it is not** permitted to wear Chapter jewels in Craft Lodges although most people would be too polite to pass comment on a visitor doing so. The inscriptions on a Royal Arch jewel are as follows, round the circle 'SIT TIBI SCIRE SATIS SI TALIA JUNGERE POSSI' ( If you canst unite such things thou knowest

enough). On five sides of the two triangles are inscribed in Greek, Latin and English (O, worshipper of God citizen of the world).

The Royal Arch Chapter is the key to all the higher and side degrees that Ireland can offer, which are far fewer than can be found elsewhere, the reason for this is a strange combination of people being in the wrong place at the wrong time and those who have read Knight and Lomas will have already heard one side of the story. In 1813 Augustus Frederick 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Leinster became the Grand Master of Ireland, The Dukes of Leinster were originally the Earls of Kildare until one married an illegitimate daughter of Charles the second and received as a wedding gift not only his English Title but some worthless coalfield in Newcastle upon Tyne and the family quickly became one of the richest landowners in Ireland. The Duke appears to have been a popular Grand Master, judging by the number of Lodge especially those outside the island named after him. He appears to have had a special relationship with the Deputy Grand Secretary, Rt. W. Bro. John Fowler 1827-1856, as already mentioned who carried out many missions on his behalf. His correspondence with the then Grand Master of England The Duke of Sussex, which is referred to by Brig. A. C. Jackson in his excellent book 'Rose Croix' the history of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales. Although Fowler considered himself the custodian of ritual in Ireland it was he who single-handedly removed most of the old side degrees.

In Ireland there are two side degrees above the Royal Arch, The Grand Council of Knight Masons and Great Priory of Ireland, as I have stated earlier the Grand Council work the story of the end of the Babylonian Captivity and the rebuilding of the Temple, up until 1924 these degrees were under the control of Grand Priory, when Grand Council was formed. To-day unlike the Grand Priory the Grand Council is open to non Christians. Above these degrees is Supreme Council of the 33<sup>o</sup> of the Ancient and Accepted right and membership is very strictly by invitation, it should be noted however that in Ireland the 28<sup>o</sup> Knights of the Sun is also worked.

Companions, no talk about Irish Freemasonry would be complete without a mention of the Loyal Orders, although I cannot stress too strongly that they have nothing whatsoever to do with Freemasonry, being entirely separate and autonomous bodies. I merely mention them as shedding some light on earlier workings of Freemasonry in Ireland. The Orange Order was founded after the Battle of the Diamond in 1759 ( battle is too strong a word, perhaps a local skirmish is the better description of this event) and was formed as a defence of the Protestant religion and

property against the attacks of their Catholic neighbours. Most of the founding members were Freemasons and, if we study their ritual as it is carried out to-day, we find the degree work is carried out by Lecturers, and not the Officers, the method of degree giving use in all Masonic Lodges under the Irish Constitution. This may explain that Officer in some French Lodge Office known as the Narrator. Yet another link with France ( In particular the Grand Orient ) is the change of the password on an annual basis. There is a degree worked in the Orange order called the Royal Arch Purple. I have made discreet enquiries about this degree, not being in the Order myself, and it has no parallel in the Masonic Degree system. Here the term Arch is two fold, as it is the last degree of the Orange system and the sign of God's forgiveness to the world .

I could go into a greater detail about the possible origins of the Royal Black Preceptor appearing as it did in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and sharing some of the degrees and symbols of the Masonic Order, but that is another story and would lead into higher things.

In this all too brief and hasty review, we have found many fields of enquiry all tending to show that the Grand Lodge of Ireland and its concomitant bodies, are no mere offshoots or poor relations of our larger sisters across the Irish Sea, but are in fact autonomous and indigenous bodies, whose influence on world Masonry far exceeds that imagined by many of our rank and file.

Finally, Companions may I draw your attention to Royal Arch Chapter of Research No.222 constituted on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1978, for the association of Installed and past Kings, who are subscribing members of Royal Arch Chapters under the Irish Constitution, to encourage research into the history, antiquities, symbols and ceremonies of the Order, by means of papers on such subjects and also by discussion. A correspondence Circle exists in connection with the Chapter for companions in good Masonic Standing and applications for membership in writing should be sent to the Registrar, if you are interested please speak to me before you leave.

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