Royal Arch – FAQ

The Sash, Sword and Trowel

Companions have you ever put your sash on the wrong shoulder and had to be told. Have you ever seen a Companion with his sash on the wrong shoulder? Both cause much amusement since we can all laugh at ourselves as well as with each other.



The way to remember which one is to understand why the Sash is worn on the left shoulder. The reason is lying on the floor of the Chapter .

Remember Companions we are here, symbolically to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. King Solomon's Temple was sacked by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, 500 years ago.

Companions

- **The Trowel is the tool that we use to rebuild the Temple – symbolically**
- **The Sword implies that we will defend our Temple from further attack**

  OR in the vernacular - Don't mess with a Royal Arch Mason.
- **The Sash is worn to hold the scabbard and hence the Sword when it is not in use**

With right hand we are rebuilding the Temple, using the Trowel, therefore the Sword is held in the left, implying that we are always alert, ready to defend our Holy work. This means of course that the Sash must be over the left shoulder. If you can remember that the Sword is held in the left hand because the Trowel is in the right hand you should never get the Sash on the wrong shoulder again.

Just a further thought, since in building work **the Trowel** is the tool that applies the mortar that binds the building together it is also a symbol of **Companionship and Unity**

The Sword is also a symbol which means that having been Exalted the Royal Arch Mason can be considered a Prince and Ruler. In the 18th Century **The Sword** denoted that **rank and high status**

Incidentally, the fact that we hold the Sword in the left hand is the reason the Penal Sign in the Royal Arch is always given with the left hand. You remember the sign strikes the back of the neck, metaphorically with the Sword held therein. That would be painful ☺

Similarly, it is why we toast the Grand Originals downstairs with the left hand, to show we have laid down our Swords and are amongst friends, amongst Companions.