

HFW

CC:

ALUMNINETWORK

DECEMBER 2024 | EDITION 8

Catching Up

CC: speaks to Ann Fenech, President of the Comite Maritime International

Boomerang Hire

Maurice Thompson shares why he returned to HFW

Heads & Tales

Meet our Chief Financial Officer, Mike Giles



HFW Community: you're invited...

From our alumni to our clients, our current staff to our suppliers, each person in our global network – past and present – makes up an important part of the HFW Community.

HFW's Alumni Network is a place where current and former colleagues can stay in touch with each other, and with the firm.

At HFW, we're incredibly proud of our alumni. From boardrooms of the world's leading organisations to startups driving innovation across our sectors, our alumni make waves. They're not just part of our history; they're shaping the future.

As a member of our alumni network, you gain access to a wide range of benefits, including free use of office or meeting space in any HFW location; referral bonuses for introducing candidates to the firm; and invitations to alumni events across our global network. We'll also keep you updated on the latest news from HFW and your fellow alumni.

The HFW Alumni Network is open to all current and former lawyers and business services professionals. Thank you for being part of our community.

Join our HFW Alumni LinkedIn Group

The HFW alumni network is open to all current and previous employees of HFW, and will help friends and colleagues stay in touch with each other – and with the firm. To see the full visit of Alumni benefits and to confirm your details are up to date please visit: www.hfw.com/alumni

Introduction from the Chairman



Welcome to the December 2024 Alumni Magazine, bringing you the latest news from across our HFW Community.

In this edition, we catch up with Ann Fenech who worked at HFW London between 1985-1991 when she first qualified. She is currently Head of the Marine Litigation Department at Fenech & Fenech Advocates based in Malta. In October 2022 she was elected President of the Comité Maritime International (CMI) - the first woman to hold this position in the 127-year history of the international maritime organisation.

We interview boomerang hire, Maurice Thompson, who returned to HFW in January 2024, after 16 years away.

In the latest in our series of interviews profiling our senior management, our Chief Financial Officer, Mike Giles, who joined the firm in February 2024, talks about his degree in pharmacology, his role in the privatisation of the UK electricity industry under Margaret Thatcher, and the time he attended Richard Branson's millennium house party.

Head of Property, Mike Forshaw shares some interesting insights on office move projects across our global network.

As ever, please get in touch if you would like to be featured in a future magazine, get involved in any of our current initiatives, or simply to say hello.

James

JAMES GOSLING, HFW 1980-2016
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ANN FENECH

Ann Fenech worked at HFW London from 1985-1991 when she first qualified. She is currently Head of the Marine Litigation Department at Fenech & Fenech Advocates based in Malta. In October 2022 she was elected President of the Comité Maritime International (CMI) - the first woman to hold this position in the 127-year history of the international maritime organisation. She is currently serving her first term.



I come from a medical family, with many generations of doctors, including my father and great grandfather. My father assumed that I would follow his footsteps into the medical profession, but I told him that I wanted to pursue languages, geography and history at school, much to his concern. These subjects (and my character) naturally led me to law, which I read at the University of Malta. At the time I was dating my now-husband, Thomas, who was studying medicine at Kings College Hospital in London. We had a long-distance relationship but on graduating, we decided to get engaged and married later that year.

I started to apply for jobs in the London market as I would be joining Thomas there. I was 24 at the time. I got to know that HFW were looking for a law graduate to work on a particular project. It was very novel role. Take your mind back to 1986 when computer systems were archaic and the ability to save information was very rudimentary. HFW had an extensive library of thousands of counsels' opinions in paper form. They wanted someone with a law degree to read this extensive library of opinions, create summaries and liaise with a computer company (which was unheard of at the time) to devise a software which would enable users to

search for these opinion summaries online. I applied for this job and was interviewed by partners, Charles Baker and Henry Page, and the librarian Deborah Sabaoth. I got the job. The position was for one year, but after the year, I was offered a role as a fee-earner, having had the benefit of reading thousands of Counsels' opinions.

I had the most amazing time at HFW and was given every possible opportunity to be an active member of the organisation. My gender, age or nationality never ever came into the equation. My experience there has stood me in good stead throughout my entire career. The whole atmosphere was conducive to bringing out the best in people. It wasn't just the lawyers; the support staff were wonderful to work with too. I worked predominantly for Graham Hogg and Tom Butler who gave me great opportunities, with hands-on experience with clubs, throwing me right at the deep end with cases. I was involved in cases which you would read about in Lloyd's List the following day and many interesting cases that were made case law. I enjoyed every minute of it. Those were exceptionally good formative years. The late 80s was a really interesting and unique time to be practicing maritime law in London. It was exciting to be working at such

a well-known firm as HFW with a tradition in the maritime sector.

I have so many happy memories and wonderful stories. I recall on my first day at HFW a big group of us went for a drink at Marlow's Wine Bar which was below the office at Marlow House. A man named Richard came over and introduced himself and said how it was his first day also. He said how he felt like he was a fish out of water. Despite it also being my first day, I reassured him and said it was a great place to work and we can stick together, and everything would be absolutely fine. We spoke for about 20 minutes. The next day in the office some of the girls were having a giggle. I asked what the joke was. They revealed that the baby-faced Richard from the night before was in fact Richard Crump who had actually been a partner for many years. I felt pretty foolish!

