



serle court

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David Blayney KC

Year of Silk: 2013 Year of Call: 1992

“One of the cleverest people you could hope to meet. He gets down into the tiniest details of a case and has a fantastic strategic overview.”

Chambers & Partners

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Practice Overview

David has a commercial and chancery practice with a particular focus on disputes involving complex financial or quantum issues. Major cases in which David has been involved include the litigation arising out of the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the test case on the fairness of bank charges and the group litigation relating to RBS's £12bn rights issue in 2008.

David is also closely involved in the development of technology to support the analysis and preparation of complex cases, and is therefore well placed to help the team implement technology-enabled approaches to investigation and case preparation in appropriate matters.

Areas of Expertise

Commercial Litigation

Pagden v Fry (including summary judgment / strike-out hearing at [2025] EWHC 1918 (Ch)) – claim for damages against a private equity fund manager relating to the sale of a portfolio of companies.

The RBS Rights Issue Litigation – group litigation seeking for damages arising out of RBS's £12bn rights issue during the 2008 financial crisis.

Constantin Medien v Ecclestone and Others – claim for damages relating to an alleged \$44m bribe paid by Bernie Ecclestone and his family trust upon the sale of commercial rights in Formula One. (Instructed by Peters and Peters)

Re Lehman Brothers International (Europe) (In Administration) [2011] EWHC 2022 - proceedings relating to the validity and effect of liens in Master Custody Agreements and Standard Terms & Conditions used between LBIE and other Lehman Brothers companies. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Brightsea UK Ltd v Drachs Investments No.3 [2012] EWCA Civ 516; [2012] STC 1507 – instructed by the successful appellant in appeal to the Court of Appeal concerning the extent of the vendor's powers under a tax deed that formed part of a £200m company sale. (Instructed by Clifford Chance).

Bradford & Bingley valuation – instructed by the Independent Valuer of Bradford & Bingley in relation to more than 700 references to the Upper Tribunal arising out of his valuation. The references were all dismissed following a hearing in May 2012. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Abbey National & Others v OFT [2008] EWHC 2325, [2009] EWHC 36, [2009] EWCA 116, [2010] 1 AC 696 - the test case to establish whether the unarranged overdraft customers with the 67 million personal current account customers of the UK's 8 major banks were challengeable under the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 and/or under the common law penalty doctrine. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Professional Negligence

David has considerable experience of professional negligence claims, particularly involving trustees, accountants, solicitors, company directors and valuers. Examples include:

Lemos v Coutts – Breach of trust claim brought against trustees of a Cayman based trust, concerning the trust's investment in ships. The case involved a mixture of trust, professional negligence and loss quantification issues.

South Australia Asset Management Corp v York Montague [1997] AC 191: Landmark decision in professional negligence and assessment of damages. (Instructed by Clifford Chance)

Nykredit v Erdman [1997] 1 WLR 1627: House of Lords decision on application of SAAMCO decision to questions of interest and limitation. (Instructed by Clifford Chance)

Partnership and LLP

David has considerable experience in disputes relating to partnerships and joint ventures. Examples include:

K v R - dispute about issues of business valuation and legal argument about the effect of correspondence and meetings concerning proposed termination of the partnership. Settled shortly before trial in 2013. (Instructed by Marcus Sinclair)

R v P –dispute about partnership for operation of greyhound kennels. (Instructed by Goodman Derrick)

K v B – dispute about dissolution of solicitors' partnership. (Instructed by Fox Williams)

Re L – appointed by the Bar Council to act as arbitrator on dispute about termination of a solicitors' partnership.

Private Client Trusts and Probate

Lemos v CIBC – claim against professional trustees in the Cayman Islands relating to the sale of shipping investments (instructed by Mourant).

Lemos v Coutts – claim against professional trustees in the Cayman Islands relating to the acquisition and retention of shipping investments (instructed by Maples & Calder and Linklaters)

Trilogy Management Ltd v Cheung [2012] JCA 152 – instructed (assisting Advocate Nicholas Journeaux) for the successful appellant to the Jersey Court of Appeal on a dispute as to the meaning of a provision in the Articles of Association of a company. (Instructed by Carey Olsen).

