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THE LEGAL 500 UK AWARDS 2015



Welcome to the The Legal 500 UK Awards 2015, where we recognise and reward the very best of the best across the legal industry. We pride ourselves on the thorough, in-depth research we carry out in order to produce our rankings of firms and sets in the United Kingdom. This leaves us in a unique position to be able to identify the teams who warrant particular recognition.

The shortlist and winners are based on merit alone, there are no specific submission requests. Each researcher who worked on the guide was asked for their input and the criteria was a simple but effective one: which law firms stood out for you this year and why? We were not necessarily looking for top-tier firms, nor the largest firms.

We also asked, which companies stood out throughout the course of your research and why? We combined those answers with the research carried out for our GC Powerlist series, and our work over the past year for our latest publication, GC magazine, to identify our in-house winners. In the pages to follow I will share some of the reasons behind our decisions with you.

DAVID BURGESS
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
THE LEGAL 500

IN-HOUSE WINNERS

BANKING

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

John Collins, general counsel, RBS

John Collins began his career with RBS in 2007 where he has since helped the bank through the financial crisis, navigating through the turmoil of its bailout, its sell-off, its exit from over 12 countries and a number of regulatory fines. Collins was promoted to group general counsel in January 2015 and heads a 400-strong legal team. Given Collins' in-depth understanding of the banking industry and his dedication to RBS, he is in a perfect position to overcome the challenges put forward by the government's recently announced plan to sell its shares in the bank.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

JPMorgan Chase, led by John Tribolati, EMEA general counsel

JPMorgan Chase, the USA banking giant, has recently undergone a strategic expansion of its legal division in order to overcome the increased regulations it is facing. The expansion included hiring renowned in-house lawyers such as John Tribolati, headhunted from his previous role at Goldman Sachs. The heavyweight legal team are accredited for their instrumental role in the reputational management of the company and their efforts in co-ordinating multiple responses to investigations and regulatory penalties.

EMPLOYMENT

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Matt Newman, director of employee relations, reward and dispute resolution, group legal, Royal Mail

Matt Newman displays 11 years of experience in the field of human resources; he began his career as an employment lawyer at magic circle

firm Linklaters and thereafter moved in-house with RBS. Here he demonstrated excellent management of technologies to increase HR efficiency in processes and methodologies for measuring employee engagement. In May 2015 Newman moved to Royal Mail, during which time the government sold half of its remaining 30% stake of the postal service, 1% of which will be gifted to employees in the company. Newman is at the forefront of handling the legal notions associated with the reward.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

PageGroup, led by Jorge Roche, director of legal and business affairs (legal and compliance - UK, North America, ROW)

The legal team at the PageGroup is a diverse workforce, headed by Jorge Roche, director of legal and business affairs. This year the group was awarded Outstanding Employee Engagement Strategy at the HR Excellence Awards. All-pervading in their policy on employment, the legal team deserve acknowledgment for their support and exertions of the Pride@Page initiative, which aims to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees. This was launched after the success of the 2012 Woman@Page initiative, which aims to improve gender balance at all levels of employment. These initiatives are a first of their kind displaying global commitment to equality.

ENERGY

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Claire Carless, general counsel and company secretary UK, Siemens

Claire Carless has had a constant connection with the energy industry; in her first in-house role she was legal manager to National Power,

advising on all aspects of power projects. Now at Siemens, since 2012, she heads an 80-strong team and six compliance experts, covering four business sectors: energy, healthcare, industry and infrastructure and cities. Carless is praised for her legal assistance during Siemens' recent wind energy boom, with Scottish Power requesting over 100 machines for the East Anglia project, and more recently, Dong Energy choosing Siemens as its number one supplier of turbines for the Hornsea wind farm project.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Shell - Led by Michael Coates, UK head of legal and associate general counsel downstream

Shell is currently negotiating one of the biggest M&A deals of the year, valued at approximately £46bn, in the acquisition of the BG Group. Although this is a global deal, it will mean a heavy role for the UK team headed by Michael Coates. Shell's robust approach to pricing with their "appropriate fee arrangements" has brought a new dimension to environmental product liability claims and is at the forefront of the next panel review in 2016. The team has also successfully assembled an unusual joint venture agreement to sell gas and electricity supplied by First Utility, under Shell's branding.

ENVIRONMENT

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Jonny Ginns, group general counsel, INEOS Enterprises

Jonny Ginns joined INEOS in 2006, where he has helped lead joint ventures across the world with companies such as PretoChina, BASF, Total and Carlyle Private Equity. In May 2014, Ginns' legal department was successful in attaining clearance for a definitive joint

venture agreement, between INEOS and Solvay, from the European Commission. The company is looking to invest up to £640m in shale gas exploration in the UK, it currently owns 11 licences and is bidding for more in the near future. Ginns' knowledge of the sector and his robust leadership are integral to this success.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Kingfisher, led by Clare Wardle, group general counsel and company secretary

Kingfisher is 'greening' the do-it-yourself (DIY) scene with ambitions to transform all their stores and customer households to zero carbon or net generators of energy in order to combat the UK's carbon emissions. It currently has 50 company targets in place, which cover the Net Positive priorities (timber, energy, innovation and communities) and three other areas that cover employees, suppliers and partners and environment. Clare Wardle and her legal team have been instrumental in providing the sustainability department with all legal assistance needed to implement these game-changing targets, making Kingfisher one of the greenest companies in the UK.

FINANCE

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Karen Kerrigan, chief legal officer, Seedrs

Karen Kerrigan is the chief legal officer for the online equity and crowdfunding platform, Seedrs, and is also the director of the UK Crowdfunding Association. Kerrigan has been pivotal in the company's growth, under her legal expertise, Seedrs' was the first of its kind to receive regulatory approval from the Financial Conduct Authority. The company's success has led to an expansion into Europe,

with Kerrigan drafting the legal work needed for the partnership with ING Belgium who are also partnering with KissKissBankBank in France to provide clientele with fast-track options and a diverse source of funding.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Hayfin Capital Management, led by David Rushford, general counsel

Hayfin Capital Management moved to fill in the lending-gap for companies post financial crisis, bringing with it a number of firsts. One example is the estimated €2bn taken from institutional investors to offer senior loans to medium-sized European companies, making it the largest such fund to date. The legal team at Hayfin, headed by David Rushford, has been at the forefront of dealing with these new complexities as well as managing the legal challenges shaped by the company's potential changes in ownership activity; having prepared for potential sale and having managed subsequent changes in holding stakes by current investors.