Within a couple of years of me joining HFW, the late Archie Bishop became Senior Partner. He was the world-famous authority on salvage and yet he always had time for me, and for all the other junior associates and assistants. I remember getting a call from Archie's PA Olive when he had just become Senior Partner. Archie had been invited to go to Malta to give a presentation.

As I was from Malta, I was invited to accompany him for a four-day trip. I had never met this man in my life but without giving it a second thought I enthusiastically said "of course, let's organise an event in Malta and invite all the maritime practitioners to meet Archie." We met for the first time at the gate at Heathrow Terminal 4. From that day onwards, we were best friends. I owe a lot to Archie. He was instrumental in encouraging me to do what I've done in my professional life, and I shall always be very grateful.

I have lovely memories of working with James Gosling and the late Charlie Lowe. I am still very good friends with Paul Dean, HFW's Global Head of Shipping. We joined HFW at the same time as young associates; he is one of the nicest people I know. Though it has been decades since I left HFW, it feels like I never left. It still feels like a family.

In 1991, my husband was offered a fellowship at the University Hospital in New Orleans where he would be specialising in diseases of the retina. It was very fortunate that this relocation was to New Orleans, the second largest port in the United States. Archie helped me to secure a role at Chaffe, McCall, Phillips, Toler and Sarpy. The office had a large window overlooking the Mississippi River. The amount of traffic going up that river was absolutely phenomenal and that is where I really got exposed to a great deal of casualty work. The number of accidents they have on that river necessitated law firms being on call on a 24-hour basis. There was an abundance of wet work.

In 1992, we returned to Malta after my husband's fellowship was over. I returned to a very different world now because the maritime sector, which we have always had as a country, was in the process of being developed further by the government of the day. There was a very strong focus on amending our legislation for the benefit of the maritime sector. When I qualified in 1986, lawyers would do a bit of everything, with a special preference for a particular area, but it was absolutely unheard of to do marine litigation exclusively. However that is all I had

"I had the most amazing time at HFW and was given every possible opportunity to be an active member of the organisation."

done since I had graduated, so when I went back to Malta, I was offered three job interviews. At interview, I expressed my desire to stick with marine litigation and to develop their marine litigation department. Two of the firms, which were very prominent at the time, thought that this was ambitious and were uncomfortable with the idea. Fenech & Fenech had a different approach, they agreed that this was unheard of, but said, if you think you can do it, just get on with it! So, in 1992 I started the Marine Litigation Department at Fenech & Fenech, and we have never looked back since. We are still to this day, the only law firm on the island with a dedicated Marine Litigation Department, and that allows us to focus very heavily on the client's needs and offer specialised bespoke quality work. In 2008 I was elected Managing Partner of Fenech & Fenech and I remained Managing Partner till December 2020.

In 2008, I was elected as the President of the Malta Maritime Law Association and one of my tasks there was to ensure that the Association would become a fuller and more participating member of the CMI. The CMI is the international organisation which has been responsible for the drafting of the vast majority of international maritime conventions. This was something which really attracted my attention because Malta is truly a maritime jurisdiction and every aspect of the maritime sector is represented here.

In 2015, I was elected to the Executive Council of the CMI and in 2018, I was nominated and elected to the post of Vice President. In the meantime, the CMI had drafted a Convention on

the Judicial Sale of Ships and their recognition. As a practitioner and someone who is very heavily involved in the day-to-day sale of ships and judicial sale of ships, I was hugely interested not only from an academic perspective, but from a professional perspective, with real hands-on daily experience. The CMI needed to find an international legislative body that would take on our draft and turn it into an international convention. At short notice we held a colloquium in Malta in February 2018, gathering the industry on an international level. It was hugely successful. There was an overwhelming agreement on the need for this convention amongst all the main industry participants. In May 2018, I, together with Stuart Hetherington, President of the CMI, and Alex von Ziegler, representative of Switzerland, went to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and explained the outcome of the colloquium. UNCITRAL agreed to proceed with the project. For the next four years, I acted as the CMI coordinator for the project. In June 2022 the final draft got approved by the Commission at UNCITRAL, and then in December 2022 it was adopted by the General Assembly of UNCITRAL. It was then open to all the Member States for signature and ratification. This was a huge cause for celebration. I was totally taken up with this draft convention, it was like a big case, and I was totally dedicated to it.

Then one day the President of CMI, Chris Davis, suggested that I put myself forward for the role. Initially I did not give the suggestion much serious thought. I was very busy, but also unsure whether this was something for

me. Before I knew it, I was nominated for the position by the National Maritime Law Association of Australia and New Zealand. No other person put their name forward and I received great support from national maritime law associations from every continent. I felt very privileged and honoured to think that people thought I was appropriate to follow in the footsteps of maritime icons of the world such as Francesco Berlingieri.

I was elected to this position in Antwerp in October 2022. I have since worked towards a number of deliverables. These include creating new working groups tasked with considering various current issues and making recommendations, including decarbonisation, and attacks on shipping; I have convinced HFW's Richard Neylon to chair the latter. Another focus has been to reach out to all our National Maritime Law Associations, encouraging members to get involved in the various CMI working groups. I have tried to accept as many invitations as possible to visit these National Maritime Law Associations, either in person, or remotely through video conferencing, and these efforts have been much appreciated. Also on my agenda is to encourage our consultative members, such as the International Group of P&I Clubs, BIMCO, ICS, the International Salvage Union, the IBA, amongst many others, to take a more active role in our IWGs because I really believe that for our suggestions and recommendations to have a greater chance of succeeding, they need to be formulated by academics and practitioners alike, with a robust dose from industry. This of course goes hand in glove with being active participants in the IMO legal committee and maintaining excellent relations with other UN bodies including UNCITRAL. Over the past two years we have registered significant progress in all these areas, and I am delighted that the industry is actively participating in all our activities and taking a key role in the development of numerous projects. I saw this with my own eyes when we were negotiating the Convention on the International

Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships, where thanks to the excellent relationships we have been able to build, we could count on these important industry players for support. The CMI remains a key player in the development and unification of international maritime law and we have the right people to do this.

