



serle court

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James Mather

Year of Call: 2006

"James is outstanding: very bright and thorough, a tenacious advocate and great to work with."

"Fearless and stands up to the judge."

"A real star in civil fraud. Knows the area like few others."

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Practice Overview

A “super-smart junior” who “spans the commercial and chancery bar brilliantly”, James is renowned for his expertise across the areas of civil fraud and asset recovery, company and partnership disputes, and insolvency. He is described in the directories as “absolutely phenomenally intelligent”; “an awesome forensic attacker”; and “brilliant in court”, with an ability “to take on the most sophisticated players in the sector” and “see points that others miss”.

His cases include several of the most substantial and high-profile international disputes of recent years, including:

- *Premier League v Manchester City Football Club* (the ‘sport trial of the century’, concerning alleged breaches of financial fair play regulations);
- *PIFFS v Al Rajaan* (US\$1 billion bribery and asset tracing claim – one of *The Lawyer’s* ‘Top 20’ cases of 2025);
- *The Eclipse litigation* (£1+ billion group action arising out of failed film scheme – one of *The Lawyer’s* ‘Top 20’ cases of 2024);
- *State Bank of India v Mallya* (heavily contested bankruptcy petition based on debt in excess of US\$1 billion with overlapping Indian criminal and civil proceedings);
- *Invest Bank v El Hussein* (multi-million pound s423 claim brought by UAE bank against Lebanese businessman and members of his family);
- *State of Qatar v Banque Havilland* (US\$1+ billion claim brought by State of Qatar alleging conspiracy to manipulate its currency).

He is frequently instructed against silks, including in the Court of Appeal, where in recent years he has acted for the successful parties in each of *Re Coinomi* (overlap between s 994 petition and derivative action in context of cryptocurrency business); *Malik v Hussain* (effect of time limit for exchange of contracts); and *Ward v Savill* (whether declaratory judgment binding in subsequent tracing claim concerning fraudulent film scheme). In addition to his trial experience, James has extensive experience of interim injunctions, issues arising from international litigation (including cross-border insolvency) and overlapping civil and criminal proceedings (including in multiple jurisdictions).

James has deep experience of corporate and joint venture disputes extending to issues concerning private equity and hedge fund structures, shareholders of English and offshore companies, and members and partners of LLPs and limited and traditional partnerships. In one recent case he acted for a billionaire tech entrepreneur in an LCIA arbitration concerning a Cayman fund structure and a Delaware company. In another recent case he acted for a co-founder of a private equity firm involving an English LLP and related offshore LP structure, in arbitration proceedings also involving injunctive proceedings in the Commercial Court.

James has consistently been recognised as a leading junior for many years across all the main legal directories. He won Insolvency Junior of the Year at the Legal 500 Bar Awards. He was formerly a member of the Serious Fraud Office’s panel of counsel for recovery of the proceeds of crime and standing junior counsel to the Department of Business in directors’ disqualification proceedings.

Areas of Expertise

Civil Fraud

Ward v Savill [2020] EWHC 1534 (Ch) Acted for Defendant in relation to tracing claim asserted against valuable London property, successfully establishing that Claimants could not rely on declarations obtained in earlier related

proceedings.

Alokozay v Alkozay [2019] EWHC 1631 (Ch) Successfully acted on behalf of wealthy Middle Eastern businessman in five-day trial establishing claims in deceit in relation to various disputed transfers.

Re Gerald Smith [2019] EWHC 2598 (Comm) Acting on behalf of Serious Fraud Office in heavy, multi-party, and multi-jurisdictional litigation connected with the enforcement of the largest ever UK confiscation order obtained by the SFO.

Bayerische Landesbank v Constantin Medien [2017] EWHC 131 (Comm) Acted for Part 20 Defendant in Commercial Court claim for \$130m arising out of bribery in relation to the sale of the Formula One group to CVC in 2006.

Avonwick v Castle [2016] EWHC 3832 (Ch) Unlawful means conspiracy claim for damages of US\$170m in relation to alleged transaction defrauding creditors (5 week trial in 2018).

Bestfort Developments LLP v Ras Al Khaimah Investment Authority [2016] EWCA Civ 1099 Security for costs application in connection with substantial fraud proceedings.

Gerald Metals v Timis [2016] EWHC 2136 (Ch); [2016] EWHC 2327 Applications for injunction and disclosure relating to dispute over energy assets in Africa.

Billington v Davies and Soane Capital [2016] EWHC 2969 (Ch) and [2016] EWHC 1919 (Ch) Freezing order application and various enforcement proceedings arising from substantial property fraud.

