© F A R Bennion Doc. No. 2003.059 Website: www.francisbennion.com Sent to *The Times* but not published

Any footnotes are shown at the bottom of each page For full version of abbreviations click 'Abbreviations' on FB's website.

Lord Wilberforce

I first encountered super-intelligent Richard Wilberforce, (Lord Wilberforce, who died on 19 January 2003) when I was a Bar student in the 1950s. From within his sober Chancery Chambers this man delivered a brief cool talk to the neophytes. I forget what he said, but I well remember his unassuming but commanding Wykehamist manner. He told us about law in a way that could not be done today, when law has been destroyed by populist politics. The only time I engaged this man face to face was when I wished to probe his views on statutory interpretation. He received me quietly in a small office in the recesses of the House of Lords. He said, to my astonishment, that when finding out the legal meaning of Acts of Parliament he never used dictionaries, and shut his ears if they were referred to in court.