I am a LinkedIn fanatic; I think it is the most amazing tool which brings you up to date with what's happening all over the world in a matter of minutes.

Over the course of my career, I have been fortunate to live in various places. I have enjoyed each place I have lived in for a long time and made the most of being there. I am a flexible person and tend to get on with everyone around me. I love London and feel very much at home there. New Orleans was a fascinating place. You have the French influence there which reminds you of the continent, but it is also typically American. It was such a fun colourful place to live. Of course, living in Malta has its advantages with the climate, the proximity of extended family; it is home.

Outside work, I love to travel. We have a sailing boat and have sailed all over the Mediterranean. Over Covid I developed my baking skills and produced some pretty impressive cakes, though I am more of a savoury person. I love cooking. I try to cook every day as I find it relaxing. Your mind cannot wander to work; you have to be fully present, or else you can burn yourself, or the food, or something will not go right. I also love to entertain; the biggest number I've cooked for at home is 60 people. And then of course there is my dear family. My husband Thomas of 38 years who has been so patient with me, and my two boys; Thomas married to Kelly, and Matthew, fiancé to Sarah. Tom and Kelly have made us grandparents for the first time, and we have a wonderful baby granddaughter called Olivia, so three months ago I also became a doting grandmother! The most wonderful experience of all.



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glassdoor

BOOMERANG INTERVIEW

Maurice Thompson returned to HFW in January 2024, after 16 years away, this time with a team of seven lawyers from Clyde & Co and other firms.

Maurice has 30 years' experience in Australia and the Middle East advising clients on complex large-scale disputes and litigation in the shipping, aerospace, energy & resources, insurance and commodities sectors. He also has substantial experience acting in class actions and litigation involving litigation funders in Australia and internationally.

When did you first join HFW and what was your role?

I first joined HFW back in 2006 when Gavin Vallely first got the approval to open HFW's first office in Australia in Melbourne. We had been working at another firm and the entire group left to then become HFW.

Why did you leave HFW and where did you go?

I left HFW in 2008 mainly because of some conflicts. Up until 2008 there was a single marketer/seller of Australian wheat internationally and Stephen Thompson (now a Sydney partner) was doing lots of work for that client, while I was doing work for a whole host of other budding wheat merchants with a quite commodities focussed practice. Then in 2008 the Australian Government deregulated the Australian export wheat market and the competition within Australia for commodity traders to then sell and export wheat ramped up. At that stage it started to develop into a number of partners servicing that one pre-deregulation 'monopoly' wheat marketer, and me servicing those wanting to compete with that monopoly. So, conflicts started to impact me, and I chose to join a competing firm.

What made you decide to come back?

In the world of shipping and commodities law in Australia, the big players over the last 15 years have been HFW and Clyde & Co. I was the Head of Clyde & Co's 'Energy, Marine & Natural Resources' Group in Australia and if I was to move anywhere, it needed to be to a firm I highly rated, and to work with some partners I also highly rated. It was a pretty simple decision in the end: Gavin is the best maritime lawyer in Australia; Richard Jowett is one of the best insurance lawyers in Australia; and Stephen Thompson is one of the best commodities lawyers in Australia. I work across all three sectors (plus some more), so it was easy to align my practice with theirs. Plus, I had the advantage that I had worked with all of them before and I knew I could again work well with them.

HFW has seen the potential in litigation funding (or probably more apt to now call it 'legal funding' or 'disputes funding') and recognised that is a large part of my practice and offered me an opportunity to help drive the potential in that space which was the clincher for me.

So, I returned because of great management, partners recognised internationally as being top of their game, and a vision to take advantage of opportunities others are slow to move on.

How did it feel coming back to somewhere you had previously worked?

It almost felt like I had not left. Many of my contemporaries in the Australian and other global offices back in 2006 are now the very senior partners at the firm so I had a helpful degree

of perspective to rely on. The big difference locally was that Gavin's jet dark hair is now more silver and my hair has largely vanished!

What does your role involve now?

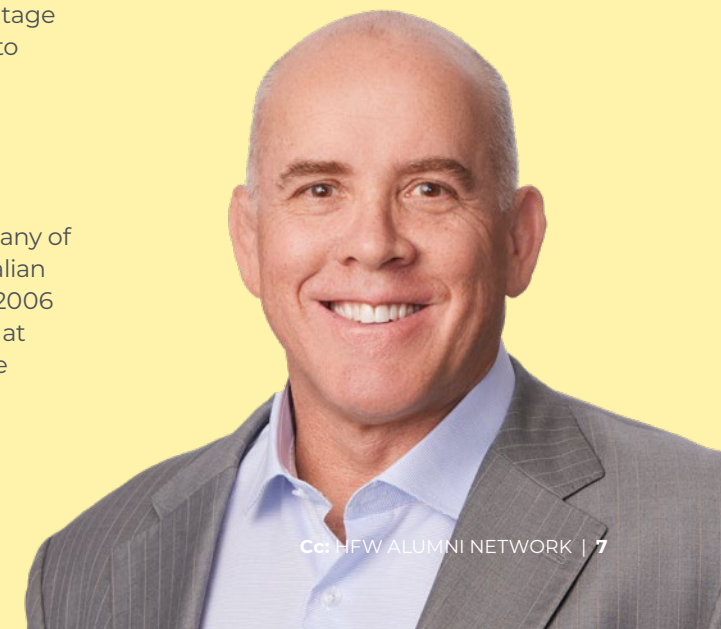
I am running a small number of very large class actions and singular litigation matters with litigation funding across the shipping, commodities and biosecurity sectors. Plus, I'm tasked with assisting other partners to pitch appropriate cases to legal funding companies.

