



Oxford

16 April 2026

9am – 5pm

Hosted by
Penningtons
Manches Cooper

Held @
Worcester College
Oxford - OX1 2HB



**PENNINGTONS
MANCHES
COOPER**

Chaired by

Charlie Shillito – Penningtons Manches Cooper

Keynote

Her Honour Judge Melissa Clarke

Speakers

Nicole Sandells KC – 4 New Square

Simon Johnson – Enterprise Chambers

Ben Smiley – 4 New Square Chambers

Dominic Tucker – iDiscovery Solutions

Imran Benson – Hailsham Chambers

Nicholas Parton – Opus Business Advisory Group

Matt Evans/Jamie Molloy – Ignite Specialty Risk

Duncan Crine – Mediator

Katy Manley – PNLA President/BPE Solicitors





0900–0920 Registration and Refreshments

0920–0930

“Chairs’ Address”

- Charlie Shillito - Penningtons Manches Cooper Solicitors

Charlie is a senior associate in the commercial dispute resolution team and is based in Oxford. He is well versed in litigation tactics and procedure, having navigated claims through every level of the English and Welsh judicial system, from the county courts up to the Supreme Court.

Charlie has a particular interest in banking disputes and professional negligence, especially APP fraud and Quincecare claims and negligence claims against solicitors. He has extensive experience in shareholder and partnership disputes and disputes arising from distribution and licensing agreements.

In the seminal Supreme Court case of *Philipp v Barclays*, Charlie represented the Consumers’ Association trading as Which?, acting as an intervening party. He is regularly approached for legal commentary on developments relating to APP fraud and has recently featured in *Saga Magazine* and *MLEX*. He is also a member of the Professional Negligence Lawyers Association.

Recognised by the legal directories as a leader in his field, Charlie is ranked as a leading associate in commercial litigation in the Legal 500, and a band 3 lawyer in commercial litigation and ‘Band 1 lawyer’ in professional negligence in Chambers UK. Clients have described him as ‘a very talented and capable individual’, who ‘engages with the details and merits of the case, and has sound judgement’ and ‘removes any stress from the process’. Charlie qualified in 2017 into the financial services disputes team at another international law firm. During his time there he was seconded to Lloyds Bank’s retail and consumer finance litigation team. He joined Penningtons Manches Cooper in 2020 from a leading global insurance law firm, where he specialised in professional negligence.

<https://www.penningtonslaw.com/people/charlie-shillito/>

0930–1000 *“Keynote Address – Professional negligence claims – A Judge’s Perspective”*

- Her Honour Judge Melissa Clarke

Her Honour Judge Melissa Clarke is a prominent Senior Circuit Judge in the UK, currently serving as the Designated Designated Civil Judge for Oxford and Thames Valley.

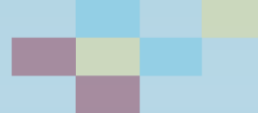
She was appointed as a Recorder in 2012, a deputy High Court Judge (Enterprise Judge) in March 2015 and later as a Senior Circuit Judge in December 2015. She became Designated Civil Judge in 2017, first for Thames Valley, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and then for Oxford and Thames Valley in 2024. She continues to sit as a judge of the High Court in the King’s Bench Division and the Chancery Division.

Judge Clarke has presided over several high-profile intellectual property disputes, most recently giving a comprehensive judgment on the subject of trade mark genericism in the ‘dryrobe’ case (*Dryrobe Ltd v Caesr Group Ltd* [2025] EWHC 3167 (IPEC)).

In the area of professional negligence, she recently gave judgment in the case of *Hodgson v Hammond & Dieleman* [2025] EWHC 1261 (KB), a case involving omissions to conduct clinical investigations, which is a relatively uncommon example of a case being argued on both Bolam and Bolitho principles.

She frequently handles high-value commercial disputes and property litigation within the Thames Valley area.

Beyond the bench, Judge Clarke is known for her contributions to legal education and the development of young lawyers. She frequently speaks at the Personal Injury Bar Association annual conference, at the Social Housing Lawyers Association events, and at national and international conferences and universities on various aspects of law and judging; locally she is a regular judge of the Oxford International Intellectual Property Moot and supports various initiatives of Oxford Brookes University law faculty including the CLOCK project bringing students into court to provide support for litigants in person; she acts as a mentor to junior barristers from pupils to those seeking silk.