Constantin Medien AG v Bernard Ecclestone & Ors [2014] EWHC 387 (Ch) Acted for claimant in bribery claim relating to the sale of the Formula One business.

Ministry of Justice v LSM Partners & Ors [2012] EWHC 1280 (QB) Acted for defendant in multimillion fraud and breach of fiduciary duty claim brought by the Ministry of Justice against its property consultants.

Adelaide Partners & Ors. v Danison & Ors [2011] EWHC 4090 (Ch): Acted for claimants in a \$16 million financial fraud and dishonest assistance claim.

Al Rushaid Parker Drilling v Shekhar Shetty & Ors. [2011] EWHC 1460 (Ch) Acted for large Saudi Arabian oil services conglomerate in multi-jurisdictional proceedings raising allegations of secret profits and other wrongdoing against its former Chief Financial Officer.

Insolvency

State Bank of India v Mallya [2020] EWHC 96 (Ch) Acting for former chairman of Kingfisher Airlines in defending attempted bankruptcy proceedings in context of multi-jurisdictional enforcement process.

Re Supercapital Ltd [2020] EWHC 1685 (Ch) Acted for Administrators of insolvent FCA-regulated payment services provider in novel application seeking court's approval of a distribution plan on the basis of statutory trust principles.

Re Gerald Smith [2019] EWHC 2598 (Comm) Acting on behalf of Serious Fraud Office in heavy, multi-party, and multi-jurisdictional litigation connected with the enforcement of the largest ever UK confiscation order obtained by the SFO.

Lady Moon v Petricca [2019] EWHC 439 (Ch) Attempt to wind up allegedly insolvent Italian investment fund in the English court on the basis that it was analogous to a trust. Successfully disputed the court's jurisdiction.

Re Webinvest [2017] EWHC 2446 (Ch) Examination of principles on sharing documents between insolvency estates where overlap in the officeholders.

Shlosberg v Avonwick [2016] EWHC 1001 (Ch) Injunction restraining Dechert from acting due to receipt of privileged materials via bankruptcy trustee.

Re IG Limited [2016] Acted for former director of company in liquidation concerning acquisition of claims against former directors and other disputes arising from company's liquidation.

Yossifoff v Aviva Commercial Finance [2016] Defended Aviva against £50m claim arising from insolvency of group of care homes.

Secretary of State for Business v Townsend [2015-16] Acted for defendant director in disqualification proceedings and proceedings to act notwithstanding disqualification.

Re KJK Investments [2015] Acted for Secretary of State in contested public interest winding-up petition concerning circular pension release scheme with no prospect of returns to the investors.

Ash Regeneration Incorporated v Celtic Energy Limited [2014] Dispute relating to the terms of a restructuring of a series of coal mines in South Wales through offshore entities.

Re Lehman Brothers: acted for various US Lehman entities concerning the fate of a number of substantial pots of Lehman monies held within its European structures.

Assisted HM Treasury in relation to issues arising from the financial assistance provided to Northern Rock plc.

Stonham v Ramrattan [2011] 1 WLR 1617: acted in insolvency appeal to Chancery Division concerning scope of discretion to make no remedial order in respect of a transaction at an undervalue.

Partnership and LLP

Advised and acted in numerous partnership and LLP disputes involving private equity firms, accountancy firms, law firms, medical practices and various informal business partnerships. Also wide experience of advising on and drafting partnership deeds and LLP members' agreements, retirement deeds and other partnership documents and interaction between partnership/LLP law and insolvency.

Malik v Hussain [2020] EWHC 2334 (Ch) Acted for dispute as to existence and winding up of a substantial Indian restaurant and wedding venue business.

Sternberg Reed v Harrison [2020] Ch 223 Solicitors' firm dispute raising issue as to operation of the without prejudice rule.

Schillings v Scott [2019] EWHC 2657 (Ch) Dispute over partner's retirement from a law firm, including disputed injunction proceedings.

Re P Law [2016] Dispute in relation to alleged misappropriations from law firm, involving contested just and equitable winding up and parallel criminal proceedings.

Dadoun v Katri [2015] Partnership dispute in relation to hotel development venture.

Dutia v Geldof [2015-16] Partnership dispute in relation to private equity firm focused on investments in Africa.

A v B [2014] Acted for well-known professional services LLP defending an arbitration claim by a former member to a share in the proceeds of the sale of its business taking place after the date of his retirement on the basis of an alleged fraudulent misrepresentation.

Re W LLP [2014] Acted in dispute concerning departure of group of members from private equity firm involving allegations of fraud and other serious misconduct.

Marshall v Holt [2014] An unfair prejudice petition arising out of a property joint venture, raising issues as to scope of relief available under s 994 of the Companies Act 2006.