What do you most enjoy about working for HFW?

I do like the fact that HFW is the best globally in my core sector areas of shipping, aviation and commodities. That does pack a large punch.

What do you like doing outside of work?

When I last worked at HFW in 2006 I played no.8 for a Premiership rugby side and frequently came to work with cuts and bruises and limps having taken out my frustrations on opponents on the rugby pitch. Those sporting limps are now replaced by 'old man' limps and I'm now a couch potato screaming at the TV. I paddle a surf ski or get on a concept 2 rowing machine to 'relax' and I love fishing.



Lateral hires

We continue to broaden and strengthen our offering to clients by adding leading talent across our sectors and international network.

Insurance Special Counsel – Sydney

OCTOBER 2024. We strengthened our global insurance group and continued the significant growth of our Australia business with the hire of two Special Counsel in Sydney.

Dominic Russell joined HFW from Dentons in September 2024 and Phillip Thomas joined from Meridian Lawyers in October 2024.

We have now added three Special Counsel to our insurance group in Sydney since the beginning of FY24 following the arrival of insurance and litigation specialist Grant Covington from Omni Bridgeway in October 2023.

[Find out more.](#)

Corporate restructuring, insolvency and commercial litigation Team – Melbourne

AUGUST 2024. We bolstered our corporate restructuring, insolvency and commercial litigation practice with the hire of a team led by partners Paul Buitendag and Rena Solomonidis in Melbourne.

[Find out more.](#)

Construction Team – Hong Kong

MAY 2024. We have continued to expand our fast-growing Asia Pacific business with the hire of a leading construction, projects and infrastructure team in Hong Kong, headed by partners Steven Yip and Malcolm Chin. They joined with Senior Associates Yvonne Lau, Charles Cheung, and Brian Liu, and Associates Nicole Leung and Suki Fung.

[Find out more.](#)

Shipping & Export Finance Team - Paris

MAY 2024. Our global shipping and export finance practice was strengthened with the hire of Partner Paolo Pinna and Associate Constance Ollat, who joined the Paris office on 2 May from Norton Rose Fulbright.

[Find out more.](#)

International Arbitration Team – Paris

MAY 2024. We grew our Paris offering with the hire of leading international arbitration Partners Julien Fouret and Gaëlle Le Quillec from Eversheds Sutherland, with Senior Associate Camille Dupuy.

[Find out more.](#)

Ship Finance Team – Piraeus

FEBRUARY 2024. We have continued to grow our Greek ship finance offering with the hire of a leading team in Piraeus, led by partners Robin Parry and Ronan Le Du.

This follows our recent recruitment in Piraeus of legal director and ship finance expert Antonella Karalis from Australian bank ANZ. The latest move makes ours one of the largest ship finance teams in Greece.

[Find out more.](#)

Construction



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Sean specialises in construction disputes and international arbitration in the oil and gas, mining, power, renewables and public infrastructure sectors, and in investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS).



TOM HUTCHISON
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Tom joined HFW as a Partner from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. He specialises in construction and engineering law, in particular in the energy, renewables, oil & gas, transport and infrastructure sectors. He advises on complex, technical, high value projects across the globe, from procurement and project structuring to risk mitigation and dispute resolution.

Corporate & Commercial



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Kashif has a broad corporate and commercial practice and joins HFW from International Legal Group, having previously been at DLA Piper and Dentons.

Sanctions and White-collar crime



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David has more than a decade's experience advising clients on sanctions and white-collar crime, and joins HFW from Stewarts, where he was previously Head of Financial Crime. He was previously Group Senior Sanctions Officer at Kleinwort Hambros, a private bank owned by Société Générale.

Promotions

This financial year, we have promoted eight new Partners and four new Legal Directors. The promotions reflect our continued growth across our international network and core sectors.

New Partners



Rami Al Tal
(Shipping, Dubai)

Rami assists clients with debt recovery, banking disputes, shareholder disputes, labour disputes, payment orders, sale and purchase contract disputes, enforcement of local and international awards and judgments, attachment of assets, fraud, breach of trust and shipping disputes.



Edward Beeley
(Commodities, Hong Kong)

Edward specialises in commercial litigation, contentious insolvency, and offshore work with a particular focus on complex high-value commercial disputes in the international trade and commodities spaces. He regularly appears as an advocate before the Hong Kong Courts, and has represented clients in international arbitration under all the major regimes in jurisdictions across Asia and Europe.



Suzanne Meiklejohn
(Commodities, Singapore)

Suzanne specialises in dispute resolution between parties in the commodities sector. She has experience advising and representing parties across a broad spectrum of dispute resolution fora, including in the English and EU courts, and in arbitrations under the rules of various international and sectoral institutions, in particular SIAC arbitration.



