



PUMP COURT

CHAMBERS

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CHRISTOPHER STEAD

“Christopher is extremely friendly and professional. He performed extremely well at the hearing and it was an excellent outcome, one which many others would have failed to achieve. I have recommended Christopher to my colleagues and the head of my department has also been informed.”

Instructing Solicitor

Call: 2008

For enquiries please call +44 (0)20 7353 0711 or email

Christopher is a civil practitioner with particular expertise in business, property, and probate matters, along with experience in personal injury litigation. He has a thriving court practice alongside a busy paperwork load, and is experienced at advising on, drafting, and appearing in proceedings before the County Court, First Tier Tribunal, and High Court.

Originally, Christopher practised as a tenant in the business and property team at Kings Chambers (Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham), having undertaken pupillage with Mark Harper KC and Andrew Latimer. He joined Chambers after a career break to be ordained in the Church of England and to lecture in doctrine and church history, where he was engaged in research and writing alongside teaching university students and examining.

Christopher often speaks at seminars for professional clients across the areas of business, property, and probate law, as well as co-hosting the Pump Court Civil Law Podcast with Louisa Simpson and Timothy Salisbury.

Christopher is a robust litigator and courtroom advocate, who can provide advice, drafting services, and advocacy, at all levels and stages of litigation, as well as assisting through ADR processes such as mediation. He is willing and able to pick up cases in the latter stages and at short notice, as well as providing hands on assistance from the very beginning of a dispute. He is able to approach instructions for court or advising and drafting with the client's aims and objectives in mind to be able achieve what matters most to them. He is thorough and precise in preparation, and clients value and appreciate his ability to get to the heart of the issues involved.

Business & Commercial

Christopher is the Deputy Head of the Commercial team within chambers.

His experience and knowledge across the range of commercial matters allows him to advise on, and appear in, cases involving multi-faceted issues across the commercial spectrum.

He undertakes work in a range of commercial disputes, and has had experience of many of the usual issues involved in connection with such litigation, including contractual formation and interpretation, franchise agreements and post-termination restrictive covenants, sale of goods and supply of services, banking and finance, guarantees, all in addition to aspects related to civil procedure. He has represented major companies as well as smaller traders and individuals, and he has appeared at all stages of proceedings, as well as being involved from the very beginning of a party's involvement in the dispute resolution process.

Recent cases by way of example include assisting leading counsel in advising on and drafting pleadings for a complex high-value contractual dispute centring around issues of agency and authority, as well as fraud; assisting leading counsel in advising on conflict of laws and anti-suit injunctions; advising on a six-figure construction dispute; advising on and drafting for a six figure guarantee dispute; and he has drafted pleadings for injunctions restraining breach of covenants and retention of documents, and can accept last minute instructions for urgent injunctions across commercial matters. He has a keen interest in cases involving allegations of fraud, and was recently called upon to assist a firm in a large disclosure exercise in a high-value claim involving allegations of commercial fraud.

Christopher's work in commercial litigation has of course included issues arising in relation to director's duties and shareholder's rights, and he has advised on partnership disputes. He is happy to receive instructions in all matters relating to company and partnership law.

Christopher understands the need to bring a sense of commercial pragmatism to each case, and is sensitive to what it is that the client wants and is best served in obtaining.

Property Law

Christopher has experience of various forms of property claims, both commercial and residential, and accepts instructions across the whole spectrum of property litigation. He speaks on matters related to property law for professional clients, including a recent seminar on developments in the law of nuisance, and will be speaking at the Pump Court 2024 Autumn seminar on recent developments in adverse possession.

In real property cases, he has acted, advised, and drafted in relation to the following:

- boundary disputes, including multi-day trials
- rights of way – advised and drafted, and providing ongoing assistance involving bins and passageways
- easements
- nuisance and trespass – advice and drafting in different proceedings involving flooding, tree-root encroachment, and interference with enjoyment through noise and emissions
- adverse possession – advising and acting in complex proceedings, including in the property tribunal alongside a determined boundary application
- proprietary estoppel and constructive trusts

He receives instructions in TOLATA claims, and in other cases involving the establishment of interests in land. His extensive probate and inheritance practice means that he is well-versed in the interplay between estates and property proceedings.

