

Colin Reese QC

Deputy Master, The Worshipful Company of Bakers



Colin Reese QC is a baker by livery but a lawyer by "trade". During his year in office the Bakers Company will be joining with the City in commemorating the 350th anniversary of The Great Fire of London. The fire allegedly started at the premises of Thomas Faryner, the King's Baker, at his bakery in Pudding Lane where he baked ships' biscuits. Additionally the Bakers Company will also be marking the 800th anniversary of the Assize of Bread and Ale. This law prescribed the price and weight of loaves of bread, and it remained in force until the early 19th Century.

Colin was born in Hawarden, a village near Chester but, just inside Wales in March 1950. He lived there until 1966, becoming a loyal Welsh Rugby Supporter and attended the local Hawarden Grammar School. In 1966, the family moved to Southampton where he became a Saints (Southampton FC) supporter and he attended King Edward VI School, in those days a free grammar school operating as part of the state education system.

Encouraged by the school, he sat the Entrance Exams for Cambridge and was accepted by Fitzwilliam College to read Law. He was at Cambridge from 1969 to 1972, obtaining a 2:1 degree in Law. In the 1971/72 academic year, he was the President of the University Law Society.

Whilst at Cambridge, Colin decided he would qualify as a barrister. He joined Gray's Inn and, after leaving university, he studied for the Bar Finals, and was called to the Bar in the summer of 1973. Pupillages followed; 6 months in a set of chancery chambers in Lincoln's Inn and 6 months in a set of chambers in the Temple (now well known as Keating Chambers) which specialised in the then unfashionable field of construction law. In those days it was still common for the pupil to pay 100 guineas to his pupil Master to compensate him for the inconvenience of having a pupil about the place for 12 months but, he was fortunate to find two 6 months pupillages with enlightened individuals who each cheerfully waived his right to 50 guineas on the basis that (1) he had more need of the money and (2) what was the point of taking that sum off him when 83% of it would be going straight to the Exchequer! He was able to make ends meet at this stage of his career thanks to a combination of scholarships awarded by Gray's Inn and obtaining part time teaching positions at London Polytechnics, on weekday evenings, and at Fitzwilliam College, on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings.

In 1975, he was offered a tenancy in a set of chambers in Lincoln's Inn (since removed to Gray's Inn and now well known as Atkin Chambers), which specialised in planning and construction law. He remained in these chambers until retiring from the law last year. Throughout his career at the English Bar (1975 to 2015) he specialised in disputes arising out of building and civil engineering activities in England and abroad. He took silk in 1987 and was a part time Judge – a Recorder 1989 to 2015 and a legal member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal 2000 to 2015. Away from mainstream legal practice and judging, he conducted a number of public inquiries as an Assistant Parliamentary Boundary Commissioner in the last two completed reviews of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries.

Colin has been married to Diana since 1978. They have three children, a daughter followed by two sons who are now all in their 30s, and one grand daughter. In 1980, Colin and Diana moved to the Sevenoaks area of Kent in order to live " in green pastures " but, within a commutable distance of London. They remain there to this day and now feel they qualify as Kentishman/woman and certainly not Man or Woman of Kent. Diana but, not Colin, is a keen golfer and bridge player. Both walk the dogs - an English springer and a chocolate Labrador in the woodlands of West Kent and elsewhere.