A partnership arbitration (with Philip Jones QC) relating to a dispute between members of a legal services LLP arising from a planned 'team move', raising issues of scope of fiduciary duties and repudiation of LLP agreement.

Rahimian v Tchenguiz & Ors (with Philip Marshall QC): acting for Claimant in claims asserting, inter alia, the informal creation of a partnership in relation to a large sub-prime mortgage lending enterprise.

Company

Malik v Hussain [2020] EWHC 2334 (Ch) Acted for petitioner in unfair prejudice petition relating to a substantial Indian restaurant and wedding venue business.

Hut Group v Zedra Trust [2019] EWHC 2191 (Comm) Dispute relating to right to access accounting information on basis of term of sale and purchase agreement; also disputed application to inspect company register ([2017] 11 WLUK 112)

Simonon v Simonon [2019] EWHC 844 (Ch) Dispute over entitlement to sell shares in a company receiving royalty income under terms of a divorce agreement.

Royal Westminster Investments SA v Varma Acted for claimant in allegation of fraudulent misappropriation of shares in a BVI company; also involving dispute over scope of rectification proceedings which went to Privy Council ([2015] UKPC 2) and application for relief under s 25 CJA ([2012] EWHC 3439 (Ch)).

Waddington Ltd v Chan Chun Hoo Thomas [2008] HKEC 1498: appeal to Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal raising issues of reflective loss and multiple derivative actions.

Shing Lee Ho Chee v Unigreg Limited: acted for the Claimant in seven-day trial in Chancery Division raising issues relating to letters of credit and illegality under Chinese law.

Re a Company: acted in a petition under s 994 of Companies Act made on behalf of petitioner with c.US\$8m stake in company which he founded providing telecommunications solution.

Re Merit Holdings: acted for defendant in a shareholder dispute in relation to a freezing injunction and the substantive claim, raising issues of standing to bring a derivative claim.

World Clothes Holdings v Moschillo: acted for Claimant fashion company in claim raising issues of jurisdiction to bring derivative claim for wrongdoing against director domiciled abroad.

Commercial Litigation

Ward v Savill [2020] EWHC 1534 (Ch) Acted for Defendant in relation to tracing claim asserted against valuable London property, successfully establishing that Claimants could not rely on declarations obtained in earlier related proceedings.

Hut Group v Zedra Trust [2019] EWHC 2191 (Comm) Dispute relating to right to access accounting information on

basis of term of sale and purchase agreement; also disputed application to inspect company register ([2017] 11 WLUK 112)

Alokozay v Alkozay [2019] EWHC 1631 (Ch) Successfully acted on behalf of wealthy Middle Eastern businessman in five-day trial establishing claims in deceit in relation to various disputed transfers.

Re Gerald Smith [2019] EWHC 2598 (Comm) Acting on behalf of Serious Fraud Office in heavy, multi-party, and multi-jurisdictional litigation connected with the enforcement of the largest ever UK confiscation order obtained by the SFO.

Bayerische Landesbank v Constantin Medien [2017] EWHC 131 (Comm) Acted for Part 20 Defendant in Commercial Court claim for \$130m arising out of bribery in relation to the sale of the Formula One group to CVC in 2006.

Avonwick v Castle [2016] EWHC 3832 (Ch) Unlawful means conspiracy claim for damages of US\$170m in relation to alleged transaction defrauding creditors (5 week trial in 2018).

Gerald Metals v Timis [2016] EWHC 2136 (Ch); [2016] EWHC 2327 Applications for injunction and disclosure relating to dispute over energy assets in Africa.

Bestfort Developments LLP v Ras Al Khaimah Investment Authority [2016] EWCA Civ 1099 Security for costs application in connection with substantial fraud proceedings.

Billington v Davies and Soane Capital [2016] EWHC 2969 (Ch) and [2016] EWHC 1919 (Ch) Freezing order application and various enforcement proceedings arising from substantial property fraud.

Avonwick v Castle [2016] Acting for Mikhail Shlosberg in conspiracy claim for damages of US\$170m.

Royal Westminster Investments SA v Varma Acted for claimant in allegation of fraudulent misappropriation of shares in a BVI company; also involving dispute over scope of rectification proceedings which went to Privy Council ([2015] UKPC 2) and application for relief under s 25 CJA ([2012] EWHC 3439 (Ch)).

Millward Brown v Metrixlab [2016] Acting in breach of confidence claim arising from move of senior employees between advertising firms and alleged misuse of client lists.

Ash Regeneration v Celtic Energy [2015-16] Acted for Celtic Energy in relation to dispute over transfer of ownership of mines in South Wales to offshore entities.

