

GRAND RANK – UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) is the governing body for freemasonry in England and Wales where the most senior officer is the Grand Master. He has a substitute or ‘Pro Grand Master’ to act for him if he is a member of the Royal Family. There is also a Deputy and an Assistant Grand Master. London and every masonic province and district has its own Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master and officers. At a national level Grand Officers are appointed in specific roles. Non active “Past” Grand Rank can be awarded as an honour. These Grand Ranks are generally repeated in the Provincial, District and Metropolitan Grand Ranks.

This leaflet is an overview for a general audience. The UGLE Book of Constitutions sets out these ranks in detail and is the definitive source if advice is sought from a masonic perspective. Regalia has been imperfectly recorded over the years and historically there have been many unofficial deviations – the Library and Museum has, for example, a provincial rank apron of the mid Victorian period that has large faceted brilliants around the central device and a collar which seems to have been improvised from the lace of an old Royal Marines coatee.

Collar Jewels of the Rulers



Grand Master



Past Grand Master



Deputy Grand Master



Assistant Grand Master

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Regalia of the Rulers

The current regalia derives from the deliberations of the Board of Works in 1817 which specified the new patterns after the union of the Premier (Moderns) and Atholl (Antients) Grand Lodges in 1813 but otherwise left little record of why they decided what they did. The regalia of the Grand and Provincial Grand Ranks has not changed significantly since then. The size and construction of aprons has varied according to the tailor or firm making them. The now typical 'masonic' gold lace of the border was preceded by a wide range of gold lace including military patterns made obsolete by changes in uniform. The Royal Princes (Moderns) had gold and blue decoration before the Union and dark blue borders were the Moderns grand rank distinction.



**HRH the Duke of Sussex
Grand Master c 1820**

This portrait of the Duke of Sussex shows a fully embroidered apron and collar with an ear of corn at the point. It is noticeable that the cuffs in this case do not have the eye within the compasses, possibly it being felt improper to represent the Great Architect on the cuffs, or that there being only one deity He should be represented only once in the regalia. As with the Provincial Grand Masters it is noticeable that the jewel's device links to the cuffs and the collar to the apron. The portrait presumably predates the introduction of chains and may represent the Grand Master's regalia in its original form as devised by the Board of Works. The crown on the cuffs refers to his status as a Royal Duke. Subsequent Grand Masters have also added the appropriate crown or coronet to indicate their position in the aristocracy. The breast jewel worn is not related to rank, it is the member jewel of the Lodge of Antiquity No.2 and was instituted by the Duke.



**Deputy Grand Master pattern apron of
HRH The Duke of Clarence (Later King
William IV)**

The Deputy Grand Master is specified as having apron and collar with pomegranates and lotus flowers. This design first appears in the 1841 constitutions but an existing set of regalia stated to have belonged to HRH The Duke of Clarence is of this pattern and must, therefore, date prior to his death in 1837. It is probable that the fruit was the rank device, pomegranate for Provincial Grand Masters, lotus added for Deputy Grand Master and the Grand Master adding an ear of corn.



Collars

The collar chains worn by serving Rulers and Grand Officers show the rank of the wearer by the number of medallions bearing stars. The rulers have twelve stars, filling all available medallions on the collar. The Grand Wardens have seven stars whilst five are worn by for certain senior Grand Officers and three by all other Grand Officers. The Metropolitan, Districts and Provincial Grand Officers do not wear chains. All chains are lined with garter blue silk ribbon.

Gauntlet Cuffs



Rulers and Grand Officers may wear ornamental cuffs edged in gold like their aprons and garter blue in colour bearing their badge of rank. These are no longer generally worn although some Grand Officers, mainly overseas, have retained them. They were originally the cuffs of formal gloves but have been ornamental since the mid 1800s.

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Apron of an Acting Grand Officer (dress) and Acting Grand Officer (undress)

Grand Officers wear an apron with a broad ribbon of garter blue and gold trimming. Their badge of office is in the centre within a wreath of a sprig of acacia and an ear of corn. Acting Grand Officers wear a collar chain with the number of stars indicating seniority and an apron with a gold badge and trimming ('Dress' regalia). On less formal occasions aprons and collars in plain blue are worn, this is termed 'undress'. A badge or 'jewel' is hung from the collar or chain showing the rank.