HEALTHCARE

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Ben Holgate, legal director UK and Ireland, Novartis

Ben Holgate has dedicated the majority of his career to the healthcare sector, with 12 years at Wyeth before joining Novartis five years ago. Faced with multifaceted legal situations remote to the healthcare industry, Holgate succeeds with many years of experience and a robust grasp of the regions' healthcare law. Under his leadership, the company signed an exclusive agreement promoting two Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) drugs in the UK, with Pfizer in charge of marketing and Novartis conducting all other matters. The team has managed to keep other respiratory

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products unaffected from the agreement, a nimble piece of legal footwork.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Spire Health Care Group, led by Daniel Toner, general counsel

The Spire Health Care Group has seen fast-paced growth since starting with its 25 original hospitals. Daniel Toner's team has made this growth a reality and has been commended for its efforts in processing vast numbers of documents associated with the work. Cinven, a private equity house, recently announced that it will sell part of the Group to the South African listed Mediclinic in a £432m deal, with the Spire team playing an essential part in the complex merger.

INSURANCE

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Neil Hodges, UK general counsel, Zurich Insurance Group

Since joining Zurich, Neil Hodges has brought great savings to the legal team. This year alone the group reported payments of over £97m in protection claims; for example its recent win of a fundamental dishonesty appeal at the Newcastle County Court. Hodges also led the legal appointment of CBRE Global Investors to increase Zurich's exposure to UK real estate allocations by up to 5.5%, while at the same time is assisting in the request for the government to provide sustainable pension solutions.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Aviva Group, led by Kirsty Cooper, group general counsel and company secretary

Aviva is now one of the UK's leading workplace insurance providers after its acquisition of

Friends Life for £5.2bn, one of the biggest UK insurance deals in recent times. Aviva UK Life is the product of the acquisition and on its own is approximately the size of a FTSE 50 company, enabling the group to launch a new Protection proposition that offers a full suite package of workplace services and products. Kirsty Cooper and her team are also acknowledged for their ability to maintain an excellent legal function during the company's internal re-structure, and for their long-term relationships with external legal advisers.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Ritva Sotamaa, chief legal officer, Unilever

Ritva Sotamaa pioneered the first panel review for the company and has made massive strides in developing the relationship with external legal advisors on matters concerning contracts, commercial, construction and IP rights. Unilever has retained the IP panel and is planning to launch a number of regional panels following initial success. As an organisation dealing with 400 brands, Sotamaa keeps all legal workings in check having created a 25-strong legal team with over 10 years of experience at the headquarters and with a further 500 lawyers in the global team. She has recently launched an online, company-wide legal academy which is designed to build and enhance her lawyers' skills.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Smith & Nephew, led by Jack Campo, chief legal officer

Supporting healthcare professionals in over 100 countries, chief legal officer Jack Campo and team have earned recognition internally and externally for their efforts in

IP rights across borders. Earlier this year the legal team prevailed over a patent dispute filed in the US that had been on-going for 11 years against Arthrex; the court ruled that \$85m in damages and \$6.8m in supplement damages should be paid by Arthrex. Moreover, the London based company is set to acquire Zimmer's Unicodylar Knee System from the US market after the successful purchase of existing inventory and IP rights for the US.

LITIGATION

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Carol Hui, general counsel and group company secretary, Heathrow Airport Holding

Carol Hui has led her team through Heathrow's submission to build a third runway, battling the disputes with competitors and interested parties. Hui was also heavily involved in the litigation surrounding the breakup of the company working closely with external advisors on the sale of its other airports. Over the last two years Heathrow Airport has seen the opening of the Queen's Terminal 2 and the closure of Terminal 1. When putting these actions into perspective with over 80 airlines flying directly to over 180 destinations, Hui's experience in litigation has been essential in enabling the premier international airport to function without coming to a legally caused standstill.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Sotheby's, led by Antonia Serra, European general counsel

Sotheby's, a global art business and auctioneer in operation since 1744, deals in worldwide sales exhibitions from wine to diamonds to art. The Sotheby's legal team recently dismissed

a lawsuit made against them concerning the painting of The Cardsharps by Caravaggio. Functioning in a high-stakes industry based on authenticity of products brings with it many litigation dilemmas that the legal team handle on a daily basis, at a global level, with minimum negative publicity.

PRIVATE EQUITY

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Joe Blum, partner, general counsel and chief compliance officer, Global Infrastructure Partners

Joe Blum, partner and general counsel of Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), joined the company in 2007 after 21 years at Latham & Watkins. Blum is responsible for legal and regulatory matters at a global level, including the company's supervision of outside counsel on matters associated with transactions and litigation. Blum has also been involved in the negotiations and structuring of the company's investment fund while ensuring compliance with all regulatory bodies. The bulk of Blum's experience is vested in private practice; his impressive years of experience allow the commercial aspirations of GIP to be converted into a reality with expert legal grounding.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Bridgepoint, led by Charles Barter, general counsel and chief legal and compliance officer

Charles Barter is a private equity star in his own right, having devoted 10 years to private equity with Travers Smith prior to joining Bridgepoint. Barter and team have kept in stride with the company's fast paced buyouts of market leading businesses such as the recent acquisition of ASK Italian and Zizzi restaurants from competing equity house Cinven, and

for their major investment deal with Expert Market. Bridgepoint is poised to buy Appleby Fiduciary and Administration Business, while there are talks to sell the Laboratory of the Government Chemist for up to £700m.

PUBLIC SECTOR **INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR**

Ceri Bird, head of legal services, Swansea University

Ceri Bird served as a lawyer for the City and County of Swansea for 10 years, joining Swansea University in 2013. With a large part of her career devoted to local public law, Bird is an integral player in all legal activities, currently helping the University realise its goal to be in the top 200 ranking. The University has newly experienced growth in infrastructure, education programs and student population, which has in addition allowed the area around the campus to capitalise on its achievements, bringing new development to Swansea. Moreover, Tata Steel and Swansea University have signed an agreement to develop and retain graduate talent in the region.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Nottinghamshire County Council, led by Jayne Francis-Ward, corporate director, policy, planning and corporate services, legal and democratic services

Jayne Francis-Ward and her team have led the consortium arrangements for an unusual approach to external advice. The East Midland LawShare integrates a group of councils and law firms as a cost effective method for specialist legal advice from external services. It has grown to include councils outside of the East Midland region and has delivered significant savings since its inception in 2006.