He has advised and acted for landlords in residential possession proceedings (including as against trespassers), and is able to handle the various and complex issues that arise under the different routes to possession. He has successfully acted for landlords in commercial leasehold claims, including renewal of business tenancy, as well as forfeiture claims in long leasehold disputes. He has advised on leasehold enfranchisement, and has appeared successfully in residential service charge proceedings. He has successfully represented clients in proceedings in the First Tier Property tribunal. He is regularly instructed in dilapidations/disrepair claims, both on behalf of landlords and tenants, and in commercial and residential matters.

Personal Injury

Christopher accepts instructions in all matters relating to personal injury. He has extensive experience of credit hire claims, and successfully deploys arguments for both claimants and defendants in such cases, including the dismissal of a claim on the basis of need, and resisting reductions in the period of hire.

He regularly appears in liability trials, and has successfully opposed applications for findings of fundamental dishonesty in road traffic accident claims. He has appeared in occupier's liability proceedings, he has advised on claims involving strict liability, and has been involved in industrial disease work. He is willing to take instructions for both Claimants and Defendants at all levels of personal injury litigation.

Christopher represents clients in interim applications in personal injury cases, including strike out, relief from sanctions, directions and allocation hearings, stage three MOJ portal hearings, and others.

Inheritance, Wills & Probate

Christopher regularly receives instructions in probate and inheritance matters, and is involved in producing and presenting training sessions on various matters relating to contentious probate and inheritance claims. He will be providing training for MBL in autumn seminars on both 1975 Act claims and contested probate.

He has advised on a number of different issues relating to the administration of estates and distribution, obtaining information about testamentary documents, rectification of wills, and executors' duties and powers. He also regularly acts on behalf of parties in contested probate cases and in claims under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975.

He has recently been involved in several cases (and some are ongoing) in which the validity of wills face challenge on grounds of capacity, want of knowledge and approval, undue influence, and fraudulent calumny. He has also appeared successfully for applicants seeking permission to bring a 1975 Act claim out of time. Christopher can assist from the very early stages in finding the most effective way of pursuing or defending a claim against an estate.

He is able to provide advice, draft pleadings, and appear as an advocate in contentious probate and family provision proceedings, as well as advise on procedural matters and strategy in achieving the best outcome for his clients. His knowledge in the law, alongside his experience in pastoral work, allows him to bring both understanding and empathy to clients who are often facing one of the most difficult and trying times in their life, and to work with them to find the best resolution.

Insolvency

Christopher receives instructions to act in matters of personal and corporate insolvency. He has acted for debtors and creditors in bankruptcy and winding-up proceedings, including complicated disputes and injunctions, and is able to receive urgent instructions in applications to restrain the presentation or advertisement of winding-up petitions, as well as applications to set aside statutory demands against individuals.

He has experience of administration applications, and experience of cases involving the issues and claims that arise during the insolvency process, including involvement in cases on behalf of insolvency practitioners.

Christopher has been involved in the preparation and presentation of training on insolvency matters, including a seminar on the 'Phoenix' provisions in sections 216 and 217 of the Insolvency Act 1986 delivered by leading counsel, and recently wrote an article for the Pump Court website on the recent change to the law on arbitration agreements and disputed debts in the context of winding-up petitions.

Qualifications

- University of Leeds – Law (LLB) – First Class
- BPP Law School (Leeds), BVC – Outstanding (highest in year)
- Baron Dr Ver Heyden Lancey Prize (Middle Temple)

Professional associations

- Chancery Bar Association
- PIBA

Outside Interests

Christopher has a young family, so much leisure time is happily spent watching them grow up. He likes regular weight training at the gym, which sometimes conflicts with a recently discovered gift of baking.

Hailing from south Wales, he has an obligatory love of rugby, and music, spending much of his youth playing the trombone in a variety of excellent ensembles; although he does not play much anymore, he still enjoys music of all sorts, and listens to it live whenever he can.