Tom Morgan
(Shipping, London)

Tom has a broad shipping practice. He has significant experience responding to complex, high-value marine casualties including collisions, groundings, stow collapses, fire/explosions, and dangerous cargoes, through to disputes under contracts of carriage, vessel sharing agreements and marine insurance. This regularly involves issues of general average and limitation. He also has a particular focus on the container shipping, car carrier, and chemical tanker sectors.



Peter Sadler
(Dispute Resolution, Perth)

Peter represents clients in a broad range of commercial disputes, particularly disputes in the energy, mining, and industrial sectors, both in Australia and internationally. He specialises in economic and technical disputes, which are often resolved through arbitration. In addition to his litigation and arbitration expertise, Peter provides strategic guidance to directors and corporate clients in navigating regulatory actions, investigations, and commissions of inquiry.



Owen Webb
(Commodities, Melbourne)

Owen specialises in handling high value, time-sensitive commodities and shipping disputes, and acting in arbitral proceedings and litigation in London, Singapore, and Australia. Owen also assists clients with the structuring of commodities transactions. He advises clients across the trade and energy sectors, including commodity trading houses, insurers, port infrastructure owners and users, and shipping companies and vessel charterers.



Mark Thompson
[Senior Manager] (Shipping, London)

Mark is a Master Mariner in our shipping emergency response team, and deals with marine casualties, including collisions, groundings, cargo claims and salvage. He is also active in yacht-related crisis management involving fires, helicopter incidents, tender/PWC related accidents, and total loss.



Nicola Hui
(Shipping, Hong Kong)

Nicola specialises in both wet and dry shipping including charterparty disputes, casualties, fire and explosion, general average, and total loss. She has particular experience of contractual disputes arising from container vessel claims, dangerous cargo, and loss of cargo. She also has significant experience in all aspects of P&I and FDD disputes.

Legal Directors



David Chalcraft
(Dispute Resolution/Fraud and Insolvency, London)

David is an English and BVI qualified commercial litigator, specialising in complex disputes usually involving elements of international civil fraud and insolvency. He also has significant experience in offshore trust and contentious insolvency litigation in various offshore jurisdictions.



Luke Garrett
(Insurance and Reinsurance, Dubai)

Luke advises clients on insurance claims, subrogated recoveries, defence work and coverage issues within marine, trade credit, liability, cyber and property insurance classes of business. He regularly acts in international arbitrations, complex litigation in the English High Court and the DIFC and ADGM Courts, as well as assisting with and supervising local UAE court litigation.



Mona Dejean
(Shipping, Paris)

Mona specialises in maritime matters and has over fifteen years' experience handling complex shipping and energy law issues. She advises and represents actors of the shipping and offshore energy sectors, both in litigation and transactional matters. Mona handles all types of shipping disputes.



Daniel O'Connell
(Shipping, London)

Daniel focusses mainly on wet shipping matters, including collisions, groundings, salvage, wreck removal, fires, piracy, limitation of liability and coverage issues. He also advises on dry shipping matters including charterparty, bill of lading and related contractual disputes. Daniel acts for owners, charterers, H&M underwriters, P&I Clubs and salvors in both arbitration and court related matters.

Senior Associates

This financial year, we have promoted 16 new Senior Associates.

Alex Andreou
(Shipping, London)

Angela Bilardi
(Insurance and Reinsurance, London)

Henry Clack
(Shipping, London)

Andrzej Czernis
(Shipping, Dubai)

Thomas Dickson
(Shipping, London)

Rosina Dyke
(Shipping, Paris)

Luke Fittis
(Shipping, Dubai)

Joyce Fong
(Corporate and Commercial, Sydney)

Steffi Gougoulaki
(Shipping, Piraeus)

Rosie Harrison
(Commodities, London)

Mark Myles
(Shipping, Singapore)

Gordon Rieck
(Commodities, London)

Tanisha Saxena
(Commodities, Dubai)

Nivvy Venkatraman
(Construction, Sydney)

Alex Walley
(Insurance and Reinsurance, London)

Kirsten Wright
(Shipping, London)



HEADS&TALES

Meet our new Chief Financial Officer, **Mike Giles**, who joined the firm in February 2024 from Fieldfisher where he was CFO. Mike has more than 35 years' experience in law and other professional services firms.



I had a pretty uneventful childhood.

I grew up in Upminster (a suburban town in East London). My father was an insurance broker and my mother was a nurse who worked in the local hospital. I loved being outdoors and at age eight I joined the Cubs and then went on to become a Scout. One of the highlights was the annual camp. I remember going to the Lake District (a national park in northwest England) when I was 14 and climbed Helvellyn – England's third-highest mountain – using a route that is famous for being narrow and with steep drops on both sides. It was in the days before mobile phones, so I couldn't film the experience, but the stories I told scared the life out of my poor mother!

One of my earliest jobs was selling donuts and ice cream on a beach in the South of France. Before going to University, a group of friends and I rode our motorcycles to the South of France with plans to find local work and just camp there for the summer. At the time, there was casual work available selling donuts and ice cream on the beaches, which was a great way to meet people and get a suntan. By the end of the summer, my French was almost fluent, but sadly I've forgotten most of it now.

I have a degree in pharmacology.