SC DG Petrol Srl v Vitol Broking Ltd [2013] EWHC 2176 (Comm): acting for defendant in dispute relating to alleged fraudulent conspiracy against energy concerns in Eastern Europe.

Amoutzas v Tattersalls [2010] EWHC 1696: acted for Claimant in dispute concerning ownership of monies deposited with a bloodstock auctioneer and alleged assassination of a horse in Greece.

Working as part of a team (with David Blayney and others) advising a major retail bank on the legality of product charges under the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulation 1999.

Assisting HM Treasury in relation to issues arising from the financial assistance provided to Northern Rock plc.

Private Client Trusts and Probate

Lady Henrietta St George et al v Sir Jack Haywood et al (with Frank Hinks QC and Jonathan Adkin): multimillion pound litigation in Bahamas and Cayman Islands relating to the ownership and control of Freeport Grand Bahama.

Alhamrani v Alhamrani (with Victor Joffe QC): advising in relation to adjournment on grounds of ill health of key witness in large piece of contentious trusts litigation in Jersey.

Re V R Trusts (with Giles Richardson): acting for the trustees of a substantial offshore trust in relation to alleged fraudulent misappropriation of trust assets.

Cawdron v Merchant Taylors' School [2009] EWHC 1722 (Ch): acting for Second Defendant in case concerning validity of trusts of a war memorial.

B v B (with Alan Boyle QC and Jonathan Russen): acting for the defendant in a dispute raising issues of proprietary estoppel, mental capacity and fraud in relation to the estate of a well-known nightclub owner.

Charman v Charman (with Alan Boyle QC and Dakis Hagen): advising on jurisdictional issues arising from the foreign enforcement of the decision of the English family court.

Recommendations

Chancery: Commercial and Partnership (Chambers and Partners)

Partnership and Insolvency (The Legal 500)

Company and Partnership (Who's Who Legal)

Quotes

"James is extremely competent and highly versatile. He spans the Chancery and commercial divide brilliantly." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"He is extremely bright and has a very good, understated but powerful advocacy style. He's both effective and persuasive." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"James has a good strategic mind and his written work is clear." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"James is very caring and supportive of the client and a real member of the team. His written work and advocacy is good." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"James Mather's strategic thinking is impressive. He is able to look ahead and see future obstacles that others miss. His expertise in partnership law is impressive." (Chambers & Partners, 2025)

"Sharp minded, very pleasant to deal with, commercially astute and quick thinking on his feet." (Legal 500, 2025)

"Good advisor, team player with prompt and sensible advice. Written work is good." (Legal 500, 2025)

"Accessible and a good team player, he is able to communicate difficult concepts well." (Chambers & Partners, 2024)

"James's strategic advice in fast-moving and multi-layered matters has been invaluable. His ability to think ten steps ahead and weave in strategic moves in line with the client's commercial goals is impressive. He clearly knows his stuff." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"James is outstanding: very bright and thorough, a tenacious advocate and great to work with." (Chambers &

Partners UK Bar, 2024)

"Clearly very bright and switched on, he is alive to the client's position and provides practical suggestions as well as superb legal analysis." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"A firm and persuasive advocate, he is smart, commercial and very good with clients." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

"A very good, understated yet powerful advocate, who is extremely bright. He's a very capable, interactive, and team-oriented barrister." (Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2023)

Publications

Co-author with Joel Seager (Enyo Law) of *The Position of Insolvency Officeholders and Privilege - Shlosberg v Avonwick* (2018) The Commercial Litigation Journal

Co-author with Lance Ashworth QC and Matthew Morrison of *Directors' duties to creditors in the UK: Ripe for reform?* (2018/2019) International Insolvency & Restructuring Report, Capital Markets Intelligence.

Co-editor with John Machell and Jennifer Haywood of *The LLP Legislation Handbook* (2010)

Co-author with Victor Joffe QC: *The Multiple Derivative Action*, [2009] Butterworths Journal of International Banking and Financial Law (Feb) 61

Fiduciairies and the Law of Limitation [2008] Journal of Business Law 244

Education & Qualifications

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge - MA in History (Double First)

Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (John F Kennedy Scholar)

City University, London - Postgraduate Diploma in Law (Distinction)

Inns of Court School of Law - Bar Vocational Course (Outstanding)

Appointments

Serious Fraud Office Proceeds of Crime (B Panel) (2017)

Junior Counsel to the Crown (C Panel) (2011-16)

Junior Counsel to the Department of Business for Directors' Disqualification hearings (2010-11)

Consulting Editorial Board, LexisPSL Corporate

Contributing Editor, Butterworths Corporate Law Service