Metropolitan, Provincial, District and Grand Officers wear similar aprons but with the badge in a circle bearing the name Metropolitan or the District or Province and a narrower border of blue. A plainer apron decorated with braid is worn on less formal occasions.

Regalia of Provinces, Districts and the Metropolitan Grand Lodge



District Grand Master's Apron for the District of Malta

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Provincial Grand Master Deputy Provincial Grand Master Assistant District Grand Master

These rulers have changed their regalia slightly. Immediately after the union of 1813 the Provincial Grand Master had regalia similar to the Grand Ranks with a pomegranate centre device on the apron, a collar with a pomegranate on the point, the jewel as now and that design repeated on the cuffs. The earliest issue all appear to have been supplied from the tailor to the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master. It seems that the Provincial Grand Masters changed to full embroidery around their aprons some time in the 1860s but the first mention in the Book of Constitutions is 1884. Surviving mid Victorian aprons sometimes show a transitional pattern with pomegranates spaced out around the apron border. The present pattern has lotus and pomegranate.



Acting Provincial Grand Officer (Dress) Acting District Grand Officer (Undress)

Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Officers have full and undress regalia similar to the Grand Officers but the blue borders are narrower and the undress is decorated with gold braid. The wreath is replaced by a circlet containing the word London for the Metropolitan Grand Lodge or the name of the Province or District.

Grand Inspector



Where lodges exist overseas but are directly linked to UGLE they are normally grouped into a District. Where this is not possible, usually where there are too few, a Grand Inspector is appointed to oversee them instead of a District Grand Master. His regalia is the same as the Grand Officers and does not have the additional embroidery of the other rulers.

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Jewels for Grand Rank.

The jewels shown are for serving Grand Rank officers and are those actually in use by the Grand Officers of UGLE in 2011.

Senior and Junior Grand Warden

These titles were adopted from the guild/livery system, they are the two principal officers of Grand Lodge and have existed since the creation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717.



Senior Grand Warden



Junior Grand Warden

Grand Chaplain



First introduced by the Premier Grand Lodge in 1775. The first Grand Chaplain was the Reverend Dr William Dodd, a London preacher and chaplain to King George III. His wife, alas, had ideas above his stipend and he fell into debt. He then forged a bill for £4,200 on the account of the Earl of Chesterfield and died on the gallows at Tyburn.

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Grand Registrar



The office was established in 1813. He is responsible for interpreting the Book of Constitutions. In the procession into Grand Lodge he carries the heavily embroidered purse which used to contain the 1813 Articles of Union. These are now too fragile and are held in the Library and Museum.

Grand Secretary



First appointed in 1723; responsible for keeping the minutes of Grand Lodge and, in modern terms, fulfils many of the functions of a Chief Executive. The longest serving Grand Secretary was William Henry White who served for a total of 49 years. Sir Phillip Colville-Smith. Grand Secretary 1917-1937 combined this office with being Deputy Grand Master of Cornwall and Provincial Grand Secretary of Oxfordshire.

Grand Director of Ceremonies



The rank was added to the list of Grand Officers at the time of the Union in 1813. The four Grand Directors of Ceremonies who served from 1813 to 1904 also held office as Garter, Principal King of Arms at the College of Heralds. The rank is responsible for ensuring that the ceremonies and protocol of Grand Lodge are correctly carried out.

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Grand Sword Bearer



First appointed in 1733, he carries the Grand Lodge Sword ahead of the Grand Master. The original Grand Sword Bearer, George Moody, was sword cutler to HRH King George II and produced the mounts and scabbard for the Grand Lodge Sword. This is still carried into every Grand Lodge meeting.

Grand Superintendent of Works



First appointed in 1814. The first appointee was the architect Sir John Soane. The officer is always an architect or surveyor as they are responsible for the upkeep of Freemasons' Hall in London.

Senior Deacon/Junior Deacon



Dates from 1834. The Deacons in lodges act as messengers but the Grand Deacons have no such duties. They do however carry gold tipped wands in the procession. The Senior and Junior Grand Deacons wear the same jewel.

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Grand Treasurer



First appointed in 1727 to administer the charitable funds. This is not a rank which generally exists at Provincial, District or Metropolitan level. This rank was occupied in the 1880s by D P Cama, the first Indian to reach Grand Officer rank.

