

Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer

The Official Journal of Leeds Law Society

 Leeds
Law Society

April 2022
Issue 175



Parenting in the law, networking, public speaking and Education Week

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Local

Leeds JLD looks at what junior lawyers should consider when deciding their post-pandemic working options

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Clyde & Co and BLM have agreed to merge and create a law firm with global annual revenue of £700m+

Society

Catherine Woodward reflects on a thought-provoking, challenging and ultimately fulfilling year in office

Last Word

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Patrick Walker visits London's art galleries and considers pies, pasties and puddings



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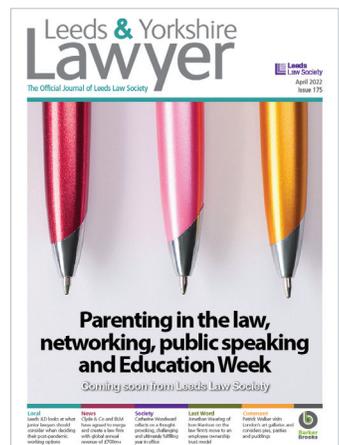
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Serving members in pioneering ways in these ever-changing times

A thought-provoking, challenging and ultimately fulfilling year in office



Catherine Woodward is a solicitor in the commercial litigation department of Gordons and president of Leeds Law Society

This will be my final column for the Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer, as I step down from the office of president of Leeds Law Society on 31 May 2022.

My year in office has been thought-provoking and challenging, and ultimately, very fulfilling. Due to the various ongoing COVID restrictions, and the new shift to permanent home-working (whether on a part or full-time basis) for most of our members, I have not been able to meet many of you in person. However, I hope to see some of you at our dinner on 12 May and I will still be attending and organising events for the society for years to come!

You will hopefully have seen the launch of Leeds Law Education Week, run in conjunction with the Ahead Partnership, our charity of the year. The charity has invited law firms from across Leeds to visit local primary schools to help young people understand the possibilities of careers within the law—not just as solicitors, but in all areas of the legal profession. I am pleased to see this event running in Leeds again, supporting social mobility in our schools and within the profession. If you are interested in joining us at this event, please do get in touch with Ahead Partnership for details—further information is available on our website.

There have been many changes over the course of the year that we as a society have had to face, many of which I was not expecting—from continuing work from home mandates to the move to a virtual office. Leeds Law Society and its members have weathered these changes and I believe Leeds Law Society continues to represent our legal community as a centre of legal excellence, with ambitious and innovative events for our members.

Leeds Law Society will be running the Leeds Conference again on 9 June 2023,

in conjunction with Leeds City Council, showcasing the business and legal professionals working and flourishing in Leeds and the surrounding areas. I hope to see many of you there and again, further details are available on our website.

The work we have done with the Joint V (being the law societies in Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol and Manchester) means that we can understand how the legal profession is developing across the country and we can work together on large-scale projects for the benefit of all our members.

I want to offer my great thanks to the staff and directors of Leeds Law Society for all their help and support over the year, from getting our in-person events running again to hosting innovative events such as LegalTech in Leeds with Whitecap Consulting. Leeds Law Society continues to serve its members in pioneering ways in these ever-changing times and I hope that you will continue to find support from your local society when you need it.

In addition, I would like to thank the courts and Bar in Leeds for their support. As a commercial litigator, the work I have done with the courts and the Bar has been invaluable both for my own career and for our members. Leeds Law Society has, and will continue to, work closely with the various legal professionals in Leeds to ensure that we are all collaborating to provide the best legal advice and support to our clients.

I also want to thank our sponsors, without whom we would not be able to offer the many high-quality events and services you have come to expect, as well as providing services to help our members excel.

Finally, thank you, our members, all for your support over the last year. I am sure you will join me in welcoming Matthew Jones as the new president of Leeds Law Society from June 2022.

Parenting in the law, networking and much more

Leeds Law Society runs regular virtual and in-person events for the benefit of members. Here is a selection of those happening over the next few weeks—visit <https://my.leedslawsociety.org.uk/events.html> to book your place

What? Parenting in the Law

When? 26 April at 12.30pm to 1.30pm

Where? Virtual

Cost: Free

Leeds Law Society is pleased to present its first event focusing on the experiences of parents working within the law. We have invited directors from the society to discuss their experiences as parents, what they think has changed for the better and how they have balanced building a successful career alongside their family life—all while working hard for their clients. Our speakers reflect a broad spectrum of parents, from new parents to single parents, and questions from the audience will be welcomed. If you would like to submit these in advance, please send to events@leedslawsociety.org.uk.

What? Networking training

When? 04 May at 10am to 11am

Where? Virtual

Cost: Free

More and more law firms are expecting their fee earners to go networking as part of their business development activity. It can often become a tick box exercise and so no one gets anything from it. In this webinar, Lara Squires FCIM, director at Consortium More than Marketing and self-confessed Networkaholic, will share her wealth of knowledge from 20 years of going to a variety of different events. She will provide insight into how networking can work for you and explain that networking is not selling. You will learn what type of events are out there and how to choose which to attend. The dreaded elevator pitch will be discussed and explained, along with how to make the events work for you. To finish off, she will cover networking etiquette and have time for a Q&A.

What? 'Tell it to the Judge' workshop

When? 04 May at 10am to 1pm

Where? TBA

Cost: £50.00 + VAT (members) / £75.00 + VAT (non-members)

Following the fantastic reception of last year's 'Tell it to the Judge' workshop, Leeds Law Society is delighted to invite back esteemed public speaking trainer, Emma Taylor, to deliver more sessions. 'Tell it to the Judge' is a workshop that equips solicitors who speak in court with the public speaking skills required to present clear and compelling arguments. It's a 'must-attend' for recently trained lawyers, solicitors who have moved into advocate roles and all diligent lawyers who don't relish the limelight. The workshop not only teaches participants how to arrange and develop a persuasive speech, it also imparts classical acting techniques, thereby boosting courtroom presence along with confidence.



As the chosen charity of the Leeds Law Society president for 2021-22, Ahead Partnership is inviting law firms from across Leeds to take part in a week of activity with local primary schools to help young people understand the variety of roles within the sector, meet role models from law and develop key skills for employment.

Leeds Law Education Week, taking place between 6 and 10 June 2022, will deliver an exciting series of World of Work Days that firms can sponsor and take part in.

Why take part?

More than 4,000 young people have benefited from this programme to date with 120 law firms participating, and 97% of the young people involved said it improved their awareness of the types of jobs they could do after school.

There are opportunities for everyone to volunteer their support and sponsorship through this programme. Your involvement will help young people in a really practical way and help them to envision a more positive future.

The programme allows businesses to play their part in creating a more equal and inclusive society, while reaching out to potential talent and the unique skills and perspectives that young people can bring to the sector.

All the activities in the programme are organised by Ahead Partnership with support and resources that help your colleagues get involved quickly and safely.

How does it work?

There are opportunities for everyone to support this programme by sponsoring and taking part in the World of Work Days. Your involvement will help young people in a really practical way and help them to envision a more positive future.

Once signed up, we'll arrange your World of Work Day at a local primary school, fully brief your colleague volunteers and provide all the resources your volunteers and the teacher need on the day to engage the pupils in finding out about the diversity of careers in law. We make taking part easy for your colleagues and an Ahead Partnership Project manager is on hand should you have any questions.

Ready to find out more?

Follow the link and complete the form to express your interest in sponsoring Leeds Law Society Education Week: <https://www.aheadpartnership.org.uk/leedslawsocietyweek>.

Hudgell Solicitors client set for six-figure damages settlement after High Court ruling

Hull-based Hudgell Solicitors has won a significant six-figure damages settlement for a man who suffered a life-changing brain injury when involved in an accident at a motorcycling track day experience in Spain.

The settlement follows representation by Hudgell Solicitors, which took his case for compensation to the UK High Court, overcoming difficulties given the accident happened in Spain, liability was fiercely defended and complicating issues over a lack of insurance.

The case took more than three years to reach court, with Hudgell Solicitors bringing litigation against the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB), the body that deals with claims involving uninsured or untraced drivers.

The man, who was aged 70 at the time, had been riding bikes for more than 50 years and had extensive experience of track days in both the UK and Europe. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and fractures to three ribs and his wrist in the accident, as well as significant psychological injuries.

He has since needed increased support from his family as he lacks strength and coordination, is very forgetful and becomes tired and frustrated quickly, resulting in a loss of temper.