Re Seymour Settlement [2002]: called to the Isle of Man Bar and represented the claimant beneficiary in proceedings seeking the removal of a Protector on the grounds of conflict of interest.

Smith v Smith [2001] 1 WLR 1937 – case about disputed disclaimer of interest under a will. (Instructed by Picton Smeathmans)

Banking and Financial Services

The RBS Rights Issue Litigation – group litigation seeking for damages arising out of RBS's £12bn rights issue during the 2008 financial crisis.

Re Lehman Brothers International (Europe) (In Administration) [2011] EWHC 2022 - proceedings relating to the validity and effect of liens in Master Custody Agreements and Standard Terms & Conditions used between LBIE and other

Lehman Brothers companies. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Bradford & Bingley valuation – instructed by the Independent Valuer of Bradford & Bingley in relation to more than 700 references to the Upper Tribunal arising out of his valuation. The references were all dismissed following a hearing in May 2012. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Credit Suisse v Ramot Plana [2010] EWHC 2759– €12 million banking and commercial dispute relating to a property development in Bulgaria. (Instructed by Asserson Law Offices)

Abbey National & Others v OFT [2008] EWHC 2325, [2009] EWHC 36, [2009] EWCA 116, [2010] 1 AC 696 - the test case (litigated all the way to the Supreme Court) to establish whether the unarranged overdraft customers with the 67 million personal current account customers of the UK's 8 major banks were challengeable under the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 and/or under the common law penalty doctrine. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Company

Pagden v Fry (including summary judgment / strike-out hearing at [2025] EWHC 1918 (Ch)) – claim for damages against a private equity fund manager relating to the sale of a portfolio of companies.

Re Lehman Brothers International (Europe) (In Administration) [2011] EWHC 2022 - proceedings relating to the validity and effect of liens in Master Custody Agreements and Standard Terms & Conditions used between LBIE and other Lehman Brothers companies. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Centenary Holdings III Ltd (in liquidation) v Vivendi SA and Others - £78m claim relating to allegedly unlawful financial assistance given upon sale of company. Includes claims against directors, advisors and parent company. Settled shortly before trial listed for January/February 2011. (Instructed by Lawrence Graham.)

Singer v Beckett (Re Continental Assurance of London Plc) [2007] 2 BCLC 287: 72 day trial of £5m wrongful trading/misfeasance claim against directors of an insurance company. (Instructed by Goodman Derrick)

Charities

David has considerable experience of partnership matters, including acting for a period as one of the Treasury Solicitor's panel counsel representing the Attorney-General. His charities cases include the following:

Royal Merchant Navy School Foundation v Bearwood College Trustees – Acting for a well-known school in contentious charity proceedings relating to the terms of its separation from its founding charity. Settled in 2012. (Instructed by Stone King Sewell)

Harwood v Harwood [2005] EWHC 3019 – case about whether a gift of a collection for a museum gave rise to a valid charitable trust. (Instructed for HM Attorney-General)

Manoogian v Sonsino (2002) W.T.L.R. 989: charity proceedings concerning the validity of a gift "for the purpose of the education and advancement in life of Armenian children". (Instructed or HM Attorney-General)

Insolvency

David has considerable experience in insolvency matters, particularly in cases involving banking or trust issues or claims against directors. Examples include:

Pagden v Fry (including summary judgment / strike-out hearing at [2025] EWHC 1918 (Ch)) – claim for damages against a private equity fund manager relating to the sale of a portfolio of companies.

Re Lehman Brothers International (Europe) (In Administration) [2011] EWHC 2022 - proceedings relating to the validity and effect of liens in Master Custody Agreements and Standard Terms & Conditions used between LBIE and other Lehman Brothers companies. (Instructed by Linklaters)

Centenary Holdings III Ltd (in liquidation) v Vivendi SA and Others - £78m claim relating to allegedly unlawful financial assistance given upon sale of company. Includes claims against directors, advisors and parent company. Settled shortly before trial listed for January/February 2011. (Instructed by Lawrence Graham.)

