



Rankings in alphabetical order:

Leading Set - **CHANCERY: COMMERCIAL**

Perhaps the single most attractive quality of 11 Stone Buildings is the sheer number of disciplines in which its members are experienced. The set is well known for its expertise in fraud, IP, insolvency and real property law, as well as company and trusts litigation. The recent arrival of two new silks has been a real fillip for a set which is now seen as being on the up as a result of advances made since the arrival a couple of years ago of chambers director Michael Couling.

The "very impressive" **Jeremy Cousins QC** joins from Selborne Chambers, a move which has given added vigour to the set. His is a broad-based, classic commercial chancery practice, which has lately seen him take on a number of high-stakes banking and finance cases. Cousins joins the likes of the highly respected **Alan Gourgey QC**, who is "a fantastic advocate" with an enviable reputation for his efforts in disputes involving joint ventures, franchising, commodities contracts, share sale agreements and banking issues. His work is taking on an increasingly international dimension. Another new and highly prized acquisition is "top-quality lawyer" **Lexa Hilliard QC**, who joins from 3-4 South Square. Among her recent cases, she has acted in a shareholder dispute pertaining to a pharmaceutical company, and is appearing in a similar dispute regarding a group of companies operating in Australia and the United Arab Emirates. This "canny tactician" has also handled a number of professional negligence actions against law and accountancy firms.

Sources recommend senior junior **Tim Penny** as a "superb and charming advocate." A lot of his work before the Chancery Division is fraud-related, or else involves claims of breach of fiduciary duty. He has been busy of late acting in the matter of *Jenington & Others v Assaubayev & Others*, a major piece of litigation concerning fraud claims against the former controllers of a Kazakh mining operation. Distinguished colleague **Edward Cohen** has a well-deserved reputation at the Chancery Bar and beyond for his work on all manner of commercial chancery cases, ranging from contract and shareholder disputes to property litigation and tax avoidance claims. A "very bright man who is doing very well," **Jonathan Lopian** has a chancery practice that is roughly equally divided between insolvency and company law disputes arising from breaches of contract, breaches of fiduciary duty and the disqualification of directors. **Birgitta Meyer** also impresses market sources with her forceful and effective advocacy. A number of legal areas make up her practice, among them insolvency, an area in which she is considered an expert. **Iain Pester** comes highly recommended for his strong work across the spectrum of commercial chancery. His work takes in contract, shareholder, partnership and joint venture disputes, as well as insolvency

and fraud actions. His good working knowledge of German and Russian are appreciated by clients from CEE. Finally, **Jamie Riley** enjoys a growing profile due to the strength of his varied company, fraud and insolvency law practice. He has an interesting line in sports and media law as well. **Max Mallin** enjoys the support of instructing solicitors for the depth and breadth of his knowledge base. His extensive understanding of financial disputes is underlined by his background in investment banking. **David Peters** provides guidance on a diverse selection of concerns spanning company, partnership, contractual and insolvency disputes. Highlights include acting for the All England Lawn Tennis Club over urgent relief on the illegal resale of Wimbledon tickets.

Leading Silk and Junior - COMMERCIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alan Gourgey QC of 11 Stone Buildings is a particular favourite amongst solicitors thanks to his "hands-on approach" and "easy manner with clients." They further note: "He quickly grasps, and then clearly explains, the most complex of issues." He recently advised Hawksford Trustees on various claims valued at between £10 million and £20 million relating to a share sale agreement for a travel group of companies. At the same set, **Max Mallin** also impresses market observers as an "astute and user-friendly" junior. Having worked in international investment banking before being called to the Bar, Mallin's practice is centred on commercial disputes arising within financial markets.

Leading Set - COMPANY

11 Stone Buildings is an insolvency law set that handles a good amount of company work as an offshoot. Areas which its barristers handle include shareholder disputes, directors' disqualifications, directors' duties, the allotment and transfer of shares, reductions of capital and procedural matters relating to companies such as meetings and resolutions. Commentators note the set has modernised greatly in recent years and now offers forward-thinking practitioners who understand the needs of modern solicitors. These counsel are ably assisted by clerks who are praised for "ensuring the work is done even when instructions to attend court have been sent at an hour's notice."

Jane Giret QC is "an extremely knowledgeable and persuasive advocate who often takes an unexpected stance and approaches cases from an interesting angle."

Marcia Shekerdemian is favoured for "her excellent way with judges, solicitors and clients." In a recent case, *Re Colliers International UK*, she represented a property consultant in relation to the cancellation of its share premium account. **Tina Kyriakides** recently acted in a substantial dispute relating to a share sale agreement and advised a majority shareholder of a company in relation to a section 994 petition. Commentators say: "She is easy to underestimate. She's no tub-thumper, but gets along very nicely indeed."

Leading Set – FRAUD CIVIL

In the last couple of years or so it has been all change at 11 Stone Buildings. The set has acquired a new clerk in Michael Couling, a new marketing and business development manager, and has sought to extend itself beyond its traditional heavily insolvency-oriented base. It has succeeded in doing this to a certain extent and now involves itself in an increased share of the fraud market. Examples of cases it has handled in recent times include *Rosenberg v Nazarov* and a £500 million Kazakhstani gold mining fraud.

Alan Gourgey QC is "a bright professional who fully understands that speed is frequently of the essence," according to solicitors. He recently acted on the Chancery Division fraud claim of *Cadogan v Tolley*.

