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Top 10 maritime lawyers 2021

Be it the high-profile Supreme Court cases or the more quotidian round of arbitration cases, each year, maritime lawyers play a key role in settling the myriad disputes that inevitably arise in our industry; and 2021 was no exception

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by Lloyd's List |

London remains the international centre for shipping litigation, thanks to the English law settlement clauses built into many contracts



RAINEY: BIG-NAME SHIPPING SILK WHO SPECIALISES IN MAJOR CASES.

01 / Simon Rainey QC, Quadrant Chambers

Simon Rainey remains one of the big-name shipping silks, specialising in important cases that often go all the way up the ladder.

This year, he has acted in the Supreme Court for the winning side in *Evergreen Marine v Nautical Challenge* [2021] 1 Lloyd's Rep 299, the first new judgment on the ColRegs for 40 years, and incidentally saving the Taiwanese boxship outfit tens of millions of dollars.

He will soon be heading to the Supreme Court again to argue the appeal in *Eternal Bliss* [2020] 2 Lloyd's Rep 419, the surprise and hotly debated decision of 2020, where the High Court held that demurrage is not an exclusive remedy for delay.



02 / Stephen Hofmeyr QC, 7KBW

Stephen Hofmeyr is an all-round commercial lawyer who frequently turns his hand to shipping cases, with ample experience in long commercial trials and international arbitration alike.

He is often cited for his grasp of complex technical issues, as demonstrated by his current work advising shipowners on NOx and CO₂ limits and the mitigating steps they have to take.

Mr Hofmeyr has also been chosen as the winner of the 2021 Chambers shipping barrister of year award.



03 / Elizabeth Blackburn QC, The 36 Group

Barrister Elizabeth Blackburn specialises in complicated large-scale casualty cases, and is acting as counsel in both the *Maersk Honam* (IMO: 9784271) and *Ever Given* incidents, as well as litigation regarding *MOL Comfort* [2020] Lloyd's Rep Plus 15 and in *Ievoli Sun* (IMO: 8708634).

She has a reputation for relishing complexity, whether that be in the shape of conflict of laws or jurisdiction issues, or heavyweight questions of naval architecture, hydrography, geotechnology and meteorology.

Ms Blackburn was part of the UK delegation at the May 2003 IOPC supplementary fund diplomatic conference, and was also involved in the finalisation and implementation of the Nairobi Wreck Removal Convention 2007.



04 / Claire Womersley, HFW

Claire Womersley started her career at sea and reached the rank of first officer at P&O Princess Cruises. She joined law firm HFW in 2008 as a casualty investigator and qualified as a lawyer through distance learning.

Promoted to partner in 2020, Ms Womersley focuses on collisions, groundings, salvage and personal injury.

Earlier this year, she acted for the shipowners and P&I insurers of *Ever Given* (IMO: 9811000), the boxship whose grounding blocked the Suez Canal for six days.

Her work has also been recognised with a Merchant Navy Medal for services to women and diversity in the maritime industry in September.

05 / Lindsey Keeble, Watson Farley & Williams

Long recognised as one of the leading women on the London shipping law scene, Lindsey Keeble is a key thought-leader on environmental, social and governance issues as they relate to the industry.

She was a co-author of WFW's report *The Sustainability Imperative*, which won the Green Finance award from Shipping Professional Network London at this year's London International Shipping Week.



Ms Keeble has also been recognised as Shipping and Maritime Lawyer of the Year at Euromoney's Women in Business Law Awards.

On her watch, WFW was also awarded gold standard certification by the Women in Leadership Empowerment Forum for the third year in a row.



06 / William Baldwin, Jones Walker

New Orleans-based Will Baldwin is co-leader of the maritime industry group at Jones Walker, the prominent US shipping law firm.

He is something of an all-rounder, representing clients on a wide range of issues, from ship finance to vessel seizures, charterparty drafting, contractual disputes, arbitration, pollution, piracy, personal injury, and Jones Act and cargo disputes.

Naturally, given his location, the offshore sector makes up a big part of his workload. High-profile jobs include overseeing Tidewater's \$1.25bn takeover of Gulfmark in 2018.

Mr Baldwin is rated in the top tier of shipping lawyers in the 2021 edition of Legal 500 United States.



07 / Edward Liu, Hill Dickinson

Edward Liu, a resident partner at the Hong Kong office of Hill Dickinson, is widely considered one of Asia's most influential shipping lawyers.

His main area of practice is in commercial and shipping litigation and arbitration, and he has extensive experience in handling international commercial disputes, especially those connected with China's Belt and

Road Initiative.

Mr Liu has also dealt with many shipbuilding cases involving Chinese yards. Although he hails from mainland China, Mr Liu is an enthusiastic participant in the Hong Kong SAR maritime community, serving on the maritime and port development committee of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board.



08 / Robert Bright QC, 7KBW

Another undisputed heavyweight among London shipping silks is Robert Bright of 7KBW, who is representing Angelicoussis interests in *Begum v Maran* [2021] Lloyd's Rep Plus 97, in which the widow of a Bangladeshi man killed during the breaking of a very large crude carrier has brought a compensation claim against the vessel's former owner.

There is much riding on this one, not least the whole of scrapping as it has been practised by western shipowners for many years.

Past claims to fame include acting for Dutch bank ING in the OW Bunker litigation, *PST Energy 7 Shipping LLC v OW Bunker Malta Ltd (The Res Cogitans)* (SC) [2016] 1 Lloyd's Rep 589, all the way up to the Supreme Court; for the P&I club in the *Atlantik Confidence* [2020] 1 Lloyd's Rep 520 deliberate scuttling case; and for the owners in *Cape Bonny* [2018] 1 Lloyd's Rep 356, a landmark decision in general average law.



09 / Stephen Askins, Tatham & Co

Ex-Royal Marines Stephen Askins is the go-to lawyer when it comes to complicated maritime matters, especially those relating to piracy and geopolitical risk that has drawn shipping interests.

A partner at London-based Tatham & Co, Mr Askins established his reputation during the era of Somali piracy and provides discrete advice that keeps many sensitive shipping and insurance matters out of the headlines.

A passionate advocate for seafarers who is known for going above and beyond, Mr Askins cemented his reputation with his pro bono work for the so-called Chennai Six, representing six former British soldiers who were arrested by India in connection with anti-piracy measures in the Indian Ocean.



10 / James Turner QC, Quadrant Chambers

One of the metrics of influence is media exposure, and Quadrant Chambers barrister James Turner QC has had a lot of that during this year, thanks to his liberal stance on cross-Channel asylum seekers.

In one 24-hour period, he discussed the issue on Radio 4's agenda-setting World at One, the 9pm BBC News, The Independent newspaper and Lloyd's

List.

That is especially impressive, given that he is a shipping barrister with no detailed knowledge of immigration law.

"What James does not know about shipbuilding disputes is not worth knowing," says one legal directory. "He really is a master in that field."

The Top 10 maritime lawyers list is compiled by the Lloyd's List editorial team in conjunction with our colleagues at Lloyd's Law Reports

Sources: Lloyd's Law Reports, Lloyd's List

***Our colleagues at Lloyd's Law Reports can benchmark activity and results in shipping litigation and are finalising data for the 2021 legal year; contact yvonne.knock@informa.com to inquire**

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Lloyd's List's Top 10 for the various shipping sectors will be published daily in the lead-up to One Hundred People 2021 — our annual ranking of the industry's most influential players, which will be revealed on Friday November 26