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Chancery

International and Offshore

Telecommunications and Information Technology

The British Airways Data Breach Litigation: group litigation arising out of the breach of security systems leading to the leaking of personal data of more than 400,000 BA customers – the first mass data breach claim to proceed as group litigation in the UK. (Instructed by Pogust Goodhead)

Regulatory and Disciplinary

Group Litigation

The British Airways Data Breach Litigation: group litigation arising out of the breach of security systems leading to the leaking of personal data of more than 400,000 BA customers – the first mass data breach claim to proceed as group litigation in the UK. (Instructed by Pogust Goodhead)

Recommendations

Commercial Dispute Resolution, Chancery: Commercial, Group Litigation (Chambers and Partners)
Banking & Finance, Commercial Litigation (The Legal 500)

Quotes

"David is immensely creative and clever." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"David is definitely the person to go to for a monstrous case. He is unflappable and dignified in the courtroom." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"David is just one of the cleverest guys on earth. He is methodical, well-reasoned and someone with exceptional brain power and court presence." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"David did one of the finest cross-examinations of an expert I've ever heard. He's very astute and forensically brilliant." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"Extremely able, highly technical and cerebral in his approach, David is the person to go to for a monstrous case. Unflappable and dignified, he really holds the attention of the court." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"David is by far the most numerate barrister I've come across and speaks numbers as a second language. He deploys his experience in a strategic manner and brings everyone along with him." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"David excels as the architect of litigation strategy for the most complex of cases. He is unfailingly genial but demands always the highest standards of those he works with." (Chambers & Partners, 2026)

"Very sharp and at the forefront of using graph database technology to help advisors build well-reasoned conclusions supported by evidence and logic." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Very cerebral, diligent and reflective." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"He is incredibly bright." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"David is really good on complex causes of actions and quantum. He also has an unparalleled ability to tackle issues in logical order and is good on strategy." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"David is very intelligent. He has the ability to get on top of hugely complex ideas and matters, and puts them in a straightforward and comprehensive way." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"David's written advocacy is particularly good." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"He is an incredibly smart individual, who wipes the floor with the other side's experts and presents his case with absolute clarity." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"David is an exceptional intellect and a pleasure to work with." (The Legal 500, 2025)

"David is decisive, persuasive and a strong team player. He comes up with practical and commercial solutions." (The Legal 500, 2025)

"He's a very bright chap, who produces good written work." (Chambers & Partners, 2024)

"David always provides an excellent service. He has the ability to make the complex seem simple by providing clear-cut advice across a range of complex issues." (Chambers & Partners, 2024)

"David Blayney has a massive brain and is very good fun to work with." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"A very cerebral character who's an original thinker" (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"David always proves engaging and is on hand with each aspect of the instruction. His advocacy and insight are invaluable." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"David has a mega brain, and has the ability to work across all the different areas that commercial disputes throw up. He is good at anything with a technical aspect." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"He is studious, and adopts a calm and thoughtful approach. He is a clear and concise barrister." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"A real thinker and a very imaginative lawyer." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"He is an extremely nice man and a very clever, thoughtful and original thinker." "He is very good and deals with the technical aspects of cases enormously impressively." (Chambers & Partners, 2020)

"Quickly earns the confidence of clients. He's very approachable, easy to get on with and happy to make himself available at short notice." (Chambers & Partners, 2020)

"He's very strong in technology and a very clever guy. He's also nice to work with." (Chambers & Partners, 2020)

"He's formidably and inventively clever, and he's also nice to work with." "One of the brightest at the Bar, he's a great team player and a deep thinker with an innovative approach." (Chambers & Partners, 2020)

"His intellect has truly frightening firepower, but he wears it lightly and is incredibly easy to work with." (Legal 500, 2020)

"Exceptional – the best recommendation I have had in 30 years of practice." (Legal 500, 2020)

"He is a fearsome lawyer; his capacity both to absorb and process information and turn that into a winning strategy is phenomenal." (Legal 500, 2020)

"A very smart silk." (Legal 500, 2020)

"Impressive on professional negligence cases." (Legal 500, 2020)

Education & Qualifications

BA Law (First Class), Lincoln College, Oxford

Memberships

Chancery Bar Association

Commercial Bar Association