So far the team has had a great year winning many awards praising it for its work in the public sector and its efforts in family law.

REAL ESTATE **INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR**

Alastair Asher, group general counsel, The Co-operative Group

Alastair Asher has oversight of NOMA, a property redevelopment project conducted in joint venture with Hermes Real Estate. NOMA is a £800m, 20-acre, office, retail and residential development located in Manchester. Asher has a 40-strong legal team to support him with the intricate legal work. After 34 years at Allen & Overy, Asher abruptly took his position at The Co-operative Group in June 2013, leaving the firm on good terms to help the co-op with the black hole left in the bank's finances. Asher quickly acclimatised, leaving behind his private practice role to focus the board's decisions through his legal lens.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Legal & General, led by Geoffrey Timms, group general counsel and company secretary

Legal & General has had a promising start to 2015 with a £370m partnership purchase of property from Cordea Savills and the more recent dedication to the regeneration of the Cardiff Central Square. Current efforts securing a 50% stake in MediaCityUK, a Manchester-based new-build, are also underway. Moreover, the company has vouched to invest in assets that have a positive social impact; it teamed up with Patron Capital to target less mainstream property sectors. Needless to say, Geoffrey Timms and his team have enabled Legal

& General to make a mark on the real estate industry.

TAX

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Colin Garwood, head of group tax, InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG)

Colin Garwood, with 25 years of extensive tax experience, is regarded as an expert and mentor figure to many. Garwood has displayed his knowledge of the tax industry by speaking at conferences and writing articles, as well as his outstanding internal legal work with IHG. He orchestrates the response to all tax matters in the hotelier's 4,900 hotels located in nearly 100 territories. Garwood also has specialism in the Controlled Foreign Companies (CFC) rules where he played a pivotal role during the drafting of new rules through his participation in the CFC interim improvements and the CFC intellectual property working group.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Prudential, led by Kieran Devlin, head of tax

Kieran Devlin and his team are currently involved in discussions with the EU on law regarding the taxation and treatment of portfolio dividends for holdings of less than 10% of shares. Over recent years they have focused their efforts on cross-border financing and corporate activities while they have been acknowledged for their protection of the company and its customers, post-financial crisis. Many in the tax sphere are impressed with the team's effort in litigation and their focus on issues, such as the availability of compound interest on tax, which not only benefits their own commercial undertakings, but those of others involved in the tax industry as well.

TECHNOLOGY

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Michael Marecki, general counsel and company secretary, Aston Martin Lagonda

Michael Marecki has dedicated his 25 year-long career to the automotive industry having worked with world renowned brands such as the Ford Motor Company, Land Rover and Jaguar Land Rover. Now with Aston Martin, Marecki manages IP protection as innovations in technology are sent around the world to be externally manufactured in a highly competitive environment. The company recently launched its new prototype car, and is also expanding into the electric sports cars market, where the groundbreaking technology will need rigorous protection.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Google, led by Emma Jelley, senior regional counsel UK and Ireland

The legal team at Google provides a pillar of support to one of the world's most pioneering companies, which often leads it into undefined legal complexities. Emma Jelley and her UK and Ireland team have recently had to deal with the upsurge in data and tax laws as well as other legislation in the pipeline; more recently the EU data transfer deal with the USA. Moreover, the legal team has to overcome the differences between the UK and Ireland, where laws differentiate when data protection breaches are compared. This poses an extra work load for the department on top of its daily on-goings which are mammoth in themselves.

TELECOMS

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

James Blendis, general counsel and company secretary, EE

James Blendis was previously with T-Mobile for six years, during which time he led the company through the merger and integration into EE. Having dedicated a bulk of his career to the telecoms industry, Blendis found himself in the middle of the hacking scandal where he represented the company giving guidance on the features of phone security and hacking. His work portrays high-profile projects associated with telecoms and an ability to streamline large legal departments while ensuring responsiveness and lower budget profiles. With current talks of BT aiming to acquire EE for £12.5bn, there is no doubt that Blendis' experience and knowledge will play an integral role.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Three, led by Stephen Lerner, general counsel and director of regulatory affairs

Mobile network provider Three currently has an estimated 8.8 million customers with roam-free prices in over 17 countries worldwide. Its parent company, Hutchison Whampoa, is currently in the process of gaining permission from the European Commission to acquire O2 from its parent company, Telefónica. Stephen Lerner has been general counsel and director of regulatory affairs at Three since 2003, where he heads the 75-strong legal team. The team is praised for its initiatives to alter restrictive policies surrounding the UK mobile network market such as termination rates for customers as well as issues on spectrum allocation.

TRANSPORT

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Maria da Cunha, director of people and legal, British Airways

Maria da Cunha has commercial, legal and operational experience in the airline industry bringing together legal responsibility, HR, risk, compliance and government affairs to support the company's commercial growth. Taking into consideration da Cunha's role as director of people, her efforts in the launch of the first aviation apprenticeship scheme merits recognition, alongside her time spent with trade unions in regard to cabin crew disputes. With a large part of her career vested with British Airways, she was part of the legal team during their international expansion and financial downfall during the acquisition by now parent company International Airlines Group (IAG).

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Transport for London, led by Howard Carter, general counsel and head of legal

Transport for London (TfL) has been making front page headlines due to recent London Underground strikes instigated by proposed night services and increased competition in the cab industry in London. The legal team at TfL, headed by Howard Carter, have been playing the middle man between black-cab drivers and the popular Uber service and are also currently in the process of handling disputes from the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA) against the construction of the Embankment Cycle Superhighway. The legal team handles many cases at once, displaying diplomatic mediation between various associations while ensuring the safety of the London commuters. ■

BAR WINNERS

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

SET OF THE YEAR

Fountain Court Chambers

This banking and finance behemoth includes a huge array of talent both at silk and junior level, and is the first port of call for the headline commercial cases in the market such as *Tchenguiz & ors v SFO* and the Fiona Trust litigation. Chambers' international profile is also growing; it opened an office in Singapore in 2014, bringing to bear members' strength and expertise in the jurisdiction.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Paul McGrath QC, Essex Court Chambers

Despite only taking silk in 2011, McGrath is now in the top tier for civil fraud and widely considered one of the top silks in this area, having written the leading book on the subject. His representation of Vincent Tchenguiz in disputes with the SFO and Grant Thornton also confirms his go-to status.

CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY

SET OF THE YEAR

4 Pump Court

Reason: This set scoops the award for its tireless focus on and strong track record in construction and energy law. Members are adept at handling all manner of cases from multibillion-pound international arbitrations and big-ticket domestic mandates at the TCC to high-profile professional negligence cases.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Manus McMullan, Atkin Chambers

Viewed by peers and solicitors alike as one of the best construction silks in the market, McMullan amply demonstrated this reputation by being chosen to act in the raft of high-profile cases arising from the \$5.2bn

widening of the Panama Canal, one of the largest infrastructure disputes in the world.

CRIME

SET OF THE YEAR

Garden Court Chambers

Members of Garden Court Chambers continue to appear in the most serious, legally challenging and era-defining criminal trials and appeals, defending people from all walks of life. Recent case highlights include Henry Blaxland QC's successful abuse of process submission in the trial of a man accused of the 1982 Hyde Park bombing.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Sasha Wass, 6KBW College Hill

2014 was a headline year for Wass, who prosecuted in one of the most talked about trials of recent times – that of Rolf Harris. Her caseload is diverse and she also maintains a strong reputation in big-ticket financial crime and fraud cases, the latter of which saw her prosecuting Kweku Adoboli, responsible for largest British banking fraud.

EMPLOYMENT

SET OF THE YEAR

Matrix Chambers

This set is fast-becoming the go-to chambers for High Court employment cases and expanded its team in 2014 by making two lateral hires in Gavin Millar QC and Nicholas Randall QC. Recent work highlights include the challenge to the new Employment Tribunal fee regime and landmark LLP case *Bates van Winkelhof v Clyde & Co.*

SILK OF THE YEAR

David Reade QC, Littleton Chambers

Reade is rapidly rising to the fore of the employment Bar, thanks to his high-profile

caseload and consistently outstanding feedback from solicitors. In 2014, he acted in the highly publicised Supreme Court case of *Hounga v Allen*, which examined whether illegal immigrants should be deprived of fundamental workers' rights.

EU AND COMPETITION

SET OF THE YEAR

Monckton Chambers

Members of this set have been involved in the largest and most technologically interesting competition litigation of recent times, such as the Pay TV cases that could change the way we all watch sport. The set is also unique in housing a dedicated merger control group, deployed to provide a bolt-on service to law firms.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Aidan O'Neill QC, Matrix Chambers

O'Neill's practice spans the London, Edinburgh and Luxembourg courts and also encompasses both the commercial and humanitarian sides of EU law. In the past year, he has been instructed in cases challenging alcohol minimum pricing and the disenfranchisement of prisoners in European Parliamentary elections.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN

SET OF THE YEAR

29 Bedford Row Chambers

This set has been unstoppable in recent years on its path to becoming one of the best chambers for family and children law barristers around, under the competent sentinel Nicholas Francis QC, head of chambers. Recent work highlights include Supreme Court cases *Vince v Wyatt* and *Sharland v Sharland*.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Tim Amos QC, Queen Elizabeth Building (QEB)

Amos has long been regarded as a leading financial remedy specialist. Following the landmark *Petrodel v Prest* case, his workload remains dominated by high-profile divorce cases including one that was referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

INSOLVENCY

SET OF THE YEAR

Maitland Chambers

Since the financial crisis, this set has cemented its expertise in insolvency litigation, exemplified recently in the Bank of Ireland/McFeely litigation regarding the collapse of a property empire. Members are also involved in the Lehman Brothers Waterfall I Application, among other high-profile cases.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Raquel Agnello QC, Erskine Chambers

Since taking silk in 2009, Agnello has gone from strength to strength in the insolvency field and continues to appear in widely publicised cases such as Lehman Brothers. She has a broad practice which also extends to pension related insolvencies.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

SET OF THE YEAR

Essex Court Chambers

This set remains the dominant force in international arbitration, handling multibillion-dollar cases that cover the full spectrum, including fraud, energy, insurance and infrastructure disputes, as well as major investment treaty arbitrations. Over three quarters of chambers' members identify arbitration as a key practice area.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Neil Calver QC, Brick Court Chambers

Calver has established a top-notch reputation for major insurance and reinsurance coverage disputes as well as more general commercial matters, earning him a place in the top tier of *The Legal 500* international arbitration rankings. Recent work highlights saw him advising on a multibillion-dollar arbitration in South America.

IP, IT AND MEDIA

SET OF THE YEAR

Three New Square

Although its history is rooted in patent law, Three New Square wins this award for its successful diversification in recent years and increased involvement in soft IP, IT and media related disputes. With regards to the former, members appeared on both sides in *Comic Enterprises v 20th Century Fox* and *Lush v Amazon*.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Hugh Tomlinson, Matrix Chambers

Long regarded as a top media law silk, Tomlinson has carved out a reputation as the go-to QC for those bringing privacy actions against Google. He represented the claimants in the Vidal-Hall and Mosley cases, both of which created new law in the protection of privacy online.

PERSONAL INJURY AND CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE

SET OF THE YEAR

Serjeants' Inn Chambers

This set is going from strength to strength in the clinical negligence field; four members have taken silk in the last five years, and the junior arm is also strong, bolstered by

lateral hires in 2015. Members are frequently instructed in the highest-profile cases such as *Reaney v University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust* and *Pringle v Nestor*.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Robert Weir QC, Devereux

Since taking silk in 2010, Weir has rapidly risen to fore. He is widely regarded as being one of the top specialists in personal injury law but also has a solid clinical negligence practice to boot. Supreme Court and Court of Appeal cases consistently feature among his enviable workload.

PRIVATE CLIENT: TRUSTS AND PROBATE

SET OF THE YEAR

XXIV Old Buildings

This chambers is a deserving winner based on the strong caseload throughout 2014/15. *Crociani v Crociani*, one of the world's leading ongoing trust disputes, and the large insolvency of a Cayman Islands company in *Akers & ors v Samba*, are just two examples of high-profile disputes handled by members.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Simon Taube QC, Ten Old Square

Taube has immense experience in this field; he is probably best known for his litigation skills, but also handles advisory work both in the UK and abroad. He was recently called upon to assist the Law Society with its guidance to the solicitors' profession on contentious probate cases.

PUBLIC LAW

SET OF THE YEAR

11KBW

The public law group at 11KBW has been gaining momentum in recent years and

continues to go from strength to strength. It is particularly strong in local government, education and information law matters, and climbed the civil liberties and human rights rankings in 2015, following a year of standout cases such as *Kennedy v Charity Commission* in the Supreme Court.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Nigel Fleming QC, 39 Essex Chambers

Fleming combines his thriving public law practice with equally strong expertise in environmental matters. In 2014, he successfully defended Transport for London in a freedom of expression challenge to the decision not to allow a poster campaign by a gay rights group to be placed on the outside of London buses.