1000–1045

*“Professional Negligence – getting creative.
Pushing the boundaries from a Chancery perspective”*

- Nicole Sandells KC - 4 New Square

Nicole Sandells KC joined Chambers in 2002 having developed a successful practice at the Chancery commercial bar.

The majority of her work falls within the general categories of Chancery, commercial dispute resolution and related professional liability, with a special emphasis on civil fraud and recoveries (both on and offshore), banking, trusts, property, and mortgage litigation.

Described as ‘a mega-brain, with encyclopaedic legal knowledge and the ability to cut through complex legal issues with ease’, and ‘a master tactician who is exceptionally bright and has a fantastic ability to condense significant evidential information’, Nicole is recognised as a Leading Silk for her Professional Negligence work.

In recent years Nicole has been involved in a number of high profile civil fraud and mortgage fraud related cases, including the *North East Property Buyers* litigation in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court (as *Scott v Southern Pacific*), where Nicole represented the successful lenders in a case with significant ramifications for the law of equitable and proprietary interests in land.

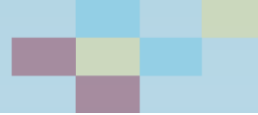
Nicole’s success for the Bank in the Court of Appeal in *Lloyds Bank v Markandan & Uddin* sparked a succession of cases pushing the boundaries of equity and trust law as a means of asserting beneficial ownership and recovering assets, culminating in a successful Supreme Court appearance representing the defendant solicitor in the follow up case *AIB v Redler & Co*. Nicole was also involved in the *Innovator (Brown v InnovatorOne)* and *Gaydamak v Leviev* appeals in the Court of Appeal, having been brought in to both cases for her equity and trusts expertise. Her most recent Supreme Court case, *Swynson v Lowick Rose*, drew on her extensive unjust enrichment and subrogation expertise. Success in that case has helped to define the boundaries of equitable subrogation, restitution and unjust enrichment.

As can be seen from her list of cases, Nicole is never happier than when tackling complex and difficult points of law, and relishes appellate advocacy. She enjoys finding novel ways to trace or defend assets and assert beneficial ownership, adapting traditional trust and equity principles to commercial situations. She has been involved in litigation, in England and internationally, seeking variously to recover and to defend assets for the liquidators of several failed Caribbean institutions, including appearing before the Court of Appeal of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court in Antigua. Nicole is currently instructed to appear as lead counsel in asset tracing litigation in several jurisdictions dealing with breach of trust, breach of fiduciary duty, restitution, tracing and the principles of accessory liability. Nicole is admitted to the BVI Bar.

Nicole’s innovation, expertise and reputation is such that her cases often settle to her clients’ satisfaction, even on complex and novel points of law, long before trial. Notable examples in the recent past include two multi-million pound fraud cases involving allegations of professional involvement by way of breach of fiduciary duty and trust, and professional accessory liability for knowing assistance. In both cases Nicole’s clients obtained 6 figure settlements beyond expectations.

<https://www.4newsquare.com/profile/nicole-sandells/>

1045–1100 Refreshments



1100–1145

*“Financial Services update: Afan Valley v Lupton”**- Simon Johnson - Enterprise Chambers*

Simon is an experienced commercial chancery barrister specialising in large-scale, technically demanding litigation.

He has particular knowledge of and expertise in group actions arising from failed property investment schemes and the interlocking specialisms involved: civil fraud, freezing orders, banking, professional negligence and private international law.

Simon also acts in a wide range of business disputes, including contractual claims of all kinds, claims for breach of warranty and fiduciary duty, together with company, insolvency and restructuring matters, particularly in the real estate sector.

The directories describe Simon as “a brain and a half” and “a fearless and compelling advocate”, who is “always up for a very challenging case”, while “seeing him on his feet and firing on all cylinders is a pure pleasure”. He is “an outstanding barrister who is a KC and High Court Judge in the making”. Simon is a seasoned trial and appellate advocate and has acted in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

Simon’s recent work includes:

