

# INTERROGATORIES

## *ANSWERED BY THE TREASURER*



The Treasurer Baroness Hale of Richmond.

**1** Given that you must spend much of your time in London, but have a house in Yorkshire, which at present do you regard as 'home'?

My 'main residence' is in London, because that is where I work, but my 'home' is in Yorkshire, because that is where my heart is.

**2** Is there any change at Gray's Inn that you have welcomed or that you would like to see?

A big topic for a short answer. It is welcome to see so many more barristers' chambers in the Inn – there were none when I joined – but I also welcome the Inn's increasing respect for the importance of the work of barristers who are not in independent practice but working in public service or in commerce, finance or industry, or in academia, as I did. I would like to see the Inn's educational activities continue to expand and flourish, because that is what we should be for.

**3** What were the best lessons about life that you learned during childhood?

Expect the unexpected and seize the opportunities it brings.

**4** Are you in favour of televising court hearings?

Supreme Court hearings are televised and it works very well – a good example is the recent 'Brexit' case where it showed the world that we were debating serious constitutional issues in a serious manner (to say that it went at a snail's pace would be unfair to snails, said one commentator). But we, and the counsel who regularly appear before us, are used to it; the cameras are unobtrusive; and what is broadcast is under our control. There are no witnesses, no defendants and no drama. The same could apply to all appellate hearings and even to the summing up and sentencing remarks in criminal cases and the judgment in civil cases. But I would be against televising witnesses, as this might inhibit their giving their best evidence, and would be wary of televising counsel's speeches, as jurors might be influenced by viewers' comments.

**5** Do you have a favourite place to visit in Yorkshire?

Yes, but I don't want to mention it, in case it gets too popular and its beautiful peace destroyed. But I don't mind mentioning that excellent ice cream is to be had at The Station in Richmond (an inspired use of the old station building for craft foodstuffs, a café, two cinemas and art displays)!

## 6 Is there any particular lawyer(s) whom you have found inspirational?

Many, but can I mention three? First is the late Tony Weir, of Trinity College Cambridge, much loved and admired by the generations of students whom he taught and inspired by his original insights and pithy prose. Second is Julian Farrand, now my husband, who gave great encouragement and practical help to the young academics starting out at Manchester University, as well as writing a seriously witty textbook about conveyancing. Third is Lord Bingham, the greatest judge of his generation, who set us all a fine example, as a lawyer, as a judge and as a man.

## 7 How does life at the Supreme Court compare with how it was in the House of Lords?

I like it a lot better. We have the space and the facilities we need, instead of being a marginal activity conducted in an institution whose primary function is parliamentary business. The building is no less beautiful but lighter and brighter. We can sit in larger panels whenever we want, instead of having to compete with their Lordships for the larger committee rooms. We can give judgment in a way which everyone can understand, instead of holding an arcane pretend debate on the motion that 'the report of the appellate committee be agreed to'. We can all lunch together whenever we want, which adds greatly to the collegiality of the court. The only problem is that it is too far from Gray's Inn to come and lunch here, but that was true of Parliament too.

## 8 If you could invite three guests to Grand Night who lived in the past, who would they be?

Great question – in keeping with my theme as Treasurer this year, they had better be women. So how about Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Mary Wollstonecraft (or her daughter, Mary Shelley), and Millicent Fawcett (or, more daringly, Christobel Pankhurst)?

## 9 Which are your three top (non-law) books?

A tough one. It's hard to beat the Desert Island Discs standards, *The Bible* and the *Complete Works of Shakespeare*. I've often puzzled over my own choice of something lighter to go with them: something like *Three Men in a Boat* or *England, Their England* to laugh over. But it would probably be Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* or *Emma*. There's feisty women for you!

## 10 What is your favourite type of theatrical performance, and does any in particular stand out?

I love the theatre but it's opera that bowls me over. I can't decide whether *The Marriage of Figaro* or *Billy Budd* is my favourite, yet they are so different from one another. If forced to choose, it would have to be *Figaro*, where the women triumph, rather than *Billy Budd*, where there are no women at all but only a great injustice . . . Comedy is more my style than tragedy.