Grand Organist



The office dates from 1813. Many holders of the post at Grand Lodge have been noted composers or musicians including Samuel Wesley and Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Grand Standard Bearer



Established 1882. Two Grand Standard Bearers carry the standards of The United Grand Lodge of England and of the person presiding over the Grand Lodge. The jewel bears the standard with the arms of the current Grand Master crossed with that of Grand Lodge.

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Grand Pursuivant



The office dates from 1833. The rank comes from the heraldic office of Pursuivant – a State messenger with power to execute warrants and ranks, in the College of Arms. He acts as a messenger from the Grand Lodge to the Tylers.

The hilt of the sword is broken on this example (bottom right).

Grand Tyler



The office dates from 1813. The Grand Tyler has never guarded the door of Grand Lodge but always sits behind the Grand Master's Throne. He carries a blue wand topped with the arms of Grand Lodge in gilt metal.

President of the Board of General Purposes



President of a Masonic Charity



The Board of General Purposes is the main organisational body of UGLE and dates from the union of 1813. The jewel to the right was originally used by the President of the Board of Benevolence but is now worn by the Presidents of all the main masonic charities.

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Deputy and Assistant Ranks



Many of the Grand Ranks have a Deputy or Assistant grade. These are shown by bars on the jewels, the deputy normally above and the assistant below the jewel. These examples are for serving Grand Officers.

The most recent Grand Ranks created in 2006 and 2008



Grand Chancellor



Grand Orator

The Grand Chancellor is responsible for relations between UGLE and recognised Grand Lodges overseas. The post was created in 2006. The Grand Orator is the most recent rank created in 2008. The Grand Orator writes and delivers approved speeches on freemasonry which are intended to be a catalyst for discussion in lodges. The first Grand Chancellor and Grand Orator are still serving (in 2011) and so there has not yet been a past rank jewel for them.

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Ranks that only exist within Provinces, Districts and the Metropolitan Grand Lodge

Provincial Grand Charity Steward

Instituted in 1991 to co-ordinate and organise the charitable work of a province. The lodge rank of charity steward had been introduced in 1975 following a report by Sir Arthur Bagnall which established the present Grand Charity and recommended that Masonic charity should increasingly be directed to outside causes as well as Masonic ones. The central device is a trowel, also used as the jewel of a charity steward in a lodge (The Library and Museum does not have an example of this jewel)

Provincial Grand Mentor

The mentoring scheme of UGLE is intended to assist newer members develop their masonic knowledge and be productive members of the organisation. Individual lodges have mentors (who do not have a jewel) and these are co-ordinated by the Provincial Grand Mentor. There is not yet a rank of Grand Mentor. The jewel's centre shows a chisel. (The Library and Museum does not have an example of this jewel)

Past Rank and its equivalents.



Past Grand Officer



Past District Grand Officer

There is a difference between the collar jewels worn by acting and past Grand Officers. Past rank can be awarded on retirement after a period acting in a rank or as an honour. The jewels for acting officers are circular and the device is cut out while for past ranks the jewel is oval with the device on a blue enamel or glass background. The apron is not changed for past ranks but collar chains are not worn, a collar embroidered with corn and acacia is substituted for Past Grand Officers and one edged in gold lace for Past Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Officers.

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London Grand Rank and Overseas Grand Rank

Until the formation of Metropolitan Grand Lodge in 2003 London freemasonry was administered directly by Grand Lodge with no distinct officers and, initially, no honours system. In 1907 London Rank, later termed London Grand Rank was created to remedy this. It was unique in that it was conferred by the Grand Master directly. Senior London Grand Rank was added later and a similar honours system was created overseas in those areas where a UGLE District had not been set up. The original title of London Rank was retained for people who had not passed through the chair of a lodge and so was particularly suitable for award to long serving Tylers or members who may have chosen not to do so. This rank was also made available in the Overseas Rank system and has a blank centre to the jewel.

These ranks are still awarded. The London Ranks are now termed 'Metropolitan Ranks' but the wording on the jewel remains the same as before. The jewels are similar in appearance to the Past Rank jewels.



Overseas Grand Rank Jewel



Senior London Grand Rank Jewel

Past Metropolitan Grand Officer



Following the precedent of having a single jewel for the Metropolitan area the past rank jewel for active Grand officers in London is standardised regardless of the active rank held. The only exception is that past Metropolitan Grand Stewards have the background in red rather than blue. The jewel is unique in that the coat of arms is in full colour rather than the gold of every other grand rank.

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