- *Morris & Ors v. Williams & Co* [2024] EWCA Civ 376: Leading counsel for the successful claimants in a group action against negligent solicitors, who applied to strike out the claim as an abuse of process. Simon defeated the application at first instance and on appeal. The Court of Appeal’s judgment is the leading case on using a single claim form in multi-party litigation. Simon’s articles on this subject can be found [here](#).
- *4VVV Ltd. & Ors v. Spence & Ors*: Leading counsel for defendants to a £50 million fraud and conspiracy claim brought by 430 claimants. Simon conducted a 3 day application to discharge a worldwide freezing order and appeared in numerous hearings before the claim against Simon’s clients settled.
- *A v. B*: Leading counsel for the claimants in a £14 million group action against negligent solicitors and their insurers. Simon overturned an arbitration award obtained by the insurers by which they purported to avoid liability and outflank the claim and represented the claimants in a fresh arbitration.
- *Multi Service JG Ltd & Anor v. Maybrook Properties Germany Ltd*: Counsel for the claimants in a multi-million pound claim for breach of contract and fiduciary duty. Simon defeated a £500,000 application for security for costs, on the basis of stifling.
- Junior counsel for the claimants in 4 forfeiture claims regarding multi-million pound leasehold properties in London arising from breaches of covenants in relation to guarantor insolvency. The claims raise the issue of whether a novel form of US corporate reorganisation (a plan of division, the “Texas two-step”) infringes the rule in *Antony Gibbs & Sons v. La Société Industrielle et Commerciale des Métaux* [1890] LR 25 QBD 399.

<https://www.enterprisechambers.com/our-people/simon-johnson/>



1145–1230

“Professional Negligence Update – Mazur & more!”

- Ben Smiley - 4 New Square

Ben Smiley has a commercial practice encompassing all manner of business disputes. He is a leading junior in all his fields of practice.

He is described as “one of the stars of the junior Bar”, a “formidable advocate”, “a delight to work with” and “always first-rate”. Ben has been shortlisted for Junior of the Year four times since 2021: Professional Negligence (2025, C&P); Professional Negligence (2023, L500); Chancery (2022, L500); Professional Negligence (2021, C&P).

His commercial practice is broad, comprising the full span of corporate, insurance, professional liability, insolvency, banking and financial services disputes. His substantial costs and funding experience complements those areas. Ben also has a strong regulatory and disciplinary practice, which covers both the financial and legal professions, and sport. His sport instructions overlap with his commercial practice, and have included corporate, insurance and professional liability disputes, and governance issues.

He is praised for his clear advice and effective advocacy, in applications, trials and appeals. A trial judge described his cross-examination as leaving the witness “punch drunk”. He is able to digest complex facts and analyse difficult legal issues, in heavyweight litigation. He has appeared in the Supreme Court three times, most recently having success in the Supreme Court in *Armstead v RSA* – an important decision on issues including remoteness and the burden of proof.

Ben’s cases often have an international element, with work that has involved the Middle East, Africa, South America, Central Asia and the common offshore jurisdictions. Ben also deals with cases involving allegations of the utmost seriousness: fraud, dishonesty, deliberate wrongdoing and recklessness.

More detail in respect of the areas in which Ben accepts instructions can be found below.

Ben is named a “Leading Junior” in Chambers & Partners and Legal 500. Comments include:

- “Excellent – great to work with and brilliant with clients.”
- “Ben Smiley is very intellectual and sharp.”
- “Ben is a good junior to work with. He is very responsive and gets into the paperwork – an upcoming star.”
- “Ben is an absolute delight to work with. Charming, hard-working and prepared to get stuck in.”
- “Ben takes a measured and methodical approach, advises the client in clear and transparent terms, and is very much a rising star capable of dealing with the most complex of disputes and drilling down into the key issues.”
- “He is approachable and easy to work with. Ben is flexible and is able to adapt on tricky nuanced cases. He is good at thinking on his feet.”

Early in his career, Ben undertook secondments at international law firms and the Financial Services Authority (now the Financial Conduct Authority), working on international commercial cases, insurance matters, financial services regulation, professional liability work and sports disputes.

Just as comfortable providing advice as making submissions, and equally adept at written work as in court or conference, Ben has a keen understanding of the needs and objectives of solicitors, insurers and lay clients. He is happy to accept instructions in matters which cross the spectrum of 4 New Square’s work. <https://www.4newsquare.com/profile/ben-smiley/>

1230–1245

“Document Management Update”

- Dominic Tucker - iDiscovery Solutions

Before joining iDS, Dominic developed his consultative expertise in eDiscovery over the course of 15 years, consulting on the use of technology in support of a range of significant investigations, High Court litigations, and arbitration matters across public and private sectors. In his previous role, Dominic lead EMEA operations and eDiscovery consulting for another leading eDiscovery provider.