Representing the man's family, solicitor Paul McClorry (pictured), head of travel litigation at Hudgell Solicitors, led the case on their behalf. He said a number of challenges had to be overcome, to firstly gather evidence to take the matter to court, given stringent denials by other riders for causing the accident, and also to secure a favourable judgment.

McClorry said: "Cases like this are hugely difficult as of course, firstly, because the accident happened in Spain, Spanish laws apply. Thankfully we have extensive international legal contacts and we were able to instruct a Spanish lawyer to advise us on liability issues under Spanish law."

"Then, as the rider who we alleged caused the accident was not insured, we had to pursue a case against the UK Motor Insurers' Bureau, which ultimately acted as the compensatory body on behalf of the Spanish Motor Insurers' Bureau."

"There was also the principal issue of 'fault' to determine, and what was crucial in the case was video evidence from our client's own camera, which he had mounted on his bike's handle bars."

"Using this evidence we instructed an experienced, professional motorbike expert, competitor and instructor to give his independent opinion on the riding and cause of the accident."

"The video footage showed our client being overtaken very close to a sharp corner on the track, resulting in the other rider cutting across him, then suddenly breaking sharply, causing our client to crash into him."

"We alleged it was dangerous and negligent riding on the other rider's part given the corner was so close. The judge agreed with us, although she did attribute 25% of the blame to our client. It is a good and fair result for our client in circumstances where the MIB contested each and every



aspect of the claim and fiercely contested liability."

Although the final settlement is likely to be more than 12 months from being agreed, McClorry said he will now seek interim payments for the client and family to help with care costs and home adaptations.

McClorry added: "This judgment will result in a very significant settlement for my client, but that now has to be agreed between parties, or decided upon by the judge."

"I will now be pushing for interim payments as soon as possible as, unlike in cases in the UK against UK insurers where interim payments are often secured before liability is admitted to help cover the cost of care and treatment, the MIB were not willing to offer interim payments before liability was determined by the court."

"This has obviously made life challenging for our client and his wife, as he needs a lot of care and support. To do this they moved some 30 miles from their home to live by their daughter and wider family, who now help them out."

"They are also in the process of having adaptations made to their home, including a walk-in shower and wet room, which hopefully we can now look to secure funding towards."

"The judgment will also pave the way to put in place a comprehensive private care regime, which will be beneficial to our client and his wife, as the impact of the accident on her husband, and their lives, has been significant too."

Speaking following the court judgment, the man's daughter said: "Dad's full and very active life as a husband, father and grandfather was dramatically changed forever as a result of this accident. This has impacted our family on a number of levels and has been incredibly upsetting and challenging."

"Paul McClorry and the team at Hudgell Solicitors have supported us in a highly-professional and sensitive way throughout, putting Dad's well-being at the forefront at all times. We're grateful to them for their help and sensitivity during what has been an extremely stressful four years."

Clarion advises on Yorkshire furniture store acquisition

Leeds law firm Clarion supported Mattress Online's buy-out of a Yorkshire furniture store.

Rotherham-based Mattress Online, supported by parent company Cocoon Sleep, has acquired The Skipton Bed & Sofa Centre, a business that has been operated by the Turner family for more than 50 years.

The deal, for an undisclosed sum, was completed on 9 March. It was supported by a team of Yorkshire advisers including Alex Cooper and Hannah Nelson from Clarion's corporate practice and their colleague in the property team, Lucy Elsom, who provided legal advice to the purchaser.

Fletcher Adamowicz and Ryan Wilkinson from BHP provided tax advice.

Cooper said: "It's great to see a successful Yorkshire business continuing to grow as it embarks on an ambitious buy and build strategy. The combination of extensive online experience with physical stores offers customers even greater choice and is sure to be a winning formula. We wish Steve and the team every success."

Late last year, Mattress Online revealed plans to acquire and roll out 10 physical stores over the next five years, blending its excellent customer experience and quick turnaround times with a traditional in-store experience.

Chief executive officer Steve Adams said: "Mattress Online's approach lends itself perfectly to providing a stand-out in-store and omnichannel experience."

"Skipton Bed & Sofa Centre is a business that's ready to go. We'll be keeping the same name and staff and we warmly welcome the team."

"Our data tells us that North Yorkshire is an area where there's a lot of opportunity and by investing in the high street, we're supporting town centre infrastructure and customers can still benefit from our extensive product range and economies of scale."

Mattress Online plans to open a nearby warehouse to support the new venture.



Gunnercooke expands payment options to include crypto assets

Gunnercooke is now accepting payment for legal and professional services in crypto assets such as ether and bitcoin.

Crypto exchange coinpass, which is registered with the UK Financial Conduct Authority, has partnered with gunnercooke to make the transactions.

The law firm, with offices in major UK cities including Leeds, London and Manchester, as well as Germany, boasts a full-service fintech and crypto practice that has built up a client base of around 100 cryptocurrency developers, platforms and exchanges.

Attestant, a prominent business in staking, a process used to verify cryptocurrency transactions, recently paid gunnercooke for its legal consultancy services using the Ethereum blockchain via the new payment option. The firm advises Attestant on a range of legal and regulatory matters related to staking.

Naseer Patel, finance director at gunnercooke, said: "Up to now, only a few US law firms allow for crypto asset payments so we are proud to be at the forefront of innovation in the UK. We will now be able to work with a wider variety of clients across different jurisdictions, plus offer our partners the flexibility to be paid securely in the way they choose."

The law firm's fintech and crypto full-service practice has experts in the UK and Germany, including James Burnie and Wolfgang Richter.

Burnie hosts the firm's Crypto Cast podcast, a leading source of industry news, featuring guests from Ziglu, The Law Commission, Copper and Nickel Digital Asset Management.

"We are delighted to be the first major UK law firm to officially start accepting payment in crypto assets," said Burnie, who is a partner at gunnercooke.

"It's vital that we accept payment in this way for our substantial client base, which spans the entire blockchain and crypto asset ecosystem. Accepting payment in crypto assets demonstrates our commitment to and understanding of this important and growing community."

"Over the next decade I expect to see a gradual transition towards cryptocurrency becoming increasingly accepted as a means of payment generally."

Jeff Hancock, chief executive officer at coinpass, added: "The team at coinpass are proud to be gunnercooke's crypto exchange partner. We're especially excited to be partnered with an organisation that has ambitions to push blockchain and crypto forward in the UK."

Robert Olsen of Attestant said: "Attestant is pleased to make this inaugural crypto asset payment in Ether to gunnercooke. We believe accepting crypto payments will solidify their position as the premier UK law firm working in the digital asset space. The firm has been a trusted and valued partner in our journey from a startup to a thriving business, and we look forward to working with them for many years to come."

Wake Smith supports launch of yoga business in Sheffield

Wake Smith Solicitors has helped bring Europe's largest yoga business to Sheffield.

The Hotpod Yoga franchise, brought to Sheffield by enthusiast Suzanne Williamson, focuses on the Vinyasa Flow style of yoga in a heated 37-degree pod complete with lights, music and fragrance, and is operating from Sheffield city centre.

Williamson has taken a 10-year lease on a prominent ground floor unit at The Tower on Furnival Square with the help of Sheffield's Wake Smith Solicitors, and fitted out the premises for classes with her team of seven yoga teachers.

Williamson commented: "My background is in hospitality and fitness, and I am looking forward to combining these worlds and welcoming everybody to Hotpod Yoga Sheffield."

Explaining her interest in yoga, Williamson continued: "I needed help with rehabilitation after sustaining a back injury playing Roller Derby and stumbled upon Hotpod Yoga."

"One class and I was intrigued, two classes and I was hooked. I felt super chilled after a session but was perplexed as to why Sheffield did not have a Hotpod yet. From then on, I set about making it a reality."

"This is a supercharged approach to an ancient and powerful practice that takes yoga out of its niche and into the lives of people previously untouched by, or uninterested in, yoga. And here it is in Sheffield."

Hotpod was started in 2013 and has become Europe's largest yoga business with more than 100,000 people participating in a class at one of more than 50 locations in eight countries around the world.

Tom Weightman, associate in the commercial property team at Wake Smith, dealt with the details of the lease, and said: "This is a real revolution in yoga and Suzanne is looking to attract, and convert, Sheffielders to a new take on yoga. We wish her all the best in her new venture."



