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James Ruddell

Unregistered Barrister
Call 2015

Scope of Practice

• Arbitration • Banking and Financial Services • Civil Fraud and Investigations • Commercial Litigation • Company and Insolvency • Energy and Natural Resources • Insurance and Reinsurance • Jurisdiction and Conflict of Laws • Professional Liability • Restitution

Overview

James is an overseas associate member of One Essex Court, currently working as a member of the litigation team at Bell Gully in New Zealand.

James Ruddell has extensive experience across the full spectrum of international commercial disputes, with a particular focus on banking & finance, civil fraud and international arbitration.

When in practice at the commercial bar in London, James has acted in market-leading commercial disputes, including in some of the most substantial matters before the English courts (including several of The Lawyer's "Top 20" cases) and in four landmark appeals to the United Kingdom Supreme Court. He has significant expertise in heavy applications including those relating to jurisdiction, freezing orders, and the enforcement of foreign judgments and arbitral awards. In arbitration, James acted in disputes administered under LCIA, SIAC, and UNCITRAL rules. He also has a busy advisory practice, with a particular focus on banking and finance, and corporate/commercial disputes.

He is recommended by Chambers & Partners, Legal 500 and Lexology (formerly Who's Who Legal) and was awarded the Lexology "Client Choice" Award for Litigation in England in 2022.

Highlights of his practice include:

- **BDW Trading Limited v URS Corporation Ltd (UKSC)**
  Acting (led by Laurence Rabinowitz KC) in a 4-day Supreme Court appeal concerning numerous issues of significance to the construction sector and to the law of obligations more generally (including scope of duty, accrual of causes of action, contribution and retrospective legislation).
- **General Dynamics United Kingdom Limited v The State of Libya (Comm, EWCA, UKSC)**
  Acting (led variously by Daniel Toledano KC and Joe Smouha KC) for the claimant in proceedings to enforce an arbitral award against the State of Libya, including in a Supreme Court appeal and two Court of Appeal hearings on issues relating to state immunity.
- **Philipp v Barclays Bank UK Plc (UKSC)**
  Acting (led by Sonia Tolaney KC) for UK Finance in a Supreme Court appeal concerning a bank's *Quincecare*

duty and whether it extends to customers who have fallen victim to authorised push payment fraud.

- **Skatteforvaltningen v Solo Capital Partners LLP & Ors (Comm, EWCA, UKSC)**
  Acting (led variously by Lord Pannick KC, Laurence Rabinowitz KC and Michael Fealy KC) for the Danish Tax and Customs Administration in a claim based on allegedly fraudulent withhold tax reclaims worth DKK 12 billion (approximately £1.5 billion). James acted in a Supreme Court appeal concerning the effect of the "revenue rule" in private international law.
- **In re FTX Trading Limited**
  Instructed by FTX Trading Limited to work with Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury to provide an expert declaration on English law issues arising in the US bankruptcy of FTX Trading, principally relating to property rights in cryptocurrency and other digital assets.
- **Hashwah & Ors v Qatar National Bank (QPSC) & Ors (Comm)**
  Acting (led Daniel Toledano KC) for Qatar National Bank in proceedings brought by alleged victims of terrorism during the Syrian civil war for alleged terrorist financing.
- **Vale v Steinmetz & Ors (Comm, EWCA)**
  Acting (led by Sonia Tolaney KC) for the claimants in substantial (c.US$1.7 billion) civil fraud proceedings arising out of a JV to exploit mining rights in Guinea, including in an appeal to the Court of Appeal on issues relating to rescission and the effect of arbitral awards.

Prior to his call to the English bar, James practised for 2 years as a commercial litigation barrister and solicitor in New Zealand. He graduated first in his year in both his undergraduate (University of Auckland, LLB(Hons)) and postgraduate (University of Oxford, BCL) studies. His academic work has been cited with approval by the English Court of Appeal.

What the Directories Say

Chambers & Partners 2026 (Commercial Dispute Resolution) *"He is my favourite barrister in London as he is just uncommonly good. Extremely clever and hard-working, he shows great initiative and produces advocacy at a silk level." "James is sharp as a whistle and 100% dedicated to the job. He's incredibly smart but also sensible, and he has great commercial acumen. All in all, he's just a pleasure to work with."*

Chambers & Partners 2025 (Commercial Dispute Resolution) *"James' legal knowledge is perhaps unparalleled for someone of his level. He is able to grasp deeply complicated subjects and find a commercially viable path through an issue." "He is really responsive and easy to work with." "James is brilliant to work with and a true details man."*

Legal 500 2025 (Banking & Finance)

Legal 500 2025 (Commercial Litigation) "*James is exceptionally clever but also practical and user-friendly. He is always willing to get on the phone and thrash out the answer as a team, and he is great to work with."*

Legal 500 2025 (Fraud: Civil)

Chambers & Partners 2024 (Commercial Dispute Resolution) *"James' drafting is exceptional and he distils complex and technical matters into crisp points. He also has an appreciation of the client's commercial objectives, something which is borne out in his advice." "James Ruddell is highly intelligent."*

Legal 500 2024 (Banking & Finance & Commercial Litigation) *"James is London's best kept secret. He is just excellent – extremely bright, commercial and responsive – an absolute pleasure to work with."*

Legal 500 2023 as a Rising Star in Commercial Litigation: *"Some firms' default choice for any commercial dispute – uncommonly bright, hard-working and a real team player – his instructing solicitors would bet the house on James rising the ranks at break-neck speed."*

Who's Who Legal 2022 as a Future Leader in **Commercial Litigation**, and was the joint winner of the 2022 **Lexology** "Client Choice" Award for Litigation in the United Kingdom.

Education

- University of Oxford: BCL (Distinction, first in year) (Restitution of Unjust Enrichment, Conflict of Laws, Commercial Remedies, Principles of Civil Procedure) [2013-2014]
- University of Auckland: LLB(Hons) (Senior Scholar, first in year) [2012]
- University of Auckland: BA (History and Politics) (Senior Scholar) [2012]

Academic Achievements

- Vinerian Scholarship, University of Oxford (first in year in BCL examinations) [2014]
- Peter Birks Prize in Restitution of Unjust Enrichment, University of Oxford [2014]
- John Morris Prize in Conflict of Laws, University of Oxford [2014]
- Law Faculty Price in Commercial Remedies, University of Oxford [2014]
- FMB Reynolds Scholarship in Law [2013]
- Banking and Financial Services Law Association Postgraduate Scholarship [2013]
- Auckland District Law Society Prize, University of Auckland (first in year in LLB(Hons) degree) [2012]
- Senior Scholar Awards in Arts and Law, University of Auckland [2012], and various subject and other prizes.

Publications

- "Monetary Remedies for Wrongful Foreign Proceedings" [2015] 1 Lloyd's Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly pp.9–13
- "Common Intention and Rectification for Common Mistake" [2014] 1 Lloyd's Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly pp.48–75, cited with approval in FSHC Group Holdings Ltd v Glas Trust Corp Ltd [2019] EWCA Civ 1361, [2020] Ch 365
- "Statutory Interpretation, Parliamentary Intention and the General Anti-Avoidance Rule" (2013) 3 New Zealand Universities Law Review pp.497–521
- "Deceit in the Transvaal? The Case of Burrows v Rhodes and Jameson" [2013] Auckland University Law Review pp.99–119
- Co-Editor-in-Chief, Auckland University Law Review [2012]

Awards

Chambers TOP RANKED UK Bar 2026 One Essex Court

LEADING JUNIOR Legal500 UNITED KINGDOM 2026

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