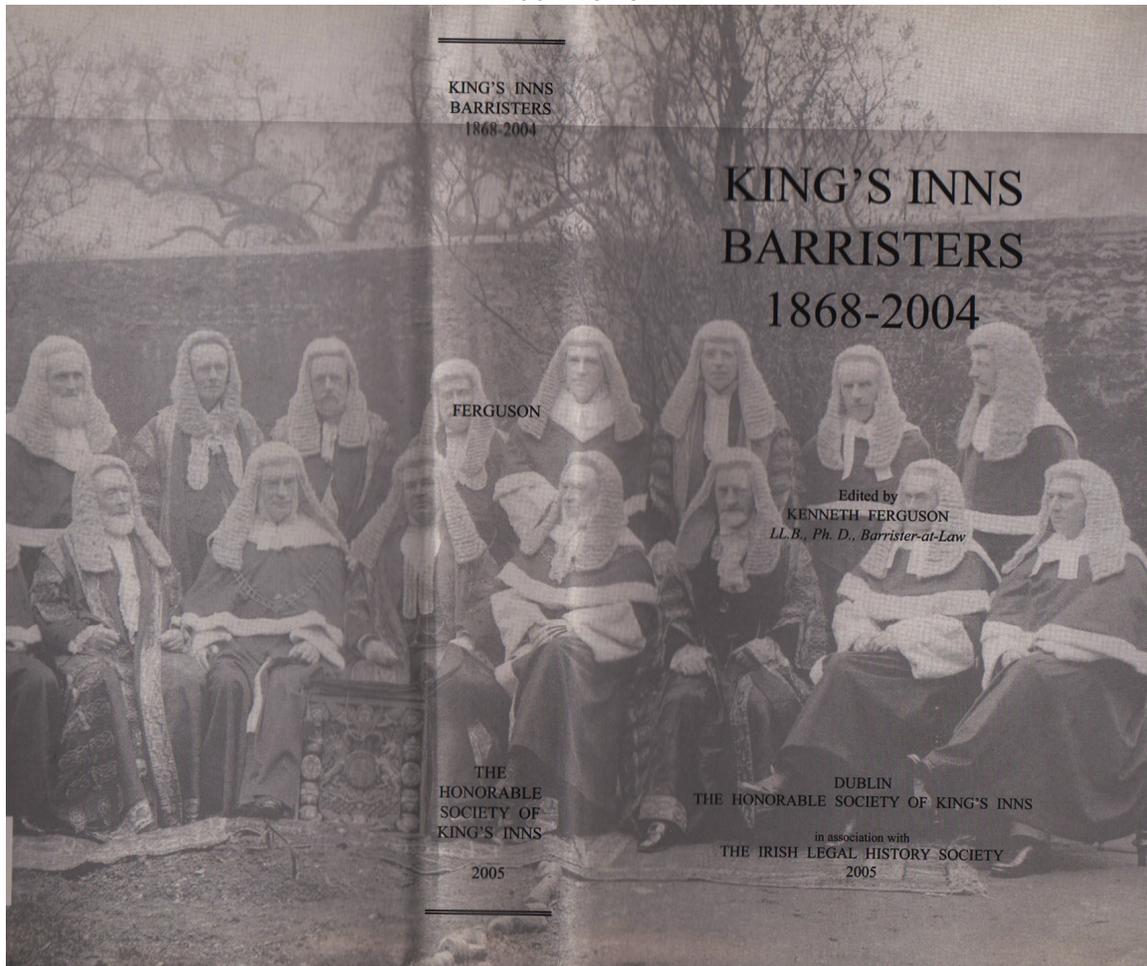


## Book Review



## King's Inn Barristers 1868-2004

**Kenneth Ferguson (editor)**, The Honorable Society of King's Inns (in association with the Irish Legal History Society), (2005), Henrietta Street, Dublin 1 (Tel. +353-1-874-4840), ISBN 0-9512443-2-9, Price €30.00 (plus post and packaging of €10).