Tom Weightman
and Suzanne
Williamson

Positive responses retain legal aid contract for McCormicks



The criminal law practice at Harrogate-based McCormicks has won a contract with the Legal Aid Agency to continue to supply services for both its own clients and those that need assistance of the duty solicitor.

Awarding of the contract followed a successful Specialist Quality Mark report. All solicitors in private practice dealing with

publicly funded work have to be assessed by an external auditor.

The report stated that the McCormicks criminal law

practice monitored financial position closely, completed file reviews face-to-face, and that all files reviewed were in "good order and easy to follow".

It said: "All the feedback forms provided by clients show very positive responses, which is a credit to the firm and shows that the firm is delivering a good standard of service to clients."

All firms that carry out legal aid work must also have their cases assessed by their peers, a process known as peer review. McCormicks gained one of the highest marks, underlining the quality of the work.

Peter Minnikin (pictured), partner and head of the crime and fraud department at McCormicks, said: "The comments are a testimonial to the hard work and dedication of my colleagues. We think it is incredibly important to continue with this type of work that supports people at some of the most difficult times of their lives. The recent independent reports show that we continue to deal with this work to a very high standard."

Squire Patton Boggs and Leeds University Business School explore ESG manufacturing and supply chain trends in new report

Squire Patton Boggs has partnered with Leeds University Business School to launch a report into navigating some of the manufacturing sector's key supply chain challenges.

The report, entitled *Rebalancing Manufacturing After Global Shocks and Stresses*, explores environmental, social and governance (ESG) supply chain trends for the manufacturing sector and is aimed at those seeking to improve financial performance, strengthen their resilience and gain a competitive advantage.

Squire Patton Boggs partner Hannah Kendrick, who is based in Leeds, commented: "2021 provided unique challenges for businesses operating across the manufacturing industry and it is clear that as we emerge from the pandemic, life will not just be returning to a new normal, but also a more resilient and sustainable one."

The report focuses on five pillars for businesses to consider:

- Resilience and innovation to gain a competitive advantage;
- Supply chains and customers, with the development of partnership models, fair competition and human rights;
- Organisational behaviour, demonstrating support to communities and people's wellbeing;
- Workforce, diversity and inclusion, upskilling and retraining; and

- Sustainability, including strategies for decarbonisation using the UK government's 10-point plan and energy whitepaper.

Kendrick said: "While ESG-centric policies will help recovery, global shocks have also acted as a catalyst for many new trends which businesses need to consider, not least the rise of human interaction with technology."

"This is an opportune moment for businesses to harness automation and technology to increase productivity and improve customer service. The opportunities around a green recovery will allow manufacturers to take advantage of financial incentives to drive business growth and support job creation for the recovery."

Professor Krsto Pandza from Leeds University Business School added: "Digital transformation and sustainability are the two most important trends affecting manufacturing companies. Both create innovation opportunities that require from managers to radically rethink business models, organisation of supply chains and internal operations as well as the way they harness creativity of the workforce."

"The future for manufacturing is bright if opportunities are explored with strategic creativity and imagination."

Funding connector Fund Her North selects Gordons as its legal partner

Funding connector Fund Her North has chosen Gordons as its legal partner following a competitive selection process.

Fund Her North is a group of more than 25 women in venture capital organisations who collectively have a combined investment power of £650 million. The funding connector is believed to be the only organisation of its kind in the UK that brings together women in the investment industry in this way to support female founders.

As exclusive legal partner, Gordons will provide female founders and their teams with legal advice throughout the funding process, including early stage, growth and exit. The firm's head of startups and emerging companies, Amy Pierechod, will lead the relationship with Fund Her North.

Gordons has been the sole legal partner of digital and tech startup investment network NorthInvest for more than three years and Pierechod is also the client lead on that partnership.

Commenting on the appointment, Fund Her North founder Helen Oldham said: "We were very keen to work with a legal partner who understood the innovation sector and had already demonstrated a passion for supporting female founders."

"Our experience working with Gordons at NorthInvest has already proved a powerful collaboration and we look forward to harnessing the momentum we've already created and putting it to work in growing Fund Her North."

This is the third corporate partnership that Fund Her North has entered into, following agreements with global wealth manager UBS and retail and commercial bank NatWest.

Pierechod said: "We are honoured to become the official legal partner of Fund Her North. The organisation



Fund Her North founder Helen Oldham and Amy Pierechod, head of startups and emerging companies at Gordons

has come a very long way in a short space of time and has made a significant positive impact on female-led businesses in the North."

"All of us at Gordons are looking forward to playing our part in further enabling Fund Her North's success and that of the businesses it supports."

Fund Her North was established in October 2020 by Oldham and six co-founders: Jordan Dargue, director of NorthInvest; Jess Jackson, head of investment at GC Angels; Charlotte Ashton, founding director of Implicit Advisory; Samantha Piddington, head of corporate finance at Deepbridge Capital; and Chi-chi Ekweozor, entrepreneur and founder of Assenty.

Morrish Solicitors relocates to new office in Bradford



Morrish Solicitors has relocated its Bradford office after first opening in the city 13 years ago.

The firm has moved to a new office at Malik House on 29 Manor Row, remaining in the centre of Bradford.

Situated in a grade II-listed building, the office has been restored to a high standard and is based in a city centre location with excellent transport links.

The office is also easily accessible.

The relocation is due to the growth of the Morrish Solicitors clinical negligence team, which is led by partner and department head Anna Sari (pictured).

Morrish Solicitors in Bradford is a Legal Aid Agency-

approved law firm for certain clinical negligence claims and assists with these matters throughout England and Wales.

The firm also has extensive experience in pursuing birth injury claims against NHS trusts in the Yorkshire region.

Commenting on the relocation Sari said: "The relocation to the new offices in Bradford demonstrates the continued success of our medical negligence team and sustained commitment to helping the people of Bradford as well as playing a part in the city's growth."

David Sorensen, managing partner of Morrish Solicitors, added: "It's the firm's 140th anniversary this year, and as one of West Yorkshire's oldest, independent law firms we are delighted to be moving to such superb, historic premises in the heart of the great city of Bradford. This shows the success of our growing and renowned clinical negligence team, as well as the importance to the firm of Bradford and our clients in the area."

New managing partner appointed at Raworths Solicitors

Simon Morris is the new managing partner of Harrogate-based Raworths Solicitors.

He took up the role on 1 April and succeeds Zoe Robinson, who stepped down after 10 years as managing partner.

As a current board member and head of the commercial team at Raworths, Morris has overseen the development of the firm's commercial offering into a fully integrated, high-quality service for a client base of privately owned businesses, entrepreneurs and high-net-worth individuals and families.

In the managing partner role, Morris will focus on driving the firm's vision of nurturing an outstanding team, delivering excellence and building strong client relationships.

Rachel Tunnicliffe, head of private client at Raworths, has been appointed as the firm's senior partner with a focus on client engagement, as part of this continued drive.

Morris commented: "Zoe has made a brilliant contribution to the success of the firm over the last ten years including embedding our culture. This supportive environment makes Raworths a great place to work, fostering excellence and making us one of the few firms in the North of England that delivers a genuinely integrated and outstanding service to businesses and private clients."

He added: "My priority going forward is to continue building on our strong team culture, delivering high quality work for clients and growing sustainably. As the last two years have shown, there is nothing that outstanding people working as one team can't achieve."

Clyde & Co and BLM to merge in July and create legal powerhouse

Clyde & Co and BLM have agreed to merge and create a law firm with global annual revenue of more than £700 million, 5,000 staff and offices in 60 cities worldwide.

The combination will conclude in July following a vote in favour by partners at both firms. The new combined law firm will be known as Clyde & Co going forward.

Both law firms have large presences outside of London, with Clyde & Co based in Leeds, Manchester and Bristol, among other cities, while BLM, a law firm focused on insurance risk and commercial law, has offices in locations such as Liverpool, Birmingham and Southampton, as well as Scotland.

BLM used to have offices in Leeds and Bristol, but decided to switch to remote working in both locations in 2020.

Following completion of the merger, BLM will become part of Clyde & Co's global insurance practice group. The majority of its lawyers will join Clyde & Co's casualty insurance practice, with other sizable groups joining the professional liability, healthcare and business advisory teams.

Carolena Gordon, senior partner at Clyde & Co, commented: "We are delighted the merger has secured approval from both sets of partners."