I actually wanted to study medicine – probably influenced by my mother – but the careers tutor at school told me that medicine was difficult and that I should try something else, such as cybernetics or ergonomics. Having looked up their meaning in a dictionary, I promptly ignored the advice, but perhaps the careers tutor was right, because I didn't get any offers to study medicine. Instead, I secured a place at Liverpool University to study pharmacology. I thoroughly enjoyed my degree course and planned to become a research chemist, but spending months-on-end in the lab during my final-year research project (on a potential drug for Hormone Replacement Therapy in post-menopausal women) made me realise that it wasn't for me.

I had no idea what to do next, so took one of those career aptitude tests.

To my complete surprise (horror?!), the recommendation was that I should become an accountant. That was not something I had ever considered, and at about that time the Monty Python team regularly made jokes about accountants being boring, so it wasn't quite what I saw myself doing. But in the absence of any better ideas, I applied to join and was accepted by Touche Ross (now part of Deloitte) as a Trainee Chartered Accountant. Despite my reservations, I realised that I actually quite enjoyed the work. The rest, as they say...

My claim to fame is that I made the UK government £1 billion.

While at Touche Ross, I spent two years working with the Department of Energy on the privatisation of the UK electricity industry in the late 1980s. The then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, and her team were undertaking a programme of state-owned business privatisations, which was very political. There was a tricky legislative issue that threatened to reduce the value of the sale. After a lot of thinking around the problem, I came up with a solution, but my bosses were unimpressed and thought my proposal was against the spirit of company law. However, the DoE and their legal advisors liked it. The privatisation went through, and the proceeds were estimated to be £1 billion higher as a result of my scheme – equivalent to about £2.5 billion in today's money. In another privatisation some years later, the Daily Telegraph reported a similar problem and described my scheme as "the standard way of dealing with these issues", which was a nice feeling.

I went to Richard Branson's huge house party for the millennium.

After I left Touche Ross, I joined a headhunting firm in Piccadilly (a touristy area in London's West End famous for theatres and shops). It was my first time working outside the City (London's historic financial district) and it was quite a change of environment – I went from pinstripes to tourists. I then moved to real estate firm Richard Ellis just as it was entering

into its merger discussions with CB Commercial to form what is now CBRE. I had responsibility for regionalising the post-merger finance function, building teams in APAC, Europe, and Latin America, whilst staying in touch with the Head Office team in Los Angeles. I regularly flew between London, LA, and Hong Kong, and soon acquired my Virgin Atlantic frequent flyer gold card. One of the perks was an invitation to Sir Richard Branson's Millennium Party at his home in Oxfordshire, which was quite an event, as you might imagine!

Don't eat soup during a job interview.

After CBRE, I got my first legal industry Finance Director role at SJ Berwin, which at the time was a relatively young and fast-growing firm, and then joined Fieldfisher to help its growth journey. Unusually, my first interview involved lunch with the then Managing Partner, Michael Chissick, at a local Thai restaurant. I wore my best suit and an expensive silk tie, but had no idea what I was ordering until a bowl of noodle soup arrived. Trying to answer questions without spilling soup down myself was a challenge. Later that day, I got a text from Michael asking me back for a second interview. He signed it off: "Well done with the soup."

My move to HFW came out of the blue.

I wasn't looking for a change but had a call from head-hunters that I'd known for a long time, who had what they described as "a very interesting job". They asked me to describe my ideal role. I said it would be another law firm, one that was undergoing significant growth and change, that was looking for someone to help it manage those challenges and have a real focus on developing the Finance function and the people within it. They said that I'd pretty much described the role exactly – they obviously knew me well! I had a meeting with HFW's Managing Partner Jeremy Shebson, which I thought went well, and was then asked to join him for dinner. It was rather more relaxed than my Thai lunch experience, and it was a really nice way to learn more about the firm and get to know Jeremy in a less formal setting. My second interview involved

giving a presentation to the Board. I'd never been in a Board meeting where people were dialling in from so many different countries around the world – it really hit home just how international HFW is as a business. At the end of my presentation, [Senior Partner] Giles [Kavanagh] picked up my coat and walked me to the door. I misinterpreted this as him ushering me out and assumed my presentation had not gone well, but Giles was actually just being his usual courteous self! I got offered the job later that day.

HFW's sector focus really does set the firm apart.

It means we are inherently focused on our clients, rather than our own practices, which is immensely important. Firms often claim to have sector focus, but clients see through that very quickly. We're also more international than any firm I've experienced previously – and I don't just mean because we have lots of offices. It's the outlook, the way we operate, the work we do, and the clients we act for. We're truly international, rather than multi-local. It's an exciting time for HFW. The way we're growing and the ongoing investment in the firm's infrastructure should be transformational for the business.

I'm a qualified scuba diving instructor.

I've been diving for more than 30 years, and I love it. My favourite place for diving is the Maldives and I particularly enjoy diving with sharks, which are so graceful underwater. I remember one dive where I tried to count the sharks I could see and gave up when I got to 100 – they were everywhere! I mainly dive around the UK coast, which isn't quite the same experience – it's certainly a lot colder and darker but can still be interesting. On one memorable dive off the coast of Plymouth, we were surrounded by an enormous shoal of sea bass – it was like something from a David Attenborough documentary!



New entity in Saudi

We have launched a new entity in Saudi Arabia as we continue to expand our offering in the Kingdom.

