

Past Master Colin Bland

Following a short illness, Past Master Colin Bland sadly died in Stoke Mandeville Hospital on 30th July aged 83. His funeral at Amersham Crematorium was attended by the Master, the Thames Warden and ten Past Masters – the Eulogy was read by the Master.

Colin was born in 1933 in Leigh on Sea, Essex, and suffered with polio as a toddler and had difficulty walking until he was about seven. He was six when the Second World War broke out, and he spent some of the war with his mother and grandmother in Sherborne in Dorset. After the war Colin went to live in Croxley Green in Hertfordshire and attended Merchant Taylor's School at Northwood – one of England's "great nine schools". He was always proud that he played in school's the Rugby 1st team. After school he attended what is now The University of London, and in 1956 he joined the National Salt Glaze Pipe Manufacturers Association, where he was to work for the rest of his professional career.

He met Ann, a student nurse and they married in 1957 in Chorleywood. In 1964 they had their first child a son, Bruce, and 3 years later a daughter Nicola. They lived in and around Chesham in Buckinghamshire throughout their sixty years of married life.

Colin's career went from strength to strength. In 1978 he was appointed to head what was now the Clay Pipe Development Association, as Director of Technical Services. He held this role with distinction until he retired in 1999. He represented the clay pipe industry on both British Standard and CEN Committees for thirty years, and was a Council Member of the IPHE and CIWEM for a total of twenty-eight years. His awards were numerous.

Colin's involvement with CIWEM and the 5 S's inevitably led to his becoming part of what is now the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators. His involvement was distinguished. He was first elected as a Court Assistant in 1989 and became Walbrook Warden in April 1995. On 1st July 1998 he was proudly installed as the Master – a role he filled with distinction, where he and Ann fully entered into the wide range of events from the Tudor Pull to white tie dinners at the Mansion House. Colin told his family that this was the highlight of his life and his proudest moment. At the end of his successful year Colin continued to give his time unswervingly for the Company. He edited the Company newsletter (The Conservator) for many years and served as Chairman of both the Past Master's Committee and the Company's Charity, the Water Conservation Trust, until his retirement in the autumn of 2016.

In recognition of this unique service, the Court at its meeting in December 2016, unanimously agreed to Colin's appointment as an Honorary Liveryman of the Company. It was with the greatest of pleasure that the Master presented Colin with his framed certificate at the Mansion House in January 2017 in the presence of the Lord Mayor and his family.

This all too brief record of Colin's life demonstrates that he was a remarkable man. He overcame personal illness, developed a successful career, had a loving family and gave his time unstintingly to organisations that he loved. There are innumerable examples of his personal kindness. We will all miss him very much.