"At Clyde & Co we are always focused on growing and developing our offering for the good of our clients and our people and this merger does exactly that. BLM has highly talented people and outstanding client relationships and we are excited by the potential of this combination."

Matthew Harrington, senior partner at BLM, added: "We are looking forward to the opportunities combining both firms will bring for our people and our clients."

"This merger is one of aligned approaches and values, offering huge benefits to our clients in the areas that matter most."

"Combining our expertise will strengthen our market offering in the UK casualty, healthcare, and professional liability space, with true operational excellence and the agility to respond rapidly to the changing needs of the market."

Lisa Linklater officially becomes Yorkshire's first female QC specialising in Commercial Chancery law

Yorkshire has its first female Queen's Counsel (QC) practising in Commercial Chancery law after Lisa Linklater from Exchange Chambers took silk on 21 March.

The title of QC is awarded to those who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy in the higher courts.

Linklater (pictured), who is based at Exchange Chambers in Leeds, specialises in high-value, legally and factually complex shareholder and partnership disputes, corporate insolvency, and commercial litigation in the Business and Property Courts of the High Courts of Justice, as well as appellate advocacy in those fields of practice.

She is recommended as Tier 1 by the Legal 500 in company and insolvency and Band 1 by Chambers UK in commercial dispute resolution.

Linklater is the first female barrister from the North Eastern Circuit practising in the field of Commercial Chancery to take silk and the second female barrister in her practice area



from chambers outside of London to be appointed as a QC.

Commenting on her appointment, Lisa Linklater QC said: "I am very honoured and delighted to be appointed Queen's Counsel. The weeks since the announcement that I was to become a QC have been a whirlwind. So many friends and colleagues from across the legal profession have been so kind and generous with their warm wishes and sage advice, which I really appreciate."

"It is wonderful to be at today's appointment ceremony with my parents, husband, children, chambers' director and chambers' chief executive, all of whom have supported me in reaching this pinnacle."

Linklater added: "I am really looking forward to this next chapter in my career and doors opening to new opportunities. With the help of the senior clerking team across each of the three cities in which Exchange Chambers is based, which I very much appreciate, the transition of my practice to silk has been relatively smooth so far."

Commenting on Linklater's appointment as QC, Ian Spencer, director for Exchange Chambers in Leeds, said: "We are immensely proud of Lisa. She is blazing a trail for others to follow."

Christopher Barnes from Exchange Chambers in Liverpool also took silk on 21 March.

Commenting on the appointments, Jonathan l'Anson, chief executive at Exchange Chambers said: "On behalf of everyone at Exchange I would like to congratulate Lisa and Chris. This recognition is very much deserved and is the culmination of many years of hard work and dedication."

Halifax Opportunities Trust appoints lawyer as trustee

Dr John McMullen, an employment partner at law firm Spencer West, has become a trustee for Halifax Opportunities Trust, the charity that is working to make vibrant multi-cultural and self-sustaining communities across Calderdale.

McMullen (pictured) advises on employment law and risk and has many years of experience in acting for charities and businesses. Spencer West has lawyers across the UK, including Yorkshire, as well as a network of international offices.

Halifax Opportunities Trust has been operating since 2000 from its base in Halifax. Its projects span the length of Calderdale, from Halifax to the suburbs such as Boothtown and Siddal and valley towns of Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden, but its home is very much centred in the Park Ward area.

The charity was established to continue some of the activities of the government-funded West Central Halifax Partnership when it came to an end in 2002.

Practically, its work involves helping people to find new or better jobs, to learn new skills, to start or grow businesses, and to help raise their families.

Halifax Opportunities Trust chief executive officer Alison Haskins commented: "The trust is delighted to welcome



Dr John McMullen to the board. John brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him, which will be of huge value to the charity and our ambitions to improve lives across Calderdale."

McMullen added: "I'm looking forward to supporting Halifax Opportunities Trust in its work. At Spencer West we put a lot of emphasis on how we can give back our communities and our lawyers are encouraged to get involved with causes close to their hearts."

Plexus Law launches intake for apprenticeship scheme on 10-year anniversary

Leeds-headquartered insurance law firm Plexus Law has announced the 10-year anniversary celebration of its apprenticeship programme to coincide with the launch of its 2022 intake.

Established in 2012, the scheme is one of the first major legal apprenticeship programmes to be launched by a national law firm, designed to widen access to the profession to those from less privileged backgrounds.

The celebration comes as Plexus opens the application process for its 2022 intake, with applicants invited to apply for apprenticeships at the firm's headquarters in Leeds and at its office in Manchester.

To mark the anniversary, Plexus worked with providers to redesign its programmes for paralegal and solicitor apprentices, expanding their focus to a greater range of skills applicable to working in a modern law firm. These skills include horizon scanning, commercial awareness, and the practical use of technology.

The firm is currently supporting 75 solicitor and paralegal apprentices across five of its offices, including London, Leeds and Manchester.

Olivia Roberts, chief executive officer of Plexus Law, said: "We are extremely proud to be pioneering providers of legal apprenticeships through our sector-leading scheme, as we prepare to celebrate its ten-year anniversary."

"The scheme was designed to widen access to the legal profession to those from less privileged backgrounds, by providing an alternative route to qualification. It has proven to be a resounding success, with many of our early apprentices—who may not have otherwise had opportunities to enter our industry—moving on to have long, successful careers at Plexus and beyond."

Commenting on the Plexus Law apprenticeship

programme, Thomas Des-Rosiers, a solicitor Apprentice, said: "When I was finishing college, I was not sure whether I wanted to go to university. I attended a presentation from Plexus, which opened my eyes to the apprenticeship option. I decided I wanted to do an apprenticeship because I wanted first-hand experience of the legal environment and believed it would be easier to learn whilst doing, with the added bonus of also earning."

"Plexus were one of the early leaders of the apprenticeship, so I was able to hear from and speak with apprentices who worked there at the time to get a flavour for what it was like."

"The support network from Plexus; the management, talent and development team, and my colleagues which has really helped in developing me as a person and as a lawyer. I genuinely don't think that such a support network would be available in anything other than an apprenticeship programme."

On the changes being made to the apprenticeship programme, Roberts explained: "As the landscape for legal services providers continues to evolve, so too must our apprenticeship programme."

"For the decade ahead, it will not be enough to simply know the law. Instead, the next generation of lawyers will need a broader skillset to reap the benefits of technological innovation—including the ability to see ahead for the challenges of the future, demonstrate greater commercial awareness, and better utilise technology to improve outcomes and create efficiencies for clients."

"Supporting the development of those skills will help us to grow and expand as a business whilst setting up our apprentices to achieve the very best in the future."

Lake Legal appoints new managing partner

Lake Legal has appointed Claire Glaister as managing partner as the specialist family law firm gears up for growth.

The appointment will see founder Lyn Ayrton, who remains senior partner, concentrate on strategic development and growing her arbitration practice.

Alongside the management changes, the firm, which operates nationally from its office in Leeds, has made two new appointments.

Brooke Dempsey, who originally joined the firm as a paralegal, has been appointed as a newly qualified solicitor, while Rhianna Cameron, who graduated from law school in 2021, has become a paralegal.

Commenting on the appointments, Glaister said: "Lake Legal has grown to become a highly respected family law firm, and it's thanks to our ability to recruit and retain the best talent. As we look forward to our next growth phase, it's great to see young lawyers like Brooke and Rhianna developing their careers with us."

"I first worked with Lyn Ayrton over 20 years ago as a work experience student, and she has supported my career ever since that time. When I joined Lake Legal over 12 years ago,



Brooke Dempsey, Lyn Ayrton, Claire Glaister and Rhianna Cameron

I knew that I was joining a unique law firm that is a great place to work."

Ayrton said: "It's a proud moment for me to see Claire become managing partner, as we continue to grow and attract new talent to the firm. I set out to build a family law firm that put its people and clients first, and this approach continues to drive the firm forward."

Hybrid working: a hindrance or here to stay?

Danielle Hutchison, trainee solicitor at Ramsdens Solicitors and media and publicity officer for Leeds JLD, looks at whether junior lawyers should move back to a pre-pandemic 'normal' or onto a post-pandemic 'normal'

The pandemic proved that remote working can work. Although we were left with no choice but to adapt in March 2020 when the world went into lockdown, the move to

home working made many question whether we would ever return to the pre-pandemic 'normal' of full-time office working. Now, having worked from home for as long as I have worked in an office, my view is hybrid working is the most efficient, beneficial and best way to work as a junior lawyer, and here's why.

