

NEWSLETTER

NEWS FROM ROBIN SIMON LLP - FEBRUARY 2009

New Office Head for London

RSL is proud of being a national practice which operates seamlessly as one firm across all four offices. We are often asked the question: so which is your Head Office? This is not an easy one to answer except to say that there is *no* designated Head Office. Inevitably however our City of London office occupies a special significance for us: it is firmly in the heart of the insurance sector of the City and it remains the base for our work for City financial institutions and of course our international insurance practice now led by Jacquetta Castle (see below).

The appointment of **Mark Aizlewood** as Head of our London team is therefore a significant matter and one which we are delighted to announce. Mark joined the firm in late 2008 and has settled in so well at RSL that we are able to confirm his role as Head of London without further delay. Mark qualified in 1991 and had been for a number of years a partner in another firm. Previous managerial roles meant that he has stepped very easily into a leadership role here with us in London.



We have 15 lawyers in the London office out of a total complement of 45 specialist lawyers in the whole firm. The growth of the firm has created its own issues of management so we have designated one partner to take on the Office Head role, partly to co-ordinate a seamless service without competition between the different locations and partly to manage the interface of each office with its local market. The Office Heads in the other locations are of course, Andrew MacLeod in Manchester, Jason Ford in Leeds, and Philip Steel in Birmingham.

Mark already had strong links with some of our key Insurer clients and he has been very busy since he joined us. It has been quite difficult therefore for us to arrange an occasion to give him a public welcome to the firm. We have, however, managed to settle upon on a date which is **Tuesday 3 March 2009** for a **reception** in his honour.

We will be having an *open house* in our 6th floor meeting room suite at Minster House from 5.30 on that evening. For those not familiar with this space, it is where all members of the firm can conduct internal meetings, seminars, meetings with clients and all the other things that are part of the RSL presence in the City. The evening will give an opportunity to view our small collection of limited edition photographs by artists such as Mark Power, Francois Rousseau and Charlie White as well as the series of distressed buildings in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan by the photographer Brian McKee, pictures which never fail to arouse comment from visitors.

E-invitations to this informal event will be issued shortly.

International News

Jacquetta Castle is leading our International initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic.

She has been invited by the Academy of European Law (ERA) to speak at its Annual Conference on Insurance Law to be held in Trier in Germany on 23 and 24 March.

Jacquetta will be speaking on the Principle of European Insurance Contract Law, the European equivalent to the Law Commission proposals.



The ERA is a public foundation set up in 1992 on the initiative of the European Parliament. It is based in Trier and continues to be supported by the European Union. ERA's membership includes the majority of EU member states.

This comes hot on the heels of Jacquetta's forthcoming trip to New York with Rachel Lawrie from our International team when they will be attending the PLUS D&O symposium and hoping to meet up with as many as possible of our US clients and contacts.

Training initiatives with surveyors

As our insurance and professional clients face up to the consequences of the new wave of lenders' claims, RSL has been responding to the challenges which face every law firm seeking balanced, logical and convincing retrospective valuation evidence. In conjunction with two of our national surveying and valuation clients, our Manchester office has been very busy training valuers and surveyors up and down the country on the requirements and techniques for expert valuation evidence, especially the role played before proceedings have begun.

Led by one of our Manchester partners, Louisa Robbins, RSL has so far trained over 125 surveyors committed to the preparation of expert witness reports. In many instances, the training has included a post course assessment to ensure a high standard of reporting right from the preliminary stages of a claim. Whilst valuation evidence was critical during the claims spike following the property collapse in the 1990's, the funding of claims by lenders in this cycle (often staged CFAs and ATE policies) makes early valuation evidence all the more important, especially with the technology available to research tones of value and establish valuation benchmarks.



These well received training sessions are equally pivotal to our new product, RSL Defend. This is a powerful case management system designed to enable us to handle lenders' claims as systematically and cost effectively as possible. Our specialist national team has carefully analysed the various patterns of claims by lenders over the last 9 to 12 months and we now expect to be in a position to launch RSL Defend next month

RSL take to the rugby field!

For the first time, RSL will be entering a team for the Lloyd's Rugby Sevens playing against various other entities from the London Market. The RSL team manager, coach and co-ordinator is Dragos Stoica and the event takes place at Richmond Rugby Club on 14 May.

Robin Simon LLP February 2009

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