REAL ESTATE, ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

SET OF THE YEAR

6 Pump Court

This set's reputation has been growing in the fields of environment and planning in recent years and these strengths have been particularly exemplified in the past 12 months. Notable cases include *Coventry v Lawrence*, the pivotal Supreme Court case, and *Environment Agency v Southern Water Services*, which saw the highest fine ever imposed on a statutory undertaker for a single water pollution offence.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Nathalie Lieven QC, Landmark Chambers

Lieven is widely regarded as one of the best public law barristers in the country and her expertise in this area helped her achieve a stellar year in the areas of environment and planning. She continues to appear in the highest courts in cases of great significance such as *R (Buckinghamshire County Council) v*

Secretary of State for Transport – the challenge to the decision to proceed with HS2.

SHIPPING

SET OF THE YEAR:

Quadrant Chambers

Widely praised for its robust and intelligent range of advocates, Quadrant Chambers remains pre-eminent in the shipping space, appearing in the most-talked-about cases in the sector such as *Borco v Phillips 66*, heard in the Bahamas Court of Appeal, and maritime personal injury case *Feest v South West Strategic Health Authority and Bay Island Voyages (CELTIC PIONEER)*.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Alistair Schaff QC, 7 King's Bench Walk

Schaff is one of the best-known shipping practitioners at the Bar and has had yet another stellar year, which saw him win in the 'B Atlantic' case *Atlas Navios v Navigators*, a four-week Commercial Court war risks insurance trial.

TAX

SET OF THE YEAR

Devereux

This set has made significant inroads in the tax arena in recent years through a stream of lateral hires. The practice was also strengthened at senior level following Jolyon Maugham QC's elevation to silk in 2015. Chambers is now considered a very strong choice for significant direct and indirect tax disputes as well as personal tax cases.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Julian Ghosh QC, Pump Court Tax Chambers

Ghosh wins this award off the back of a standout year during which he received

outstanding feedback from solicitors and acted in high-profile cases such as *Ocean Finance v HMRC*, which examined what constitutes abuse of rights for the purposes of EU VAT law.

REGIONAL/SCOTTISH

SET OF THE YEAR

Guildhall Chambers

Western circuit powerhouse Guildhall Chambers commands a leading reputation nationally for insolvency, where it has one of the largest teams outside of London, while other strong suits include crime, health and safety, environment, and personal injury and clinical negligence. The set has a formidable bench of highly-regarded practitioners at all levels of call and was bolstered by the arrival of Jorren Knibbe from Osborne Clarke in October 2014.

SILK OF THE YEAR

Anthony Crean QC, Kings Chambers

Leading planning specialist Anthony Crean QC has had a particularly prolific year dealing with various High Court challenges, including those concerning the Lichfield and Cherwell local plans. He also acted for Birmingham City Council on the £1bn regeneration of Longbridge.

CLERKING/PRACTICE MANAGEMENT: UK WIDE

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Quadrant Chambers

This set receives consistently outstanding feedback on the service it provides, in fact, for some, '*one of the major factors in chambers' continuing success is the approach taken to clerking*'. Hailed as '*the best in the business*', the clerks' room has gone from strength to strength since 'client-focused' Simon Slattery

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THE LEGAL 500 UK AWARDS 2015

joined ‘*market leader*’ Gary Ventura as co-senior clerk in 2013. Together, the team is ‘*approachable and understanding of issues and pressures instructing solicitors face*’.

SENIOR CLERK/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

David Barnes, 39 Essex Chambers

Since Barnes joined Thirty Nine Essex Street (as it was then known) nine years ago,

chambers has proven itself as ‘*a formidable force*’, not only in London (where it is now the largest civil set) but also across Asia following recent office openings and significant lateral hires in the region. He runs ‘*a very tight and effective ship*’ of clerks who ‘*take time to invest in relationships with solicitors*’ and are praised for their ‘*modern approach*’. As ‘*the best clerk out there*’, he is ‘*really driving chambers forward*’. ■

LAW FIRM WINNERS

CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL FIRM OF THE YEAR

Clifford Chance

Clifford Chance's market-leading status in financial services makes it adviser of choice on the most pressing issues facing the world's largest financial institutions; a reputation amply confirmed in 2014. Mandates such as advising Actis Capital on its investment in high-growth mobile operator Upstream demonstrated not only the firm's well-known capabilities in private equity transactions, but also its knowledge of cutting-edge issues in emerging markets. Its longstanding position at the forefront of regulatory change saw it advise a host of investment banks on EMIR, AIFMD and Basel III, while M&A highlights included assisting interactive gaming player GTECH with its recently completed \$6.4bn acquisition of International Game Technology. Lesser known for commercial contracts, the firm's work there nevertheless also received outstanding feedback from clients.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom (UK) LLP (Corporate tax)

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom (UK) LLP excels at handling all tax issues associated with large, cross-border transactions. The practice's ability to provide cutting-edge and innovative advice on high-profile deals where tax considerations are critical was recently evidenced by its key roles in both the proposed \$54bn acquisition of Shire by AbbVie, and the failed \$115bn takeover bid of AstraZeneca by Pfizer. The compact team's highly reputed experts have also been particularly active on structured finance, derivatives, funds and private capital-related tax issues.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

B P Collins LLP (South East)

Achieving exceptional client feedback – a feature of B P Collins LLP's performance across the board in 2015 – Simon Deans' team also stood out for its uniquely strong environmental, digital technology and media sector client roster. Key deals in a marquee year included assisting Biffa Waste Services with its £2.5m acquisition of PHS Wastetech, and advising Propshop (a Pinewood Studios-based provider of 3D services to the likes of Disney and Warner Bros) on its acquisition by German company Voxeljet.

