

Master Broderer 2018 -2019

Christopher Bellamy

Christopher was born in 1946 in rural Buckinghamshire, where his GP father had a single-handed practice, delivering babies on the farms in all weathers and acting as general counsellor and social worker for the village.

After boarding school in Kent, a striking lack of success at A Level and only slight improvement at Oxford, he decided to try for the Bar, and spent his first years in the rough and tumble of the magistrates and county courts of the Greater London area. In the 1970s when Britain joined what was then called “the common market” various twists and turns of fate led him into commercial and trade law, and particularly cases having an “EU” dimension, later acting regularly for the Crown. At one stage agriculture more or less took over: milk, hops, pigs, potatoes, fish, wool, eggs, sheep and beef seemed to generate more legal issues than could possibly be imagined.

After taking Silk in 1986, and some 22 years at the Bar, in 1992 Christopher was asked by HM Government to be the junior of the three British judges at the EU Court of Justice in Luxembourg. With his wife Deirdre, and their three children, he spent seven happy years in Luxembourg until, in 1999, he was asked to return to London and set up a new UK court dealing with competition and regulatory issues. Having sat also in the High Court, Crown Court and Employment Appeal Tribunal, he stepped down from the bench in 2007. Today he chairs one of the global practice groups at the London law firm Linklaters, commuting most days from the family home near Winchester. Successfully navigating Brexit is one of the current challenges.

Christopher became a liveryman of the Broderers in 1995, sponsored by Sir Gordon Slynn, later Lord Slynn of Hadley, one of the outstanding lawyers of his generation, and was elected to the Court in 2013.

Christopher is passionate about history, particularly that of the Broderers, and enjoys walking and travel. He was one of the founders of The Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, established in honour of Lord Bingham, and sees a better functioning legal system as essential to modern Britain. He was knighted in 2000, in the Millennium Honours List, and was appointed Commandeur of the Ordre Grand-Ducal de la Couronne de chêne, Luxembourg, in 2014.