

## Christopher Stead

Called: 2008  
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### PROFILE

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Christopher is a commercial chancery barrister, with expertise in private client, property, insolvency & company and general commercial litigation.

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 regularly appears in the County Court, Property Tribunal, High Court, and ICC. Christopher 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 thorough and precise in preparation, and clients value and appreciate his ability to get to the heart of the issues involved.

He originally 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. 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, he resumed his busy commercial chancery practice at chambers in London. He also now often speaks at seminars for professional clients across the areas of business, property, and probate law.

### EXPERTISE

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#### Commercial Litigation

Christopher 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, and guarantees, all in addition to issues arising out of civil procedure and enforcement. 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. Increasingly, Christopher's commercial practice has involved cases with allegations of civil fraud.

Recent cases by way of example include:

- Assisting leading counsel in advising on and drafting pleadings for a complex seven figure 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 and settling pleadings for a six-figure guarantee dispute.
- Settling pleadings for injunctions restraining breach of covenants and retention of documents.
- Successfully appearing in proceedings for a lender concerning a six-figure loan.
- Advising and drafting in a dispute over agency fees and commission.
- Advising and drafting in a dispute relating to loans between individuals and ancillary issues such as equitable charges.
- Successfully resisting an application for pre-action disclosure in a case in which allegations of civil fraud were being made.

## **Insolvency and Company**

Christopher advises on, and acts in, matters of personal and corporate insolvency, and regularly accepts last minute instructions in matters of urgency such as setting aside statutory demands and restraining presentation/advertisement of winding up petitions. He has acted for debtors and creditors in bankruptcy and winding-up proceedings, including regularly dealing with complicated disputes. He appears in the ICC and interim applications list in the High Court on various applications related to the commencement of insolvency processes, as well as actions taken by insolvency practitioners during the currency of an insolvency, and is happy to advise on all matters relating to the administration of company and individual assets.

Christopher has advised on cases involving issues relating to directors' duties and shareholder's rights, on partnership disputes, and receives instructions in all matters in relation to company and partnership law.

Recent cases by way of example include:

- Assistance in a large disclosure exercise in a multi-million pound claim brought by company liquidators against former directors.
- Appearing on the return of a freezing injunction against a former director.
- Successfully applying for an urgent administration order which resulted in the rescue of a company and dozens of jobs.
- Advising a company director on personal liability and piercing the corporate veil.
- Advising personal representatives on issues arising out of the death of a sole shareholder and director.
- Settling and appearing in proceedings involving restoration of a company to the register.
- Appearing in disputed bankruptcy petition proceedings, arising out of liability of directors under personal guarantees for a significant debt.

Christopher is a member of R3.

## Property

Christopher is experienced across the whole spectrum of property litigation, both commercial and residential. He has delivered seminars on developments in the law of nuisance, and in adverse possession.

In real property cases, he has acted, advised, and drafted in relation to boundary disputes, rights of way, easements, nuisance and trespass, adverse possession, and proprietary estoppel and constructive trusts. He frequently appears in cases involving orders for sale and other possession matters. 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.

Recent cases by way of example include:

- Successfully representing the defendant in a multi-day trial in the tribunal involving a determined boundary application and counterclaim in adverse possession.
- Advising and settling pleadings in numerous cases of nuisance involving flooding and tree root encroachment.
- Obtaining an advantageous settlement during a boundary dispute trial.
- Settling pleadings in TOLATA disputes.
- Advising and assisting in resolving a long-running TOLATA dispute.
- Advising in several cases involving allegations of misrepresentation in the sale of property.

In landlord and tenant matters, Christopher acts for landlords and tenants 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 is regularly instructed in disrepair claims, both on behalf of landlords and tenants. His landlord and tenant practice includes social housing, and he has successfully obtained numerous anti-social behavior injunctions, access injunctions, and possession orders against occupiers in succession disputes.

He has appeared in long leasehold disputes, advised on leasehold enfranchisements and has appeared successfully in residential service charge proceedings. He regularly deals with issues arising from breach of covenant and forfeiture, and regularly advises and acts in leasehold disputes in the county court and property tribunal.

He has successfully acted for landlords in commercial leasehold claims, including renewal of business tenancy, dilapidations claims, and recently advised on a dispute concerning implied surrender and re-grant and the implications for a 1954 Act

## Private Client

Christopher regularly receives instructions in probate and inheritance matters. He has advised on multiple different issues relating to the administration of estates and distribution, obtaining information about testamentary documents, construction/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.

Recent (and some ongoing) cases by way of example include:

- Proceedings involving challenges to the validity of wills on the usual grounds of capacity, want of knowledge and approval, undue influence, and/or fraudulent calumny.
- Advising on challenges to validity of will involving allegations of forgery.
- He has appeared successfully for an applicant seeking permission to bring a 1975 Act claim out of

time.

- Successful claim for rectification of a will.
- Advised on issues arising out of administration in a seven-figure estate.
- Advised in several cases on the proper construction of a will.
- Advising and drafting in a dispute concerning payments made to beneficiaries.
- Acting in proceedings for removal of executors in a number of cases.
- Acting in proceedings for directions and determinations regarding executors' conduct.
- Advising and appearing in hearings in 1975 Act claims.
- Acting as advocate in inheritance related mediations.

Christopher can assist from early stages in finding the most effective way of pursuing or defending a claim against an estate or office-holder. His legal knowledge, alongside experience in pastoral work, allows him to bring understanding, empathy, and a desirable resolution to clients who are often facing one of the most difficult and trying times in their life. He also delivers training sessions for solicitors on all aspects of probate and inheritance law.

## FURTHER INFO

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### Education/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 Memberships

Chancery Bar Association  
R3 – Association of Business Recovery Professionals

### Privacy Notice

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