CRIME, FRAUD AND LICENSING

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Hickman and Rose

In the last year at Hickman and Rose, Jane Hickman and Ben Rose's practice has maintained not only a steady flow of high-profile clients, but also a track record of successful cases. The team's instructions included defending celebrity Tulisa Contostavlos against allegations of supplying class A drugs; her trial was stayed in 2014. With a strong background in general crime work, the firm also offers high-quality advice regarding corporate crime matters, such as assisting US firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP with resisting an application for a wasted costs order regarding the collapsed Victor Dahdaleh trial.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP (Corporate crime (including fraud, bribery and corruption))

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP's corporate crime department, which comprises the white-collar and international corporate investigations

practice groups, was incredibly active in the last year. Highly experienced in acting for large corporations and boards of directors in the engineering, energy and finance sectors, the firm continued to demonstrate strong compliance and investigation capabilities. Last year saw the firm dealing with authorities such as the SFO on a regular basis.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Taylor Haldane Barlex Solicitors LLP (South East)

Taylor Haldane Barlex Solicitors LLP was a real standout this year in terms of client feedback, and for instructions that included acting on such high-profile news items as the fallout from the Leveson Inquiry, and the so-called 'plebgate affair', demonstrating its versatility in the latter by representing a police constable for client the Police Federation of England and Wales. Clearly enjoying a considerable reputation with the barristers it instructs, the firm's affinity for heavyweight criminal matters was further amply demonstrated by Crown Court cases such as *R v Edward Redman* and *R v James O'Driscoll*.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Stewarts Law LLP

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2015, Stewarts Law LLP, the UK's largest litigation-only law firm, has a first-class reputation for high-value and complex disputes. Because of the practice's focus on litigation, it is almost uniquely conflict-free, and one of the few firms able to accept instructions against banks and financial institutions. The team acted in one of the most high-profile High Court cases of recent times, advising a group of 313 institutions that brought an action, under s90 of the Financial Services and Markets Act

2000, alleging that RBS' £12bn 2008 rights issue was defective.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Three Crowns LLP (International arbitration)

Spun off less than two years ago from leading international arbitration firms, Three Crowns LLP hit the ground running, making successful pitches against established top-tier international arbitration practices during its first six months of operations. From the outset, the firm pulled in the cream of high-value, high-stakes mandates from blue-chip clients and, in 2015, further expanded its leading team with strategic hires. High-profile case examples include representing Gas Natural in ICC arbitration proceedings against ENI, involving a liquefaction plant in Egypt affected by political disruption, with serious ramifications for downstream buyers and sellers.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Ward Hadaway (North)

Ward Hadaway's dispute resolution team impressed during research with the breadth and scope of its work, due in no small part to the considerable resources the firm allocates to the area. Recent highlights include handling a dispute subject to the Laws of the State of New York, and appearances before the Mercantile Court and the Technology and Construction Court. Of particular note was the defence of Paragon Group UK in the high-profile case relating to the theft of logbooks from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

FINANCE

FIRM OF THE YEAR

White & Case LLP

The practice at White & Case LLP has a strong team of seasoned professionals – including new

hires – across the finance space, which has won the firm outstanding accolades from clients during the year. It is seen as one of the firms of choice for blending solid US and English law expertise, and is praised for its committed and client-oriented approach. The firm is knocking on the door of the top tier for debt work, where its partners are regarded as some of the best in any London firm, and is seen by some as the best firm in the City for emerging markets debt, not least in Africa. It is a growing force in structured finance and securitisation, where it is praised for its commercial and client-focused service, and has a prominent European high yield offering, with many other strings to its bow in trade finance, project finance and Islamic finance. As a rounded finance practice that is investing in the future, it is one of the very best.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP (Securitisation)

Securitisation is a practice area that has suffered many pressures since the start of the global financial crisis, not least from regulators. As the regulatory environment becomes clearer and more asset classes come back to life, some firms are reinvesting in their practices, but Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP has been ahead of the curve in building out its London presence with established names in the market. It continued this trend last year to round out a diverse and dynamic team of partners that is rapidly growing the firm's presence in the securitisation space.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Bond Dickinson LLP (Yorkshire and the Humber)

Bond Dickinson LLP has a growing presence in the Yorkshire and Humber region, acting for

lender and borrower clients across a variety of sectors. Santander UK is a significant client, which the team advises across leveraged, corporate and real estate finance matters. John Connor heads the department, which recently acted for HSBC Bank in relation to term loan facilities to Station Hotel (Newcastle) to fund an acquisition, and gained Lloyds Bank as a new client. The firm also has restructuring and insolvency expertise across the healthcare, leisure and manufacturing sectors.

HUMAN RESOURCES

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Lewis Silkin LLP

With a longstanding presence as a leading employment firm for both employers and senior executives, Lewis Silkin LLP has had another exceptionally strong year under the joint leadership of the highly regarded James Davies and Michael Burd. The group's steadily improving reputation in immigration saw it rise to tier three in that ranking, in recognition of its excellent sports-related immigration work and increasing focus on advice for high-net-worth individuals. April 2015 marked the opening of the firm's Hong Kong office, its first overseas venture and a further boost to the team's impressive employment and global mobility offering.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Tapestry Compliance LLP (Employee share schemes)

Tapestry Compliance LLP launched in the market just three years ago, but already represents a staggering 30% of FTSE 100 companies. The firm *'sets the benchmark in terms of industry knowledge'*, due to the pedigree of practice head Janet Cooper, who led the market-leading team at her previous,

Magic Circle firm for 20 years. The practice includes fellow founding partner Bob Grayson and an expanding team of experienced incentives professionals. It acted for Credit Suisse on its global awards review across 55 countries, and advised eBay on the incentives aspects of its spin-off of PayPal, demonstrating that a boutique firm can indeed compete on a global scale.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Cambridge Employment Law LLP (East Anglia)

Employment law is a highly competitive market, and many aspects of it have become commoditised in recent years, but where lawyers add value is in high-end advice. This has opened an opportunity for this niche firm made up of highly experienced partners with stellar track records built up in larger regional firms. Cambridge Employment Law LLP has become a prominent player in East Anglia in a relatively short period of time, and its reputation among prominent businesses for partner-led work of the highest quality gets stronger every year.