I, like many, found remote working extremely useful while on my training contract during the pandemic. I was able to attend far more meetings and court hearings during a day than I would have been able to had they been in person, while being able to put forward ideas for innovation and development throughout the pandemic. Of course, I missed the social side and being able to ask my supervisor a question from just across the room, but I found that I learnt by doing instead of questioning everything, which helped my confidence enormously.

Remote working also brings about a requirement for firms to be continuously innovative in respect of technology, which is of course an enormous benefit to the legal sector and those working in it. Digital investment is an absolute must in order for hybrid working to be effective, however, given this was essentially forced on firms in lockdown, most if not all firms are now much further forward than they would be in terms of legal technology than they would have been in the absence of the pandemic. Junior lawyers have been particularly prominent in pushing digital innovation, putting forward suggestions and new ideas as to how we can better use technology to assist us in working as efficiently as possible.

A further benefit reported by many is the increase in productivity when working from home. This is most likely due to not having a 'quick coffee break' that turns into a weekend catch-up around the kettle (you know you're guilty of it!),



as well as gaining the time you'd usually spend on your commute, which for many can be up to two hours a day (not to mention petrol money!).

An increase in productivity is, of course, a benefit but working from home can have its downsides. There is a lack of conversation, collaboration and company culture that many people thrive on. Anyone working in the legal sector will be aware that the profession can be demanding, stressful and at times can have a detrimental impact on our mental health. Initially, working from home exasperated this for some and brought about feelings of isolation and segregation from their colleagues.

For me, however, these feelings lessened over time and I made more of an effort to communicate with my colleagues, be it picking up the phone or organising a coffee catch-up over Teams on a Friday morning. It also encouraged me to attend more networking events and to ensure as many Leeds JLD events are in person as possible. This allowed me to manage this downside.

The most important thing for me when working from home is to set a time to switch off, and I mean completely off (get those emails off your phone!) and stick to it. Work-life balance is a hot topic nowadays but the right balance can only be achieved by ourselves. Remember, you don't have to say yes to everything!

Ultimately, flexible working is extremely advantageous to junior lawyers. It allows time for concentration but also time for conversation, and enables the freedom to work more efficiently in a way that suits you.

Hybrid working is not for everyone and, of course, flexible working includes being able to choose against the hybrid model. A working parent may prefer full-time at home whereas a senior partner may prefer full-time in the office, as that's what they know. However, for me, hybrid working is both my preference and my new normal. Of course, the answer to the question 'what is the new normal' will differ from person to person, but a mixture of office interaction and individual time to focus certainly appears to be the best solution for junior lawyers in order to work more efficiently, build and maintain professional relationships, and ultimately, to better themselves.



Moving on up

A round-up of the latest appointments and promotions in Leeds and Yorkshire



Womble Bond Dickinson has bolstered its restructuring capability with the appointment of a new industry expert.

Victoria Procter has joined Womble Bond Dickinson's restructuring team as a legal director, working in the firm's Leeds office.

Procter joins the team after spending over 12 years at Eversheds, specialising in all non-contentious aspects

of restructuring work for banks, accountants, corporate clients and other stakeholders, including distressed lending, restructuring and corporate insolvency.

The new legal director has significant experience in the finance and corporate sectors and, more recently, has dealt with failed domestic energy suppliers, which complements Womble Bond Dickinson's credentials in this sector.

Procter is well connected in the local and national restructuring markets with insolvency practitioners, lenders and other key stakeholders. Her recruitment strengthens the Womble Bond Dickinson restructuring team on both a local and national basis and will help the team continue to win mandates on high-profile matters.

Commenting on her appointment, Procter said: "I am delighted to join the Womble Bond Dickinson restructuring team in Leeds. My varied experience will enable me to play an instrumental role within the team, supporting the firm's existing excellent client base and their wider plans for growth in the restructuring market."

Andy Stirk, national head of restructuring at Womble Bond Dickinson, commented, "Victoria is an exceptionally talented restructuring lawyer and well regarded by clients and peers in the market. Victoria's appointment strengthens the expertise and service we provide to our clients, and we are delighted to welcome her to the team."

Wrigleys Solicitors has appointed Daniel Cooil to its

probate, trusts and estate planning team in Sheffield.

Cooil qualified as a solicitor in 2019 and has specialised in matters for private clients during his training and since qualification, with an emphasis on capital tax and estate planning for individuals and families.

He has worked in Yorkshire



for the past five years and has established a profile within the region's network of professionals. He is looking forward to expanding this network further into the South Yorkshire region to support the Sheffield office client base.

Commenting on his appointment, Cooil said: "Having studied and trained in Yorkshire, Wrigleys were always the stand out 'go to' firm for trust, tax and estate administration and it is a great personal achievement to be able to represent them in these areas."

"The firm is synonymous for having quality lawyers with the knowledge, enthusiasm, and commitment to giving their clients the best service and advice. Having been here for close to two months, I can see how the Wrigley's culture helps them maintain their 'go to' status."

He added: "I am excited to continue my journey with Wrigleys and learn from Peter Clarkson and Jane Netting who are two of the prominent solicitors in their field across the region."

Netting, who is head of probate, trusts and estate planning in the Wrigleys Sheffield office, said: "We are delighted that Dan has joined the Sheffield probate, trusts and estate planning team. Even though Dan has only been with us a couple of months, he has already demonstrated his expertise by providing detailed inheritance tax planning advice to clients and preparing complex wills, trusts and other documents."

"Dan's experience and knowledge will complement our existing Sheffield probate, trusts and estate planning team."

Cooil, who is also an affiliate member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners, added: "Although it has been strange to join a new firm during a pandemic and not to have as much face-to-face contact with my colleagues as in pre-pandemic times, everyone has been friendly and welcoming and made me feel very at home."

"I am looking forward to building relationships with current and new clients so that I can fully understand them and their needs, which will enable me to give them the best legal advice to assist them."

Ramsdens has strengthened its clinical negligence and personal injury offering with the appointments of associate Nick Stojanovic and litigation executives Ian Miles and Claire Exelby in Leeds.

Stojanovic, who brings with him more than 20 years of experience dealing with claims on behalf of both claimants and defendants, joins the team from Hudgells Solicitors, while Miles and Exelby join from Emsleys Solicitors and Bond Turner, respectively.

They join a clinical negligence and personal injury team at Ramsdens that works on behalf of claimants to secure compensation for life altering injuries that they have sustained through no fault of their own.



Commenting on his appointment, Stojanovic said: "It is a pleasure to start with Ramsdens Solicitors and to be back in Leeds after nearly two years away from the city. My welcome to the firm from everyone has made the move for me seamless and I look forward to representing my new clients."

Natalie Marrison, partner and head of the department at Ramsdens, added: "We are delighted to have Nick, Ian and Claire join our growing team, supporting the firm's ambitious growth plans across the region. Their extensive experience in the sector will further add to our reputation in our clinical negligence service offering."

Andrew Jackson has appointed Sarah Parker as a senior solicitor in its property team.

Parker's expertise across a range of property law issues, along with her knowledge of agriculture and rural affairs, will add further value to the firm's client offering.

With several years of property experience, Parker has advised commercial clients, such as rural land owners and farmers, on a range of matters, including solar panel farm and wind turbine projects, Selion land transactions, farming partnership agreements and Agricultural Holdings Act tenancies.

Commenting on her appointment, Parker said: "Having worked for another law firm in the region, I am aware of Andrew Jackson's excellent reputation for property work, as well as its growing recognition as being among the region's leading providers of services to the rural farming community." "I am excited to join the firm and look forward to using my



experience to provide in-depth legal expertise and pragmatic advice, which is tailored to the needs of the businesses and individuals we work with."

Geoff Phillips, partner and head of Andrew Jackson's property team, said: "Sarah is a valuable and welcome addition to the team, strengthening the expertise and services we offer to our clients. She understands the particular complexities involved in rural land transactions and negotiations, so it's great to have her on board and to strengthen our offer in this area."

"We are committed to continuing to build and enhance the team with experienced individuals who are skilled across multiple disciplines in order to provide the highest standards in service and value for our clients."



Squire Patton Boggs has promoted Leeds corporate lawyer Hannah Crosland to partner.