We have been in Riyadh for more than a decade and have now established a formal subsidiary as one of a select group of international law firms to have received a license from the Saudi Ministry of Justice to practice in the Kingdom.

We are one of the fastest-growing law firms in the Middle East, with our revenue in the region increasing by more than 60 percent over the past two financial years.



New office in Shenzhen

We have been licensed to establish a representative office in Shenzhen Qianhai, a municipality in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

We are one of only five foreign law firms, and the only UK-headquartered international law firm, that has been given approval to set up a representative office in the GBA by the Ministry of Justice of China, after a review consistent with the Regulations on Administration of Foreign Law Firms' Representative Offices in China.

Office moves

It has been over a year since HFW's London office moved to its new home at the iconic 8 Bishopsgate. The Paris office relocated earlier this year, and Hong Kong and Piraeus moves are underway. We caught up with Head of Property, Mike Forshaw to discuss these exciting relocation projects.

The aim is to 'buy that commute', to create a workplace so attractive that people see it as a desirable place to be; to work, but also to collaborate and socialise with colleagues. Each project has been curated to cater to the unique local culture and character of the office. As cities, people tend to prefer working in the office in Paris and Hong Kong, as commutes are shorter, and apartments may not have the space to accommodate comfortable home working. As these offices have 90% occupancy, more have allocated offices. London and Piraeus have more of an agile working culture, so an open plan format was followed, with fewer allocated offices. There are neighbourhoods for each team, but you can work anywhere which allows you to mix with colleagues from across the business. The London model has dispelled many misconceptions and apprehensions about open plan working, and colleagues who have visited from our other global offices have been impressed.

A common theme that has been replicated across all the office move projects is incorporating a social destination point to facilitate collaborating and mixing, whilst creating a sense of community. In London this is the staff lounge on the 8th floor. In Paris there is a courtyard and staff lounge which brings people together. The destination point in Piraeus has incredible views overlooking the Acropolis and over the port.

A value that has carried across all the projects is a sense of equality. Everyone has the same sit-to-stand desk, the same chair, the same single widescreen monitor. Everybody has been treated with the same respect and level of care when designing their working environment.

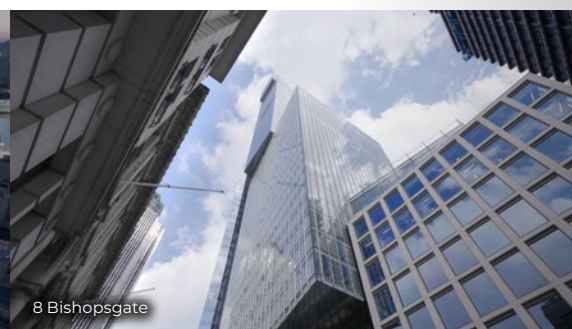
We are due to occupy some of these spaces for up to 20 years and the clean, light, vibrant design of these new working environments have been a step-change in culture for the firm and leave a great legacy for the future leaders of HFW.



Piraeus



Hong Kong

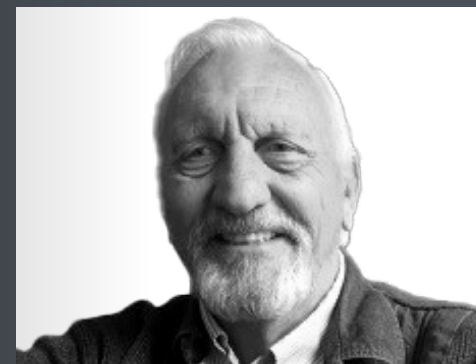


8 Bishopsgate



8 Bishopsgate - 8th floor cafe

Obituaries



Archie Bishop

We were deeply saddened by the passing of former HFW Senior Partner, Archie Bishop in February 2024 at the age of 86.

Archie, a former deck officer with the P&O Line, joined HFW in 1960. Having established himself, the firm invited him to take Articles and on qualification, immediately took him into Partnership. He was the firm's Senior Partner between 1988 and 2000. Following retirement, he remained a Consultant with the firm until 2022.

Archie was an exceptional Senior Partner who significantly contributed to HFW's global growth, particularly in expanding our presence into Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, and Greece. Renowned for his expertise in collision, salvage, and total loss matters, Archie was Legal Adviser to the International Salvage Union and played a leading role in the development of the SCOPIC Clause. He sat on the Salvage Committee of the British Maritime Law Association and the Salvage Liaison Group and was the Chairman of the Steering Committee of the London Shipping Law Centre. He was also a CEDR Accredited Mediator and a visiting lecturer at the International Maritime Law Institute of Malta, and University College London.



Tony Hall

Tony Hall sadly passed away in February 2024. Tony dedicated over three decades of service to our Finance Department. He joined the team in October 1981 and held the position of Senior Legal Cashier at the time of retiring in March 2018.

His meticulous work ethic and warm demeanour left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

Tony met his wife, Jo, a former Secretary, during their tenure at the firm. They have a son, David.

Happy retirement

We would like to pay a special tribute to Gill Jenner, who retired in May 2024 after forty years with the firm.

At HFW, we often talk about culture and the role we all play in making the firm a genuinely nice place to work. No one embodies this better than our London reception team. As the first point of contact for clients and

visitors to our London office, they always offer a warm HFW welcome and do a great job keeping things running smoothly and efficiently.

We are extremely grateful for Gill's commitment and support over the years and for always bringing a smile to staff and clients. We wish Gill the happiest of retirements.