Max Mallin brings considerable real-world experience to bear on his cases as he is a former investment banker. Sources were quick to praise him as "generous with his time, friendly, and someone who comes across well to judges and clients alike." They also commended **Iain Pester**, who recently advised the claimant in *Abbey Forwarding v Hone*. His Russian language skills are particularly welcome in this era of Russian and CIS-dominated litigation, and he is universally regarded as "an accomplished and impressive performer." Former solicitor **Ian Smith** has a broad practice that takes in POCA litigation as well as general civil fraud matters. Interviewees point to his "commercial outlook and ease of use" as reasons to retain him. He is a frequent sight in High Court fraud claims, and recently handled a matter worth more than £10 million. He is at the same set as **Tim Penny**, who is well liked for his "broad knowledge of injunctive relief" and is known for his "commercially minded application of the law." His recent highlights include the *Jenington v Assaubayev* dispute.

Leading Set - INSOLVENCY

11 Stone Buildings is a set on the move, as evidenced by its hire of two silks in the past year or so. It continues to impress with its offering across the full range of restructuring and insolvency matters, but proves particularly effective at the personal insolvency end of the market. The set is a firm favourite with solicitors, who wax lyrical about a clerking team that is "always friendly, approachable and helpful," and which importantly "maintains an astute commercial relationship" with clients.

Raquel Agnello QC continues to impress market sources, who say that "she is tireless on her feet" and "firm, effective and persistent" in her addresses to the Bench. Not only is she "extremely bright," but those who work with her say she is "great company and brilliant with clients." She recently acted on behalf of the pensions regulator in the *Nortel and Lehman Brothers* litigation. A new arrival at 11 Stone Buildings, **Lexa Hilliard QC** is hailed by sources as an excellent advocate and a tough opponent. She also earns praise for being "highly responsive and an astute strategist." Commentators are in no doubt that the set's secural of her services represents a notable feather in its cap. She joins chambers that include **Jane Giret QC**, a lawyer with extensive experience in both personal and corporate insolvency. She advised the LPC Group in relation to the UK government's freezing of Landsbanki.

Marcia Shekerdemian is admired by sources who say they use her for "more intellectually heavyweight legal matters." She is an impressive advocate, and "a real fighter in court." Her recent high-profile instructions include acting for the liquidators of *Miss Sixty UK*. **Tina Kyriakides** "is very commercial and always gets straight to the point." "Very accessible, friendly and always willing to help," she has considerable experience in both corporate and personal insolvency. Sources praise **Christopher Boardman** as a barrister "who has the whole package of skills." His "strategic judgement in court is excellent, as is his written work and drafting." His recent matters include acting for the liquidators of the *Super Aguri Formula One* team. **Iain Pester** impresses as being "fantastic on intellectually gritty matters." His wide-ranging practice caters to all aspects of corporate and personal insolvency. **Adam Deacock** is "very diligent and fantastic when dealing with all of his many clients." He excels at winning the Bench's trust and is a barrister "you would prefer to have on your side." **Jonathan Lopian** is admired by market sources as he is highly technically skilled. He recently acted for *Lloyds TSB Bank* in applying for an administration order for *Powercorp International*. **Jamie Riley** has established a strong reputation in the market as "a very assured advocate." He frequently acts in both domestic and international insolvency matters. Finally at the set, **Thomas Robinson** is hailed as an up-and-coming star of the future. His votaries say that "he offers a very supportive service," has an excellent work rate and is "very good at handling a massive caseload."

Leading Silk - IT

Alan Gourgey QC of 11 Stone Buildings "is a hands-on, detailed lawyer – if you've got a situation where you need a safe pair of hands on an IT case, he's an ideal choice."

Leading Junior - MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

Also recommended, **Robert Deacon** of 11 Stone Buildings has recently been involved in injunctive work and has tackled a number of recording contract disputes, one of which involved icebreaker clauses. He is known for his "extremely pleasant manner" and the fact that "he strains every sinew on behalf of his clients."

Leading Junior - MEDIATORS ALL CIRCUITS

Sources say **Jonathan Arkush** of 11 Stone Buildings "comes up with solutions others wouldn't have thought of, often enabling a clean break scenario." He is regularly instructed on high-value matters, and his recent mediations have included a wrongful dismissal claim and an inheritance dispute.

Leading Silk - PENSIONS

Raquel Agnello QC of 11 Stone Buildings, who has "in-depth knowledge of insolvency law," has carved out a particular niche in the market advising the Pensions Regulator's office on the exercise of its moral hazard powers.

Leading Silk – PROFESSIONAL NEGLIGENCE

Jeremy Cousins QC of 11 Stone Buildings is "responsive and thorough," and combines an "encyclopaedic knowledge of the law" with a steely resolve. He is popular in the market.

Leading Junior - POCA WORK & ASSET FORFEITURE: ALL CIRCUITS

The "skilled and pleasant" **Ian Smith** of 11 Stone Buildings has a general civil fraud practice, but has also carved out a real niche for himself as a POCA adviser. He advises a number of individuals in SFO confiscation proceedings and is someone who knows the ins and outs of this area more than most.

Leading Junior – REAL ESTATE LITIGATION

Gary Lidington of 11 Stone Buildings is "diligent, robust and user-friendly." His property practice encompasses mortgage work, easements, restrictive covenants, trusts of land and boundary disputes.