INSURANCE

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Clyde & Co LLP

Insurance is at the heart of Clyde & Co LLP's most high-profile matters, as exemplified by the fact that the firm's top ten global clients are insurers. The sizeable and dedicated team, spread across the London, Guildford, Oxford and Manchester offices, impresses with the breadth of its expertise, and scores highly in areas such as clinical negligence, personal injury, professional negligence, insolvency and restructuring, as well as litigation. Recent noteworthy instructions include handling a

political violence claim in Ukraine, and advising Capsicum Reinsurance Brokers on a joint venture partnership with Arthur J Gallagher.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR
Fieldfisher (Clinical negligence: claimant)

Fieldfisher has consistently ranked highly in the field of clinical negligence, where it stands out for the dedication and support shown to claimants. Its sizeable and expanding practice includes leading practitioners in cerebral palsy, foetal medicine, neurology, catastrophic injury and a range of other maximum severity negligence claims. The team was able to secure record compensation for a young girl whose brain was negligently injected with glue, and also settled, for over £14m, a spinal surgery case.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR
Irwin Mitchell (South East)

Following a Southampton office opening in April 2014, Irwin Mitchell has become firmly entrenched in the South East insurance sector, particularly in the context of personal injury, where ‘*top-quality litigator*’ Claire Howard joined as practice head from BL Claims Solicitors, and regional managing partner Guy Darlston relocated from the London office, having spent 16 years with the firm. The South East clinical negligence practice is also growing, and the Southampton office was recently part of the team that represented the families of seven deceased residents in the high-profile Orchid View Care Home cases.

PRIVATE CLIENT
FIRM OF THE YEAR
Farrer & Co

Farrer & Co consistently receives outstanding client feedback across each private client

practice area, and the work undertaken demonstrates comprehensive expertise in all facets of the private client sphere. The firm has the capacity to advise on substantial agricultural estates, complex charity work, and cutting-edge disputes, and provides excellent onshore and offshore tax advice to both domestic and international private clients. The firm has a good retention rate of its star private client practitioners, but also makes astute hires, showing a focused commitment to the area.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR
Thomson Snell & Passmore
(Court of Protection)

Thomson Snell & Passmore had another excellent year. The strong practice spans a range of matters; from administering complex personal estates for older clients with foreign property, farms and commercial premises, to vast expertise in welfare cases, especially in the area of high-value catastrophic injury claims. The team is also skilled at advising on cases involving financial abuse, insolvency and continuing healthcare claims. The partners are instructed to advise on capacity issues and to act as expert witnesses. Overall, the firm stands out for the sheer breadth and sophistication of its practice.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR
Birketts LLP (East Anglia)

While some firms may excel in certain facets of private client work, there are relatively few that can be said to be leaders in all of them. With its deep bench of practitioners working in a close-knit team across an office network that now extends across the whole of East Anglia, Birketts LLP is one of those few. It supports a diverse and growing client base

in every area, from contentious probate to agricultural matters. The firm is acknowledged as one of the best in its region for rural matters and work for charities and not-for-profit organisations. It has vastly experienced lawyers supporting high-value estates across the region, and an outstanding family practice known for its sensitivity and professionalism.

PROJECTS, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Ashurst

Ashurst received the perhaps the strongest client feedback of any firm in the category, reflected in its top-tier positions for infrastructure, oil and gas, and power. Equally adept in a diverse range of established and emerging markets (such as North Sea oil and gas and African onshore wind), highlight deals in a showcase year included advising on Colombia's first LNG regasification terminal, and assisting the lenders with the \$167bn financing of the landmark Shams Ma'an photovoltaic power plant project in Jordan. Its outstanding infrastructure group continues to advise on projects of the calibre of the Mersey Gateway bridge (acting for the project consortium) and, in April 2014, celebrated closing phase 2 of the £5.7bn Intercity Express Programme.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Hogan Lovells International LLP (Infrastructure (including PFI and PPP))

Acting as longstanding sole project counsel on the development of the Shah Deniz gas field (arguably the largest energy project in the world), Hogan Lovells International LLP's position as adviser of choice to sponsors on landmark upstream mandates at the nexus

of infrastructure and natural resources was cemented further by instructions such as assisting Rio Tinto with development of the multibillion-dollar Simandou mine in Guinea. According to its clients, the firm has one of the best PPP and PFI offerings in the City and, in a typically active year in the secondary markets, advised Dutch Infrastructure Fund on its sale of 16 accommodation, education and healthcare PPPs spread across Europe. In 2014, the feted group also acted for the Department of Transport on closing of phase 2 of the Intercity Express Programme.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Prospect Law (East Midlands)

Boutique practice Prospect Law, which entered the ranking in 2015, is part of a new generation of legal service providers. The firm, a legal disciplinary practice of solicitors and barristers that was established in 2010, has an innovative approach, and frequently works alongside its sister company Prospect Energy, which provides consultancy services and technical advice to clients. Co-founders Edward de la Billiere, who handles non-contentious work, and barrister Edmund Robb, who leads the litigation team, are the key names.

PUBLIC SECTOR

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Bircham Dyson Bell

Bircham Dyson Bell puts public law at the centre of its activities, and is well placed to service clients in public sector matters from its single-site office in the heart of Westminster. The firm enjoys a top-tier ranking for its public affairs and infrastructure (Parliamentary) teams, and continues to win key instructions from clients, most notably in the transport and infrastructure space. Standout work for longstanding client

TfL includes the group's advice on the visionary Garden Bridge project, a proposed pedestrian bridge across the Thames.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Winckworth Sherwood LLP ***(Infrastructure (Parliamentary))***

Winckworth Sherwood LLP has had a stellar year, and bolstered its practice with the high-profile recruitment of planning and environment specialist Brian Greenwood, who adds further expertise to Paul Irving's already excellent team. The practice maintains its tier one position in the ranking, and benefits from the presence of two Roll 'A' Parliamentary Agents in the team. The London-based group continues to be instructed on projects of national significance, and has a strong reputation for its work on the promoters' side, most notably in the transport sector.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Browne Jacobson LLP (West Midlands)

Tier one in the West Midlands health rankings, Browne Jacobson LLP is the first choice for NHS Foundation Trusts nationwide, and enjoys the accolade of influencing national policy through advising the Ministry of Justice on revised Court forms; acting in *Re X* on the streamlined Court process; and assisting the Intensive Care Society on deprivation of liberty matters. It also enjoys an excellent reputation for bringing schools through the whole lifecycle of becoming an academy, and for providing support with expansion and development thereafter. This year it was instructed by Cranbrook School, in a matter where the local authority was seeking a boarding placement for a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

REAL ESTATE

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Pinsent Masons LLP

Pinsent Masons LLP had an excellent year, remaining a leading firm in the planning, construction, and hotels and leisure tables. The lender-focused property finance team performed strongly, advising a bank syndicate including HSBC, RBS and Barclays on a £550m revolving credit facility for Derwent London. The planning practice advised Capital & Counties on a regeneration project at Earls Court worth over £8bn – London's largest private sector-led regeneration project. Also impressive is the firm's construction team, which acted on the first major, successful adjudication against Crossrail, concerning Europe's largest infrastructure project.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Taylor Wessing LLP (Property finance)