The promotion comes as a reward for an impressive body of work, including, most recently, the Clipper Logistics and Farfetch joint venture to create an ecommerce fulfilment service for luxury brands, and acting for the shareholders of Outright Games on the acquisition of a majority shareholding by EMK Capital.

Crosland is an expert in a variety of national and international transactions and the new partner has experience in equity capital markets, private mergers and acquisitions, complex company reorganisations, and private equity transactions.

Commenting on Crosland's promotion, John Alderton, managing partner of Squire Patton Boggs in Leeds, said: "Hannah is an exceptionally talented lawyer, well respected by colleagues and clients, who has made her mark at the firm."

"Her promotion is very well-deserved; she has made a significant contribution to the continued success of our corporate team and to the office as a whole. We couldn't be more delighted to welcome Hannah to the partnership."

Crosland's promotion came as Squire Patton Boggs elevated 26 lawyers to partner globally.

Catherine Scholfield has joined the disputes team at **LCF Law**. A keen litigator, Scholfield joins from a Leeds-based firm where she worked for seven years.

In that role, Scholfield provided legal advice to clients on a range of cases, including debt recovery, contract disputes,



landlord and tenant disputes, and insolvency. Commenting on her move to LCF Law, Scholfield said: "The career progression and opportunity to work with such experienced litigators at LCF Law made it an exciting career move for me. LCF Law is well known for its litigation work and takes a practical and cost-

effective approach to client work, which I really admire." "I'm looking forward to working alongside Ragan Montgomery, Tom Edwards and the rest of the team for both individual clients who might be challenging a will or have a boundary dispute for example, and for SMEs and larger organisations on a range of commercial property disputes."

Charles Abraham, head of disputes at LCF Law, added: "Catherine is a diligent and driven solicitor who is keen to expand her litigation work." "She will primarily work alongside two of the six partners within our team. Ragan and Tom help people settle wealth disputes concerning wills, trusts and inheritance and also represent clients in residential and commercial property litigation matters, so there will be plenty of variety and depth to the cases Catherine will work on."



Monika Volsing has joined the wills, trust and probate department at **Winston Solicitors** in North Leeds.

With a background in psychology, Volsing retrained as a solicitor, specialising in private client law. She now has eight years of experience in wills, probate, powers of attorney, deputyships and trusts.

She is also an Alzheimer's Society Dementia Champion and is a fully accredited member of Solicitors for the Elderly.

Commenting on her practice, Volsing said: "I enjoy meeting clients, recognising their needs and finding the right solution for them, ensuring my legal advice is tailor-made for each person."

Jonathan Winston, managing partner at Winston Solicitors, commented: "We are delighted to welcome Monika to the team. Her range of knowledge will be an asset to our firm, and we look forward to the added value she will bring to our clients."

Blacks Solicitors has appointed Richard Morton to lead its banking team nationally.

Morton joins Leeds-headquartered Blacks as a partner and head of banking law following his time leading similar teams at Squire Patton Boggs and Gateley.

He will work closely with Nigel Hoyle, head of corporate law at Blacks, to further grow the law firm's existing six-partner corporate team and to develop a standalone banking practice.



Commenting on his appointment, Morton said: "The Blacks corporate team is well established and has reached a level where the natural next stage for the firm is to develop a market-leading banking practice."

Morton added: "It is an exciting time to be joining Blacks. We are expanding across all service areas, particularly corporate, real estate and banking. Blacks' vision, values and its focus on diversity, inclusion and making a difference in the local community really resonates with me and our clients."

The new banking team will provide advice on a range of specialisms including acquisition and leveraged finance, asset-based lending, real estate finance, and restructuring acting for both lenders and borrowers.

Chris Allen, managing partner at Blacks, added: "We are delighted to welcome Richard to the team. Richard is renowned as a leader in his field and brings with him significant management experience."

"Richard joins us at a key stage in our development and he shares our excitement about the future of this great Yorkshire firm. Richard is completely aligned with our values and vision; he has lots of energy and ideas to take Blacks to the next level."



Wilkinson Woodward has appointed solicitor Aneesah Ansar to its family team. She will be based at the law firm's office in Halifax.

After completing her law degree and legal practice course at Leeds Beckett University, Ansar began her legal career in 2018. Since qualifying as a solicitor in 2020, she has handled a mix of family law work.

Maureen Cawthorn, managing director of Wilkinson Woodward, said the appointment of Ansar "forms part of our continuing plans to expand in Calderdale", adding: "We are pleased to welcome Aneesah to our busy family team. Her appointment will strengthen our diverse team of young, dynamic lawyers and senior legal professionals."

Cultural dessert



Patrick Walker is an independent mediator:
www.imediate.co.uk

Patrick Walker visits London's art galleries and considers pies, pasties and puddings

Most of the time, the limits of my cultural taste are a sourdough starter and an 'artisan' black pudding pork pie. But armed with tickets donated by a friend who has not quite given up on me, I headed for the Royal Academy and the new acclaimed exhibition of works by Francis Bacon.

I tried and I tried some more but there was no getting away from the fact (or at least 'my truth') that the artistry was almost as clever as it was unpleasant. I reached that conclusion before reaching the sadomasochistic section, but then again my friend (I shall call him Paul because that's his name) says it is all my fault for forgetting my safe word! Nonetheless, my considered view is that like most Bacon, it should be smothered in brown sauce.

Happily, the last day of a Constable exhibition revived spirits with familiar

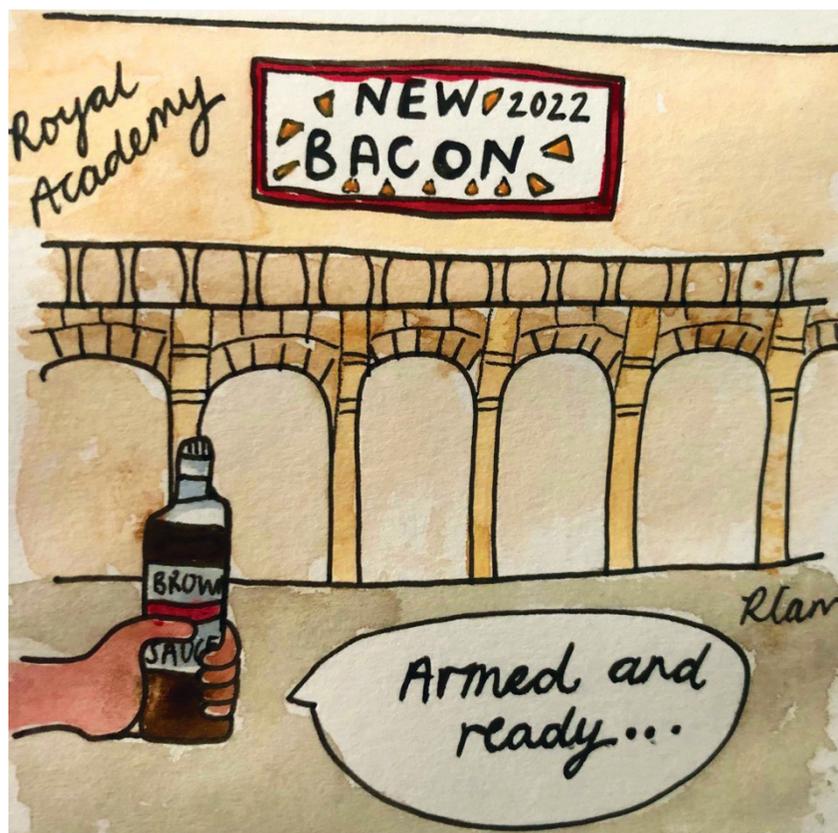
chocolate box classics alongside less well-known seascapes, which should have but apparently didn't give Turner a run for his money. And that reminds me that between exhibitions we sat down briefly near the café. I didn't enter for fear of almond milk and edamame beans, and then caught sight of somebody tucking into pastry squeezed from a familiar blue and white bag. "Bloody hell," I exclaimed to my other half, "he's got a Greggs pasty." My indignant voice carried and the man looked up and put me in my place: "It's not a pastie, it's a Turnerover."

Next was a trip to the Courtauld's Gallery. That part of the Strand is closed to traffic and resembles a building site. I thought the beeping noise came from a reversing digger but perhaps it was a warning of the queue of 'I've got my ticket to the new Van

Gogh exhibition, oh dear haven't you 'smugsters.