My father treasured a little book, *In a Nook with a Book*, a book of quotations for book lovers. One quotation which I remember was from *The Praise of Books* by J.A. Langford:

“In books, the past is ours as well as the present. With them we live yesterday over again. All the bygone ages are with us.”

Dr. Kenneth Ferguson, BL, has revived the past; brought the past into the present and recalled vividly some wonderful memories of bygone ages.

Dr. Ferguson's book is, in one sense, a continuation of a book entitled *King's Inn Admission Papers, 1607-1867*, edited by Keane, Phair and Sadlier and published in 1982 by the Stationery Office and now (sadly) out of print. The principal part of Dr. Ferguson's book contains the names of the graduating barristers from King's Inns from 1868 to 1968, the names and places of residence of the graduate's parents and details of the graduate's age and education. Mrs. Julitta Clancy, M.B.E., compiled most of the biographical details of the alphabetical index of barristers. Dr. Ferguson added further details to the entries which constitute, in an abbreviated form, a biographical sketch, based, to a certain extent, on obituaries in *The Irish Law Times and Solicitor's' Journal* and other sources.

Solicitors will note that our educational system was removed from the "tutelage" of King's Inns by the *Attorney's and Solicitors (Ireland) Act, 1866*. Prior to that time, the attorneys and solicitors had endeavored to establish a professional body independent of the King's Inns. A "Society of Attorney's" had been established in 1774 and the "Law Club of Ireland", was founded in 1791 – the precursors of the modern "Law Society of Ireland", founded in 1830.

Two essays, one written by Professor W.N. Osborough, "Landmarks in the History of King's Inns 1872, 1885, 1921, 1925" and "A Portrait of the Irish Bar, 1868-1968" by Dr. Ferguson, provide fascinating insights into King's Inns. One interesting detail is how students reading for the Irish Bar were obliged from the reign of Henry VIII to reside for a specific number of years at one of the Inns of Court in London. This lasted until 1885.

The issue of women being called to the Bar is considered by both Professor Osborough and Dr. Ferguson. The first woman called to the Bar was Frances Christian Kyle on 1 November 1921. This story is enlightening.

Dr. Ferguson paints a picture in his portrait of the life of three generations of Fitzgibbons: Master Gerald Fitzgibbon, Master in

Chancery (1793-1882); his son, a Queen's Counsel also named Gerald Fitzgibbon (1838-1905) who became a Lord Justice of Appeal, and a grandson, also named Gerald Fitzgibbon (1866-1942), destined to be one of the judges of the first Supreme Court of the Irish Free State. Their lives and times illustrate the life and times of the Irish Bar during the period under review. Lord Justice Gerald Fitzgibbon, the first Secretary of the Law Reporting Council of Ireland, is one of the few judges to be commemorated by a life-sized statute in the State, which is in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Dr. Ferguson also considers what Judge Whiteside called "the Palace of Justice", the Four Courts, and its physical characteristics. This includes details of the Law Library itself. The Bar and the First World War is a fascinating section of Dr Ferguson's essay as is the description of the turbulent period following the rebellion of 1916 up to the foundation of the State. The relocation of the new State Courts at Dublin Castle are also considered and the author brings the story up to 1968.

The last footnote of Dr. Ferguson's essay sets out details of the response of the Minister for Justice, Patrick Cooney, to a question asked in the Dáil on 10 July 1974 when the Minister said he was "well aware of the scarcity of textbooks in Irish law." Mr. Cooney added that "the real problem appears to be that there are not enough people in this country who are able and willing to undertake the authorship of textbooks of this kind." What a phenomenal and welcome change has occurred in such a short period of time. We are truly blessed.

The editor acknowledges the guiding spirits of Professor W.N. Osborough, Charles Lysaght, BL, Mrs. Camilla McAleese, the Under Treasurer of King's Inns, James O'Reilly, SC, Jonathan Armstrong, the Librarian of King's Inns and The Hon. Mr. Justice Hugh Geoghegan of the Supreme Court.

This is a gem of a book, a tour de force, a book of enormous authority, a most balanced and insightful analysis.

Dr. Ferguson and his colleagues have produced an absorbing history of the most intriguing men and women who have played a significant role in Irish life over the last two centuries.

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