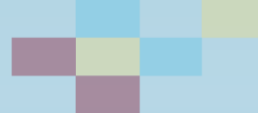
At iDS, Dominic’s role is focused on the application of technology across all phases of disclosure, including the use of analytics and predictive coding, and he has a particular interest in the Disclosure Pilot Scheme currently proceeding in the English courts. Since the introduction of the GDPR, Dominic has also assisted various law firms and corporations to manage their responses to high volumes of Data Subject Access Requests (DSARS).

https://idsinc.com/en_gb/team/dominic-tucker/

1245–1300

“Questions and discussion”

1300–1400 Lunch



1400–1445

“Insurance Issues and Interesting things about Interest”

- Imran Benson - Hailsham Chambers

Imran Benson (Call 2005) practises in professional negligence and commercial litigation, with a focus on complex, document-heavy claims against solicitors, property/construction professionals and financial professionals, often involving fraud or multi-party dynamics.

He has substantial group/collective actions experience, including for mass investor claimants in property schemes and both generations of the NOx litigation (the biggest group action ever in the Courts), and is regularly instructed by national, City and international firms. Directories describe him as “an outstanding player in the professional negligence field... extremely responsive...” (Legal 500) and note that he provides “practical, commercial advice... in a user-friendly manner” (Legal 500). He was nominated Professional Negligence Junior of the Year (Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners, 2024).

Recent cases include: *Gable v Dewesall* [2025] EWHC 2280 (successful claim by liquidators against former CEO and FD for breach of duty leading to judgments worth >£10m); *Skykomish v Gerald Eve LLP* [2025] EWHC 1031 (successfully defended a £16.5m valuation claim; judge praised “skilful... forensic cross-examination”); *AO v GC* [2023] KB (claim dismissed mid-trial after cross-examination; judge described counsel as “silks in all but name”); and was briefed in a three-month c.£100m TCC trial commencing October 2024 settled shortly before opening (The Lawyer Top 20 case 2024).

<https://www.hailshamchambers.com/our-people/profile/imran-benson>

1445–1530

“War stories and quantifying the damages”

- Nicholas Parton - Head of Forensic Accounting – Opus Business Advisory Group

Nicholas is head of the forensic accounting team at Opus. He has previously worked for the Big4 and forensic boutiques in New York, Tokyo and London. He acts as an expert witness in litigation disputes, advises on complex quantum matters and investigates fraud, corruption and bribery. Nicholas led the first investigation into a fraud perpetrated at Cubits, the UK’s first cryptocurrency exchange Admin and Liquidation.

Accreditation - Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)

https://opusllp.com/staff_member/nicholas-parton/

1530–1545

“Litigation Funding Update”

- Matt Evans & Jamie Molloy - Ignite Specialty Risk

Jamie Molloy has worked in the ATE market for the past 17 years.

His experience includes underwriting and managing a significant volume of High Court disputes as well as supporting successful appeals to both the Court of Appeal (*Salt v Stratstone Specialist Ltd* [2015] EWCA Civ745) and Supreme Court (*Braganza v BP Shipping Ltd* [2015] UKSC 17).

Jamie has created bespoke hedging products for commercial litigation funders and also a number of novel insurance schemes across the areas of privacy, property, and nuisance litigation.

He holds both Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Law as well as Cilex and CII qualifications and has a keen interest in the development of the litigation risk transfer market, having written both his undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations around these topics.

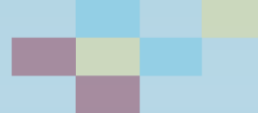
Matt Evans is currently a Technical Underwriter at Ignite Specialty Risk. He joined the firm in February 2025 as a Litigation Portfolio Manager and oversees diverse litigation portfolios, including corporate disputes, group claims, and catastrophe claims in the High Court.

Before transitioning to the litigation insurance sector, Evans spent over 17 years in high-level legal practice:

He is ranked by Chambers and Partners for Litigation Support and has been described by Legal 500 as an "outstanding litigator". He holds a deep technical understanding of litigation strategy and risk assessment, which he now applies to underwriting After-the-Event (ATE) insurance and other risk transfer products.

www.ignitespecialty.co.uk

1545–1600 Refreshments



1600–1645

"Making the most of mediation"

- Duncan Crine - Mediator

Duncan is an accredited Civil and Commercial Mediator with a background of more than 30 years as a solicitor in London and Oxford specialising in litigation and dispute resolution, including over 20 years in partner roles primarily at large national law firms.

Duncan is able to mediate a wide range of disputes, including:

professional negligence and related insurance policy coverage issues

property, probate, estates and trust disputes

corporate and M&A claims, shareholder unfair prejudice claims and partnership disputes

B2B contract disputes (manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, customers).

