



WEST HAM ABBEY CHAPTER NO.2291

www.westhamabbey.org.uk/royal-arch/

PROFILE

History of The Chapter

West Ham Abbey Chapter No.2291 was consecrated in January of 1924 by the brethren of West Ham Abbey Lodge. Its primus First Principal was Lt. Col. Edward James Kirkness Savage – a veteran of the Boer War who himself volunteered as a reservist for the Great War despite being in his mid-sixties!

There had been a surge in masonic membership throughout the East End during the late Victorian era, moving into the twentieth century. It was a time where tuberculosis ravaged much of the UK and was followed by “Spanish Flu”. West Ham Abbey Lodge No.2291, consecrated in 1889, was one of the many lodges formed to facilitate such a boom; and from its inception, the lodge determined that its charitable endeavours would play a part in relieving some of the suffering through its benevolent involvement in the financing of local hospitals.

As young men returned from the Great War, they sought the brotherhood and camaraderie that had seen them through the darkest days of the war and there was an explosion in the membership of Freemasonry.

For much of its life West Ham Abbey Chapter met at Ilford Conservative Club within the jurisdiction of what is now the Metropolitan Grand Chapter of London. However, in 2018 the members decided to move to the Provincial Grand Chapter of Essex and it currently meets at Upminster Masonic Hall, Upminster on the fourth Wednesday in March (Installation) and June, and the first Monday in September.

Health of the Chapter

Our current capitation (December 2025) is around 30 members with an age range spanning from mid-thirties to late-eighties. Not all lodges are connected with a Royal Arch Chapter, so ‘feeder lodges’ are of the utmost importance to the Royal Arch, West Ham Abbey Chapter is proud to hold strong relationships with at least six lodges located in London and Essex, which creates natural diversity within our membership concerning masonic interconnectivity. We actively welcome craft masons to step outside their typical social circle, for the opportunity to meet new faces and forge new friendships.

Having a membership from multiple lodges makes us a perfect chapter for unattached or unsponsored masons. We often receive interest from masons who are new to the area but without a sponsor to join, or masons who simply want a masonic experience among a different social circle from their craft activity.

On our relocation to Essex in 2018, the chapter decided to make the most of the quieter months within the masonic calendar, allowing for members to focus on craft masonry between autumn and spring, with chapter meetings occurring in March, June, and September, thus switching focus to the Royal Arch between spring and autumn.

The Chapter's expectations

The Holy Royal Arch is considered the climax of pure, ancient freemasonry and, like the craft lodge, requires time, commitment, and dedication from its members. The allegories and symbolism of the chapter cannot be understood by mere exposure, but rather through a lifetime of personal contemplation.

West Ham Abbey Chapter works with the understanding that all our meetings must prove meaningful and enjoyable for members and guests alike. In addition, we anticipate all our members to advance and serve an active role in our ceremonial and administrative offices. We strive for ritual excellence

and require all our members to attend the following, especially when serving an office or ceremonial role:

- Our three regular meetings
- Our Chapter of Instruction (COI) rehearsals held two Mondays prior to a Chapter Meeting

Why should I join this Chapter?

The key objective for the chapter is the development and nurturing of its members. We encourage the sharing of work as much as possible. We will support members in trying to balance their Craft and Royal Arch commitments; promote a longevity in membership, so that members feel empowered to become custodians of the Order and the Chapter's future.

Costs of membership

Currently Annual Subscriptions are £125 p/a inclusive of dining fees. The first year's subscription is pro rata. Annual subscriptions are payable in advance every January.

Joining/Re-joining fee is £30

Dining fees vary for guests but are currently approximately £35 for three course silver service meals inclusive of wine and coffee.

Where can I learn more?

You are welcome to contact the Scribe E of the Chapter secretary@westhamabbey.org.uk

West Ham Abbey Chapter has a page on the lodge website as well as a Facebook and Instagram Page where you can learn more or get in touch. You can scan the QR code below, follow the link in our header or visit:

<https://www.westhamabbey.org.uk/royal-arch/>