We didn't but those who charged through the newly renovated wing of Somerset House missed a treat. Even someone like me who is quite likely to regard Manet as no more than a pre-spell check Monet could enjoy that wonderful image of the French Bar maid (Manet's 'Bar at the Folies Bergere', apparently), the original proving a considerable improvement on the crumpled and Blu Tack-ed poster that followed me round student digs.

I'm on the train now. I've done my bit of culture for spring and am glad to be returning home to check whether my sourdough sponge is ready, or perhaps has taken over the kitchen. At least I have no difficulty in identifying my favourite masterpiece from the trip: it was a perfect tarte tatin flambéd with calvados!



Submissions are being accepted for the Yorkshire Legal Awards 2022

Visit www.yorkshirelegalnews.co.uk/yorkshire-legal-awards to begin the submissions process

Key dates for your diary

Entry deadline: 01 July 2022

Awards ceremony: 06 October 2022

FAQs

- **What is the dress-code?**
Black-tie and formal wear.
- **What time do the awards begin?**
7pm sharp, until late.
- **What is the structure of the evening?**
The evening begins with a champagne reception. Dinner follows, with the awards ceremony and then entertainment to end the evening.
- **Is there a set menu?**
Yes, across three courses. But individual dietary requirements are catered for. Let us know when you book your tickets / confirm who will be attending.
- **What if my question isn't covered here?**
Get in touch with Harry Thomas via harry.thomas@barkerbrooks.co.uk.

The Yorkshire Legal Awards brings together the region's legal community to recognise and celebrate its many achievements.

Launched in 2000 to recognise the outstanding talent across our region, this is a key date on the calendar and offers professionals the chance to come together for a memorable evening of networking, socialising and celebrating. The award categories cover everyone from the biggest corporate firms to leading barristers, from senior partners to rising stars, and

Meet the sponsors



the event itself is a glittering black-tie affair, and always sells out—so early booking is recommended.

2022 categories

The Yorkshire Legal Awards is open to individuals and teams in private practice and in-house, at law firms and companies across the region. Each category is designed to recognise the outstanding achievements of the entrant. Of course, if there is something you'd like to mention but isn't covered in the criteria, make sure that you include it anyway. The deadline for submissions is 1 July 2022.

Organisations

Suitable for law firms, barristers' chambers and in-house legal departments

- Chambers of the Year
- Diversity & Inclusion Award
- In-House Team of the Year
- Law Firm of the Year: Small
- Law Firm of the Year: Medium
- Law Firm of the Year: Large

- Lawtech Initiative of the Year
- Niche Law Firm of the Year

Individuals

Suitable for individuals practising within Yorkshire, in private practice. In-house lawyers are eligible to enter all but Partner and Managing Partner of the Year

- In-House Lawyer of the Year
- Managing Partner of the Year
- Partner of the Year
- Rising Star of the Year
- Trainee Solicitor of the Year
- Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year

Practice areas

Suitable for individuals and teams

- Banking & Finance Law
- Commercial Property
- Corporate & Commercial
- Criminal Law
- Debt Recovery
- Employment Law
- Family Law
- Intellectual Property
- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
- Private Client
- Regulatory & Compliance
- Residential Property

Judging

The awards are judged by a prestigious independent panel made up of experts from across the Yorkshire legal community. Representatives from the region's leading societies, business groups and local public bodies lend their expertise and experience to assess hundreds of written and video entries, and decide who should be recognised as Yorkshire's leading legal lights. The panel is reconstituted every year to ensure variety in views and backgrounds, and is bound by confidentiality and conflict of interest requirements to ensure its integrity and independence.

How to enter

Entering the Yorkshire Legal Awards is easy and free. Follow these simple steps and you'll produce a submission that our independent panel of judges will find clear, concise and memorable.

Pick your categories: There are lots of categories to choose from. Read the criteria carefully for each and decide which will give you the best opportunity to demonstrate your strengths.

Choose the form of your submission: We accept written submissions of

between 250 and 1,000 words per category. Written submissions are at their best after several drafts, with input from everyone involved. Remember that your entry needs to stand out from the crowd, so keep it active, free of jargon, and don't forget to proof your words before entering. Alternatively, you can enter a video submission. You'll have a maximum of three minutes to demonstrate why you, your team or business should win the particular category. Videos are easy to digest and revisit, and they allow the judges to put a face to a submission.

Submit online via the form:

Submissions can only be accepted via the online form. Fill out all of the required information, and make sure you choose the correct category from the list. The form must be filled out and submitted for every category. The form removes all formatting, so don't worry about italics, bolding, underlining or hyperlinking, as these won't make it through our system. Furthermore, no supporting documents and attachments are allowed, so don't use the attach buttons for CVs, promo videos, PDFs and Word docs—these won't make it through our system, either. Client testimonials must be collated by you and included within your written submission (and are included in the word count). Anything sent separately will not be accepted. For video entries, fill out the form as normal, mention that you are submitting a video, and submit the video file via a service such as WeTransfer.

Attach your logo: If you make it to the shortlist, we'll need a high-resolution version of your logo for the ceremony, programme and associated marketing campaigns. We accept the JPEG, .PNG and .PDF formats, but prefer .EPS wherever possible. If you don't have this, don't worry.

Attach entrant's photo: This is for the individual awards. Colour photos are preferred, and high resolution JPEG is best.

Sit back and wait for news: That's it, you're done! Approximately two weeks following the deadline, our judging panel will convene to make their final decisions. We'll then get in touch with every entrant to give them the news.

A reminder of the 2021 winners and recipients

- **Chambers of the Year**
Plowden Chambers
- **Commercial Property Award**
Addleshaw Goddard
- **Corporate & Commercial Award**
Gordons
- **Criminal Law Award**
Howard and Byrne
- **Debt Recovery Award**
Lupton Fawcett
- **Diversity & Inclusion Award**
Addleshaw Goddard
- **Employment Law Award**
Thrive Law
- **Family Law Award**
Stowe Family Law (Yorkshire Team)
- **In-House Award**
British Business Bank
- **Intellectual Property Award**
Appleyard Lees
- **Law Firm of the Year: Large**
Mills & Reeve
- **Law Firm of the Year: Medium**
BW Legal
- **Law Firm of the Year: Small**
Hägen Wolf
- **Litigation & Dispute Resolution Award**
Switalskis Solicitors
- **Managing Partner of the Year**
Andrew Meehan, Harrogate Family Law
- **Niche Law Firm of the Year**
Thrive Law
- **Partner of the Year**
Ben Townsend, Stewarts Law
- **Private Client Award**
Bell & Buxton Solicitors
- **Regulatory & Compliance Award**
Eversheds Sutherland International (Environment, Health and Safety Team)
- **Residential Property Award**
Lindsey Frith, Ramsdens Solicitors
- **Rising Star of the Year**
Haleema Ishaq, Addleshaw Goddard
- **Trainee Solicitor of the Year**
Elle Hirst, Chadwick Lawrence
- **Yorkshire Lawyer of the Year**
Neil Hudgell, Hudgell Solicitors



Stronger Together unites six largest law firms and accounting's Big Four

This is the first time that so many big players in the Leeds professional services sector have come together to collaborate locally on the challenges around racial diversity, inclusion and equality. **Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer** reports

Six of the largest law firms and the Big Four accountancy firms came together last month to form the Stronger Together network. It is designed to champion racial diversity, inclusion and equality in the professional services sector in the Leeds City Region.

Founding organisations Addleshaw Goddard, Deloitte, DLA Piper, Eversheds Sutherland, EY, KPMG UK, Pinsent Masons, PwC, Squire Patton Boggs and Walker Morris launched Stronger Together with an event on 11 March at Leeds Civic Hall, hosted by Tom Riordan, chief executive of Leeds City Council.

The Stronger Together founders tell Leeds & Yorkshire Lawyer: "Leeds is home to one of the largest professional services sectors outside London and each of the firms involved in our Stronger Together launch faces a similar challenge around ensuring equality from a diversity and inclusion perspective."