Testimonial: *"I would have no hesitation in recommending Duncan as a commercial mediator. [He] managed the mediation well... allowed dialogue to flow and intervened appropriately when he thought it necessary... The mediation was helpful in firstly bringing the other party to the table, and in producing a settlement we were comfortable with."*

- Company director / mediation participant, 2025

<https://www.duncancrinemediation.co.uk/>

1645–1700

"Questions and discussion - Closing remarks"

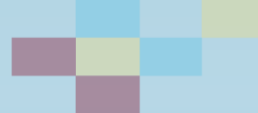
- Katy Manley - PNLA President – BPE Solicitors

Katy Manley trained in London and qualified as a solicitor in 1989 moving to the west country in 1991.

She was made an equity partner in a leading Bristol practice in 1995 becoming Head of the Professional Negligence team. She remained with this firm until the launch of Manley Turnbull in 2006 which, until closure in 2022, specialised in professional negligence claims.

Katy is a founder member and President of the Professional Negligence Lawyers Association ('PNLA') launched in 2004. With the management team, Katy has been responsible for arranging seminars and events, lobbying Government and consultation with regulatory and other bodies. Through the PNLA seminars Katy has developed a very strong network of relationships with members of the Bar, experts and solicitors throughout the UK and Ireland with an identity of interest in this niche practice area.

Katy is one of the leading names for claimant professional negligence work and is known not only for her practice but also for publishing articles and lecturing on the subject.



Terms and conditions in relation to courses, seminars and conferences ('events') provided by The Professional Negligence Lawyers' Association (PNLA) and organised by PNLA Training Ltd. (PNLA Training)

1. The full fee invoice for the conference ticket is payable.
2. For conferences taking place at a venue on a fixed date, if cancellation is received in writing at least 21 working days before the event the fee will be credited less a £75 administration charge. Substitutions are welcome at any time subject to any variation in price that might be payable if the substitute is not entitled to a discount as a PNLA member or specialist.
3. For virtual conferences the ticket(s) purchased are for the individual delegate(s) named in the booking. If a delegate gives access to the recorded speaker programme to others, then they agree to pay for a ticket at the full fee for all those delegates who watch the programme deriving from such access.
4. The booking constitutes a legally binding contract. The delegate and their employer/partnership/other practice entity are jointly and severally liable for payment of all the fees due.
5. The PNLA and PNLA Training reserve the right without prior notice to vary or cancel an event where the occasion necessitates including changing the password for virtual conference programmes.
6. The PNLA and PNLA Training accept no liability if, for whatever reason, the event does not take place or access online is not possible.
7. Large print versions of the handouts can be made available by prior request. If sufficient notice is not received, it will be provided as soon as possible after the event.
8. If there are insufficient rooms in the hotel to accommodate all delegates who require one when an overnight stay is involved, we will try to arrange for rooms of a similar quality in a nearby hotel, but the organisers cannot be held responsible if such rooms are not available. Any additional cost will be invoiced to the delegate.
9. To the extent permitted by law, it is agreed that the PNLA, PNLA Training Limited presenters and speakers will not be liable by reason of breach of contract, negligence or otherwise for any loss or consequential loss occasioned to any person acting, omitting to act or refraining from acting in reliance upon the course material or presentation of the event, or, except to the extent that any such loss does not exceed the price of the event, arising from or connected with any error or omission in the material or presentation of the event. Consequential loss shall be deemed to include, but not limited to, any loss of profits or anticipated profits, damage to reputation or goodwill, loss of business or anticipated business, damages, costs, expenses incurred or payable to any third party or any other indirect or consequential losses.
10. The personal information provided by you will be held on a database and you may be contacted from time to time by The PNLA and PNLA Training with details of events and services that may be of interest to you. If you do not wish your details to be used for this purpose, please write to: The Database Manager, PNLA, PO Box 1685, Congresbury, Bristol, BS 49 5WQ or email: yvonne.fairbrother@pnla.org.uk

PNLA Training Ltd - Costs

Cost for conference

PNLA Members: £225 plus VAT
Non-members: £300 plus VAT

Bank Details: HSBC
S/C 40 17 50 - A/C: 51367706

Please contact by email yvonne.fairbrother@pnla.org.uk to arrange payment and reserve your place.

or via our website:

<https://www.pnla.org.uk/event/professional-negligence-liability-pnla-pennington-manches-cooper-conference-oxford-16-april-2026/>