Disability, My Family & Me:

Michelle Chance

Partner Michelle Chance talks about her experience as a care giver of a family with disabilities, disability in the legal profession and what HFW is doing to address this.

Many of us will be familiar with McKinsey's findings that diverse teams are the most successful and capable of challenging consensus and driving innovation, employee engagement and overall performance. Despite us beginning to see a difference, the pace of change can be slow. And this is certainly the case when it comes to disability in the workplace.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion is akin to an orchestra," commented Michelle. "An orchestra comprises various instruments playing in harmony – not just one. It's the same in the DEI space, we don't want just one type of person. Fostering an environment that is inclusive is essential to attract and retain the best people. We all have a role to play whether as a colleague, peer, line manager, partner or business services leader in helping our people achieve their true potential. And that means understanding how to play to people's strengths and understanding what reasonable adjustments need to be made to accommodate people with medical conditions."

Michelle has spent over twenty years advising both employers dealing with disability and neurodiversity issues in the workplace and also

senior executives in FTSE companies with disabilities. She also has first-hand experience of this herself as a mother of two teenagers with disabilities and having supported her husband through a serious cancer diagnosis, who was also diagnosed as an adult with dyslexia.

"My daughter, Jasmin, was born with a very rare birthmark condition called congenital melanocytic naevus ("CMN") which is a giant mole which covered her right cheek, and which carries an increased cancer risk and can also create neurological complications. She spent the first eight years of her life having regular surgeries and was also diagnosed with dyslexia and dyspraxia. Visible difference can have a significant psychological impact and arming her with the tools, skills and support to navigate that was critical. My son, Alex, was diagnosed with ADHD and we have had challenges with getting him on the right type of medication. He was also very wary about taking any form of medication which can be a common issue with parents that have children who are neurodiverse. There are also issues with being diagnosed as waiting lists can be very long and there is a massive differential in the type of special educational needs and

disability support available in schools. The amount of time and effort that goes into understanding the system and getting the right support in place can be overwhelming."

Michelle's husband also had early stage meningitis during his cancer treatment which resulted in him becoming profoundly deaf in one ear and suffering from extreme tinnitus in the other which also impacts his balance. Stepping back from the corporate world and pivoting in terms of his career has seen him set up his own successful business.

"There have been some very positive outcomes to what at times seemed insurmountable challenges," said Michelle. "What this has taught me is that we have incredible inner strength and resilience and that there is no one size fits all approach. Everyone's lived experience differs and we need to understand specific needs and, significantly, normalise this and eradicate any perceived shame and stigma associated with certain conditions. It's well documented that people often conceal invisible disabilities."

This is wrong and exhausting – there's a risk that if we don't adapt and we don't speak openly about this, people will burn out."

Ensuring we have an open culture where people can speak up safely about these issues, has seen the firm launch its disability and neurodiversity network. The launch took place on 15 October 2024 and was attended by over 80 members of HFW from across all areas of the business and many different offices across our jurisdictions, reflecting the degree of relevance to the firm and its people.

"Putting this at the forefront of how we conduct business is a win-win," concludes Michelle, "We want to provide the best quality advice to our clients and fully supporting and getting the best from our people enables us to do just that."



News from our HFW Community

Diversity & Inclusion

Gender

Since September 2023, we have been running a London Gender Project: a collaborative campaign led by our Gender employee network examining a range of themes in connection with gender inequality within our London office and more broadly within the working world. We have shared stories of inspirational women across the firm, we have set up peer support and coaching for women returning from maternity leave, and we have set up an informal peer-mentoring scheme to make female leaders more available to junior colleagues.

Social Mobility

In September 2024, HFW welcomed our first two solicitor apprentices. Olly and Mohammed have joined the firm beginning a 6-year, Level 7 degree apprenticeship at the end of which they will qualify as solicitors.

We are delighted to play our part in the wider City Century initiative seeking to create 100 solicitor apprenticeships within City law firms this year and to revolutionise the early careers landscape for the legal profession.

Race and Ethnicity

In April 2024, our Race and Ethnicity network hosted a webinar during Ramadan in which Partner Slava Kiryushin provided insight into Ramadan, including his own personal experience as a Muslim. In addition, the network organised a fasting challenge, in which colleagues chose to fast for 1 day, consuming no food or drink between the hours of sunrise and sunset, at the end of which we hosted an Iftar meal in our London office to break the fast together.

Pro Bono

Tower Hamlets Law Centre

In July 2023, HFW formed a new partnership with the Tower Hamlets Law Centre (THLC). Volunteers from HFW support the THLC employment advice clinic, with over 40 colleagues involved and delivering in excess of £40,000 work of pro bono support to the charity and its beneficiaries.

Job Board

Did you know that if you refer a friend or someone from your network to come work for us, you could be eligible for a £500 award! See our current vacancies...



HFW London

Associate/Senior Associate - Aerospace
Senior Associate - Shipping
Personal Assistant - Shipping
Associate General Counsel
Senior Risk Lawyer
Head of Marketing & Business Development - Sectors
Group Head of Tax & Partnership Affairs
Assistant Partnership Tax Accountant
Strategic Projects Manager



HFW BVI

Associate/Senior Associate (5 - 8 years' PQE) - Commodities
Associate (3 - 5 years' PQE) – Commodities



HFW Geneva

Commodities Trade Finance Associate (3-6+ Year PQE) – Commodities

Please contact Head of Human Resources, **Soulla Callis** for more information on any of these roles.



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