The property finance department at Taylor Wessing LLP was bolstered by the arrival of Heather Buttle from Clifford Chance. Thanks in part to its increasing bench strength, the firm's real estate market profile is in the ascendant, with the team handling big-ticket work for high-profile clients. The highlight of its work this year was advice to Safra Group on the financing and purchase of the Gherkin. The team also advised HSBC on its €50m acquisition of four logistics centres in Germany. Other clients include RBS, Santander and Lloyds Banking Group.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

IBB (Iliffes Booth Bennett) (South East)

IBB (Iliffes Booth Bennett)'s simply outstanding group has exceptionally strong capabilities in corporate real estate and private equity real estate investment, thoroughly demonstrating

its broad property remit by also obtaining outstanding client feedback for its property litigation, residential development, and construction functions. Keynote matters for the huge team included advising the developer on the Barking Riverside regeneration project (one of the largest regeneration schemes in the country), and assisting Bellway Homes with major multi-phase developments in North London and Hampshire.

TMT

FIRM OF THE YEAR

DLA Piper

DLA Piper's TMT offering draws on the significant expertise of its lawyers and the firm's impressive global footprint. Of particular note, it advised Al Jazeera on issues surrounding the international roll-out and operation of its news channels, and acted for the Premier League on its broadcasting and media rights strategy. Franchising is also another strength of the team, which regularly acts for Hertz Europe, Hilton and a number of Marriott's brands on franchise transactions domestically and internationally. The firm also advises some of the biggest names in the banking sector on major IT outsourcing projects, and has an impressive list of intellectual property clients.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Charles Russell Speechlys LLP (Sport)

Following the merger of Charles Russell and Speechlys Bircham in 2014, the sport team at Charles Russell Speechlys LLP has gone from strength to strength, standing out for the breadth of the practice. The team has a particular focus on football, advising industry-leading clients including high-profile teams, Premier League players, and governing bodies.

Key work highlights include representing the FA at the Hillsborough inquests, advising individual football players on big-ticket transfers, and assisting IMG on several commercial rights deals for the Rugby World Cup 2015. The practice, promoted to tier one this year, is headed by leading individuals Jonathan Ellis and Ian Lynam.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Taylor Vinters (East Anglia)

Many law firms around the technology hub of Cambridge have excellent practitioners in various aspects of the TMT space, but one firm has been bold in developing a model unlike any other in the region. Once a well-respected regional firm with recognised expertise in the technology sector, in recent years Taylor Vinters has repositioned itself as an international firm focusing more closely on technology-related work, having opened offices in London and Singapore to bring work into a Cambridge team that is known for a standard of work that rivals firms in the City.

TRANSPORT

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Holman Fenwick Willan

A longstanding heavyweight in the transport arena, Holman Fenwick Willan acts on a range of market-leading aviation and shipping instructions. The aviation team dominates across both liability and regulatory mandates, and has played a key role at the forefront of a number of recent high-profile air disasters and regulatory disputes, where the department is praised for its quality service and client dedication. The shipping practice draws plaudits for its consistency, sheer depth of expertise and industry knowledge, particularly in insurance, admiralty, piracy and dry shipping work.

FIRM (SPECIALISM) OF THE YEAR

Campbell Johnston Clark Ltd (Shipping)

Bolstered by a number of hires at partner and associate level, specialist shipping firm Campbell Johnston Clark Ltd enjoys an increasing market presence both in the UK and internationally, with offices in Newcastle, London, Dublin and Singapore. The firm's ability to retain strong client relationships and its vast, technical skillset is reflected in a recent track record that includes a range of high-profile casualty, insurance, piracy, charterparty and shipbuilding instructions, including several market-leading disputes.

FIRM (REGIONAL) OF THE YEAR

Backhouse Jones (North West)

Based in Clitheroe, specialist outfit Backhouse Jones is widely recognised as a national leader for road transport regulatory work, acting for clients from the passenger and freight transport industries. With vast knowledge of the sector, the firm demonstrates in-depth expertise and experience in a highly specialist field. The firm receives plaudits for its strong industry knowledge, its detail-oriented approach and for its ability to provide a tailored service to clients.

NORTHERN IRELAND

FIRM OF THE YEAR

A&L Goodbody

A&L Goodbody had an outstanding 2014; its team successfully handled high-profile mandates across various disciplines, including banking and finance, corporate and M&A, dispute resolution, and real estate. It had a leading role acting for Cerberus in its acquisition of NAMA's Northern Ireland loan portfolio. Illustrative of its stellar reputation, the firm also won work from Standard Life,

New River Retail and Google, among many others. In addition to handling high-end work on a standalone basis in Belfast, the firm is also able to call upon its network in jurisdictions elsewhere; in the EU and competition arena, Belfast-based Micaela Diver is qualified in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and works with members of the Dublin office in matters spanning both jurisdictions.

OFFSHORE

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Appleby

Appleby remains the only law firm with offices in Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. In 2015, the firm demonstrated its commitment to fielding an ever-stronger team and broadening the range of services it offers. The firm's ambition is most evident in Guernsey, where it has secured rankings in insurance and employment for the first time. In Jersey, the firm has played key roles in transactions involving two of the island's most famous companies, the Liberation Group and the Jersey Royal Company. Across all jurisdictions and practice areas, the firm is consistently praised for the responsiveness, commercial awareness and approachability of its lawyers.

SCOTLAND

FIRM OF THE YEAR

CMS

CMS has consolidated its position as a leading player following its merger with legacy firm Dundas & Wilson in May 2014, and its Scottish practice has no fewer than 17 top-tier rankings in the 2015 edition. This leading international firm services clients north of the border from offices in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as partnering

supported by



with its network offices to provide a global offering to clients. It remains dominant in Scotland's energy industry, and regularly wins instructions to handle energy-related transactions, litigation and financing matters.

WALES

FIRM OF THE YEAR

Capital Law LLP

For such a relative newcomer, Capital Law LLP has established an enviable client base that includes The Royal Mint, S4C and the

British Medical Association. Since its 2006 formation, the firm has recognised the need for sophisticated, industry-specific advice in the Welsh market, demonstrated no better than in its market-leading status as adviser of choice for complex commercial agreements in Wales' burgeoning media sector – particularly its flourishing film and television industries. The firm is ranked tier one for commercial litigation and employment and, as to be expected, scores very highly across the board in our TMT subcategories. ■