

Christopher Stead

Called: 2008
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PROFILE

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, First Tier Tribunal and High Court. 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. He returned to the Bar several years ago 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 now often speaks at seminars for professional clients across the areas of business, property, and probate law.

EXPERTISE

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.

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 and settling pleadings for a six-figure guarantee dispute; settling pleadings for injunctions restraining breach of covenants and retention of documents; and instructions to appear in proceedings arising out of a six-figure loan.

Insolvency and Company

Christopher receives instructions to act in matters of personal and corporate insolvency, and continues to build his practice in this field. He has acted for debtors and creditors in bankruptcy and winding-up proceedings, including complicated disputes and injunctions, and is able to receive instructions in applications to restrain 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 in cases brought by insolvency practitioners.

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; 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.

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 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: 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; settling pleadings in a TOLATA dispute.

In landlord and tenant matters, Christopher 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, and recently advised on a dispute concerning implied surrender and re-grant and the implications for a 1954 Act notice. He has appeared in forfeiture claims in long leasehold disputes, advised on leasehold enfranchisements and has appeared successfully in residential service charge proceedings. He is regularly instructed in disrepair claims, both on behalf of landlords and tenants.

Private Client

Christopher regularly receives instructions in probate and inheritance matters. He has advised on several 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.

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; 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; settling pleadings for removal of executors; settling pleadings for directions and determinations regarding executors' conduct; advising and appearing in hearings related to 1975 Act claims; and he has been instructed 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.

FURTHER INFO

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