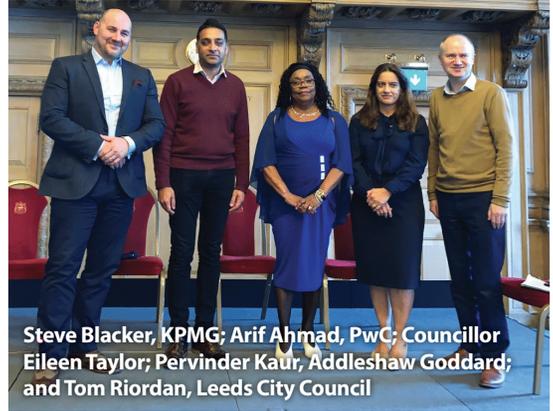
"By coming together, we can offer our people more local, visible role models from diverse backgrounds and learn from each other. At the same time, we are all part of national and indeed global firms and can take the learnings from others in our firms."

The network's efforts will include events such as the 11 March meeting, where panel members shared their personal stories around how they have overcome challenges in their career journey. It has also launched a cross-firm mentor programme that seeks to share collective experiences of equality and diversity challenges, as well as approaches and ideas on how to overcome potential barriers.

Recruitment initiatives are also planned to engage with local education, particularly at school leaver level, and showcase the diverse range of career opportunities within professional services.

An events and speaker programme will also be developed to increase awareness of career opportunities in the sector.

Pervinder Kaur, head of the Leeds office at Addleshaw Goddard and co-founder of the network, said following the launch event: "Establishing this network is a stepping-stone towards further enhancing an inclusive and diverse culture



Steve Blacker, KPMG; Arif Ahmad, PwC; Councillor Eileen Taylor; Pervinder Kaur, Addleshaw Goddard; and Tom Riordan, Leeds City Council

in our region's professional services firms."

"The focus on improving racial diversity, representation, progression and retention requires a different approach and for us all to work together. Having a succinct strategy around how to make racial diversity more effective has huge benefits for individuals, businesses and our collective success as a society."

Arif Ahmad, private business partner at PwC in Leeds and co-founder of the network, commented: "The diversity and inclusion agenda is personally very important to me. When we first came up with the idea of a cross-firm network, we were not sure how it would be received but I've been blown away by the commitment, support and enthusiasm from all of the firms in launching this network."

"This is the first time that the Big Four accounting firms and largest six law firms have collaborated locally on the challenges around racial diversity, inclusion and equality. I'm convinced that by working together on this topic, we will make a difference and am optimistic as to what we can achieve by sharing our stories, expertise and networks."

Ahmad added: "We hope that everyone, from the professional services sector, and beyond, joins us to engage in these important conversations as we create a safe space for people to celebrate best practice and learn how we become more inclusive together."

Riordan, chief executive of Leeds City Council, also commented: "Equality and diversity are right at the heart of our organisational values and we are 100% committed to having a diverse, happy workforce that is representative of our local population."

"I'm delighted our professional services sector is also embracing clear commitments to equalise opportunities and conditions for people who may not traditionally have easy access to fulfilling careers in the field."

"When a city and its workforce are aligned everyone wins as not only do you tackle inequality but you also benefit from a rich diversity of people and talent."

A promising future

Jonathan Wearing, managing director at Ison Harrison, on the law firm's move to an employee ownership trust model and what it means going forward

Ison Harrison has become entirely owned by its employees after the three shareholder directors agreed to sell the business to an employee ownership trust. Here, Jonathan Wearing, who has been head of the firm for 15 years and continues in his role as managing director, has the last word.

Congratulations on taking Ison Harrison into employee ownership—why was this step necessary for the business?

Wearing: Up until the end of last year, Ison Harrison was owned and managed by three director shareholders: myself, Richard Timperley and Dominic Mackenzie. In recent years, the business had grown to employing over 230 people at 16 offices across Yorkshire and turning over in excess of £16 million a year. Our 'Yorkshire Law Firm' business model of being one of the broadest, most

trusted and accessible law firms with branches all across the region was working well. We were benefitting from a heightening of the firm's profile and reputation and ever increasing economies of scale, which meant that we were attracting and servicing more and more clients across the region. Everyone at the firm appeared to understand what the business strategy was and a strong culture of inter-dependency between branches and departments had developed.

Despite the successes that we were enjoying as a business, we recognised that in order for the business to continue to grow and thrive, it was going to be necessary for us to look at succession planning. We needed to share responsibility for managing the business and therefore bring in others to become directors, and we needed to provide a way for the three of us to pass on ownership and eventually take out value from the business. We needed to think about future exit strategies for the three of us, as well

as provide clear pathways to those at the firm who were aspiring to become directors, continued purpose, comfort and confidence to everyone else working at the firm, and obviously security to each of the tens of thousands of clients whom we have represented in the past.

Therefore, when the possibility of becoming an employee-owned business was first introduced to us by our accountants, we immediately sat up and took notice as it seemed to fit exactly what we wanted to achieve. By becoming an employee-owned business, we have uncoupled ownership and management conversations. A trust now owns the business for the benefit of all of the employees, and a board of directors has been appointed to manage the firm with the brief and incentive to grow the firm's profits while maintaining its ethos and culture.

There are now eight directors appointed to the board, with Richard, Dominic and I being joined by Gareth Naylor (head of personal injury and inquests), Jenny Bland (head of property), Sarah Laughey (head of family), James Thompson (head of clinical negligence) and Richard Coulthard (head of commercial). The trust is responsible for paying down the balance of the purchase price to the three founder directors from profits generated over the coming years and distributing profits to all eligible employees. No third-party funding or debt is involved.

Those who aspire to be leaders of the firm in the future can see a pathway to becoming a director without needing to raise funds in order to do so. All employees have the opportunity to become more engaged in the business and can expect to receive a profit share at the end of each year. Everyone now has a direct interest in the firm continuing to grow in size and profitability as it delivers an increasingly broad and consistent service to clients across Yorkshire. Operating as an employee-owned business, the future for those at the firm is as secure as it is exciting.

What are some of the benefits of employee ownership, particularly for a law firm?

Wearing: The benefits can be categorised as culture, loyalty and retention; respect and reward; succession; and differentiation.

Culture, loyalty and retention

Like with most successful businesses, the firm's culture is something that we have great pride in. There is always a risk when businesses are sold that the change in culture can strain relationships and loyalties and good people leave. In becoming an employee-owned business, we eliminated that risk and simply built on what was already a very engaged, loyal and positive culture.

Respect and reward

One of the main benefits of becoming an employee-owned business is that employees are entitled to receive a profit share at the end of each year. The first £3,600 of each employee's profit share is currently tax-free and represents something of a target for us to try to achieve for everyone. However, it isn't just the prospect of a profit share that has helped engage colleagues. Employee-owned businesses heavily encourage employee representation and

engagement in the general running of the business and, as such, those who now wish to get further involved can do so and feel respected and valued as a result.

Succession

Succession planning is one of the biggest challenges for businesses and law firms have historically struggled in this regard. By becoming employee owned, and separating ownership from management, succession planning of ownership should never be an issue again.

Differentiation

We became the 10th employee-owned law firm in the country, which means that we have a point of significant difference from all of our immediate competitors. The structure and purpose of the business is really cutting edge and resonates with clients and colleagues alike.

As the legal sector becomes more competitive in Yorkshire, do you see the new structure giving your firm an edge?

Wearing: The legal sector in Yorkshire has always been competitive with firms growing, merging, acquiring, shrinking or closing each year. Running a law firm with a clear purpose, trusted reputation, strong financial performance and upward momentum is far from easy in such a competitive market, but we feel that as a result of becoming employee-owned we will be able to continue to grow as we have previously. Our hope is that the change will mean we have an edge in terms of engagement, recruiting staff and attracting clients. However, time will tell!

What do the new directors bring to the board?

Wearing: The five new directors who have joined the board bring breadth of knowledge, experience, energy, enthusiasm and hope. Knowledge and experience of their particular specialisms and the challenges that their colleagues face in their teams; energy and enthusiasm to push their areas forward, as well as to help engage everyone at the firm in the new landscape; and hope so that all those who aspire to become directors know that it is accessible and what qualities they will need to display in order to achieve it.

What's next for Ison Harrison?

Wearing: Our mantra is 'Always Changing, Always Improving' but in all honesty, we have experienced a lot of change recently and we need to settle into our new structure before implementing any further change. We will always look for opportunities to broaden our services both in terms of what we can advise on or where we have offices. Our hub and spokes model has worked well so far and I expect the number of branch offices to continue to grow so as to allow the firm to further enhance its profile and reputation, benefit from economies of scale, and ultimately provide increasing levels of profits for everyone at the firm to share in.



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