

What a Candidate for the Rose Croix degree should know

The purpose of this leaflet is to advise aspiring members of the Order what the Supreme Council considers a member of the Craft should know before his name is submitted to a Rose Croix Chapter as a possible candidate for Perfection.

The Rose Croix of Heredom

The Rose Croix degree is one of the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, an Order of Freemasonry as old as the Craft itself. The Rose Croix degree is in fact the 18th of 33 degrees of the Rite. In the ceremony of joining a Rose Croix Chapter, a brother is 'Perfected' as a 'Prince Rose Croix of Heredom'. In England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, this degree is specifically Christian.

Our Order is governed by the 'Supreme Council 330 for England and Wales and its Districts and Chapters Overseas'. There are other Supreme Councils, for example, for Scotland. Full details of the requirements for membership of the Order are given in the 'Rules of the Supreme Council', but advice would be given by a Recorder (he is the Secretary of a Chapter) or any of the members.

Essentially a candidate must have been a Master Mason for **at least one full year** and be in good standing with the Craft and must profess the Trinitarian Christian Faith before he can be elected to this Order and he will be required, prior to any formal consideration of his candidature, to sign a declaration to this

effect. Further, he must have received his three Craft degrees in a Lodge or Lodges under The United Grand Lodge of England, unless otherwise authorised in the Rules of the Supreme Council.

As in other Masonic Orders, a member of a Chapter will be invited, over a period of years, to progress through a number of Offices in succession, should he so wish, before attaining the Chair as Most Wise Sovereign. The learning requirements of these offices are minimal. The ritual of the Chair requires more work but is usually shared throughout the year, the Sovereign conducting various different parts of the ceremony of Perfection at different meetings. It is not necessary to have been Worshipful Master of a Lodge before becoming Sovereign.

Some of the names of the Offices in a Chapter, for example, 'Captain of the Guard', are reminders of the days, long ago, when the Rose Croix degree was worked by the Knights Templar.

The Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite

The first three degrees are deemed to be equivalent to the first three degrees of the Craft. The Intermediate degrees, the 4th to the 17th, are conferred on a candidate by name just before the ceremony of the 18th degree. The King Edward VII Chapter of Improvement Demonstration Team demonstrates one or two of these Intermediate Degrees each year at

various places around the country. The degree of the Rose Croix of Heredom, the 18th, is the last of the degrees of the Rite that can be conferred by a Chapter.

Subsequent degrees are conferred by the Supreme Council of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General at the Headquarters of the Order, known as the 'Grand East', at Duke Street in London. Usually, members are recommended to be given the 30th degree after having served as Most Wise Sovereign of a Chapter, and having been a member of the Order for at least three years. The 19th to 29th degrees are again conferred by name. Promotion to the Higher Degrees, 31st, 32nd, and 33rd, is strictly limited to senior members.

The Ceremony

The VSL used in the ceremony is the Bible. The ritual is metaphor based on the first verse of St. John's Gospel (at which the Bible is open for most of the time) extolling the principles of Christianity. Almost every line of the ritual is either a direct quotation of, or Masonic allusion to, verses of the New Testament, culminating in Christ's words to the Disciples in St. John 13:34. The scriptural references tend to be tantalisingly brief, forever offering new insight for the Christian Freemason.

The last part of the ceremony incorporates 'a secular feast of fraternal rejoicing', whose origins pre-date even Christianity.

The Rose Croix in Surrey

There is only one Rose Croix district in the County, unlike some other larger geographical districts that are split in two. Our District is led by an Inspector General, and administered by a District Recorder who will always be pleased to give further advice.

The complete list of District Chapters and Recorders contact details can be found in the Supreme Council's Year Book or on the District website at: www.surreyrosecroix.org.uk

Regalia

The only regalia required initially would be the collar and jewel pictured overleaf. The significance of the symbolism in the designs of the collar and jewel is explained during the ceremony. The beautiful apron of the degree ceased to be worn many years ago; examples of aprons can still be seen in some Chapter rooms, perhaps being used as decorative cushion covers.

Dress worn is usually a dark suit and 'sober' tie with a white collar. (Some colourful shirts have been seen recently!) Some Princes do wear their Masonic morning dress, but wearing a black tie is forbidden; this is a degree of rejoicing rather than mourning. Higher degrees have their specific collars or sashes.

This information is based upon material used by the two Districts of Essex and we are grateful for their generosity in granting permission to use it.



District Recorder

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District of Surrey



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