

**Address by the MW The Pro Grand Master
The Most Hon. the Marquess of Northampton, DL
at the Quarterly Communication of the United Grand Lodge of England
on 10 September 2008**



Brethren,

I have had the great privilege of being Pro Grand Master since March 2001 and before that I was Assistant Grand Master for five years in charge of London. I have decided that the time has come for me to step down in March and give someone else the chance to steer the Craft for the next few years.

These past eight years have continued a process of great change for English Freemasonry, helping it to come through one of the most difficult periods in its history.

As the Grand Master pointed out recently, we are entering a period of consolidation, and if we continue to build on the foundations of openness we have laid for the 21st Century there is every chance that we will start to grow again. I welcome an increase in our numbers as long as we continue to maintain the highest standards and concentrate on the quality of our candidates.

I am pleased to tell you that the Grand Master has appointed RW Bro Peter Lowndes, Deputy Grand Master, to succeed me. He will be installed as Pro Grand Master at the March Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge. He will be succeeded as Deputy Grand Master by RW Bro Jonathan Spence, Grand Director of Ceremonies, and he in turn by WBro Oliver Lodge, Past Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies. The Assistant Grand Master, RWBro David Williamson, will continue in office. I shall be presiding at Grand Lodge for the last time in December.

I wish Bro Lowndes every success in his new important role and have every confidence that the Craft will be in very capable hands. For my part I shall continue to enjoy my masonry albeit at an easier pace and with less direct responsibility.

I look forward to helping in any way I can to ensure the future good health and happiness of English Freemasonry. It has been an honour to serve the Craft.