

# Alexander MacDonald

Call: 2001

'Alex is in a league of his own – an exceptionally strong technical lawyer who can get to the bottom of any issue. He is incredibly hard-working and provides an excellent service. His written and oral advocacy is of a high standard.'

Commercial Litigation, Legal 500 2025



✉ [seniorclerks@7kbw.co.uk](mailto:seniorclerks@7kbw.co.uk) ☎ +44 (0)20 7910 8300

Alexander MacDonald specialises in all areas of commercial law, particularly international arbitration, energy, insurance and reinsurance, shipping and private international law.

He is recommended in the legal directories as a leading junior in the fields of Commercial Litigation, International Arbitration, Insurance and Reinsurance, and Shipping. The Legal 500 describes him as 'one of the stars of the Bar'. Alexander won Insurance Junior of the Year in the Chambers Bar Awards in both 2018 and 2024 (and nominated in 2023), and Shipping Junior of the Year in The Legal 500 2019 Awards. He was also nominated for International Arbitration Junior of the Year in the Legal 500 2018 Awards.

In recent years Alexander has been involved in a number of complex and high-profile commercial disputes. Amongst other things, he is acting for a number of insurers in the US\$1.2 billion claim brought by SBM in connection with the Yme MOPUstor project, and for the Owners in the B Atlantic dispute, which was heard by the Supreme Court in March 2018. He has also been involved in insurance and reinsurance disputes (many of them in arbitration) relating to Madoff, large-scale buy-to-let mortgage fraud, the Christchurch II earthquake, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, pensions mis-selling and parallel lotteries. Alexander is equally comfortable being instructed on his own, or working as part of a large counsel and solicitor team. He appears in all tiers of the English courts, and has acted in a wide range of arbitrations, including under ICC, UNCITRAL, LCIA, LMAA, GAFTA and RSA terms.

## Expertise

### Commodities

---

#### Selected cases:

- London arbitration between Egyptian supplier of coke and Indian buyer, in which buyer claimed over US\$20 million in damages for non-delivery (2010-2013).
- Singapore arbitration between trader and investment bank relating to non-delivery of coal under long-term supply agreement;

involved issues relating to force majeure; settled before final hearing (led by Robert Bright QC) (2010-2011)

- **Glencore Energy UK Ltd v. Transworld Oil Ltd** [2010] EWHC 141 (Comm): Successfully acted (with Richard Southern QC) for Glencore in claim for damages for non-delivery of oil under a sale contract.
- **Dalian Fuhaichang Aquatic Product Co. Ltd and ors v. Adris** (Commercial Court, March-October 2007): Successfully obtained freezing order, and subsequently summary judgment, in claim for over US\$2 million under Bills of Exchange Act 1882.

## Energy & Natural Resources

---

In addition to the disputes concerning the reinsurance of energy risks, Alexander has also acted in a number of cases concerning the construction of offshore rigs.

### Selected cases:

- **SBM v. Zurich and ors** (2015-ongoing): claim for in excess of USD1.2 billion in respect of the alleged total loss of the MOPUstor in the Yme field.
- Dispute between Korean yard and purchaser relating to unpaid instalment under and purported cancellation of a shipbuilding contract relating to a drillship (2015-ongoing).
- **Centrica plc v. Medway Power Station Limited** (2011-2013): Claim by Centrica under long-term interruptible gas supply contract against MPL, an SSE plc subsidiary. The claim involved complex technical (engineering, chemistry, metallurgy) issues regarding MPL's force majeure defences. It settled shortly before the 6-8 week trial was due to start
- Advising a marine engineering company in connection with outstanding change requests under a contract on the LOGIC form for the decommissioning of a North Sea rig.
- **Shell UK Ltd v. Acergy UK Ltd** (Technology and Construction Court, June 2007): Acted for defendant engineering company resisting application for injunction enjoining company from departing FLAGS Hot Tap Project to carry out work on another North Sea Project (led by Gavin Kealey QC).

## General Commercial Disputes

---

Alexander has experience across a broad range of commercial disputes. He is described by The Legal 500, in its Commercial Litigation section, as a "star senior junior – super intelligent, commercial, thorough and fully engaged.

### Selected cases:

- Acting for operator in large UNCITRAL arbitration claim against owner of drill ship relating to multi-faceted disputes arising out of long term charter
- **SBM v. Zurich and ors** (2015-ongoing): claim for in excess of USD1.2 billion in respect of the alleged total loss of the MOPUstor in the Yme field.
- **Commerzbank v. Irano Hind Shipping Co (and ors)**: acting for German bank in claim under ship finance facility, involving issues relating to the effect of US/EU sanctions against Iranian entities.
- Advice on insurance coverage aspects of the Madoff Ponzi scheme

- **Norwegian Hull Club v. Marsh** (2013-2014): acting for Marsh in claim for unpaid premium: Marsh alleged that payment of premium would be contrary to sanctions against Iran under United States law.
- **Centrica plc v. Medway Power Station Limited** (2011-2013): Claim by Centrica under long-term interruptible gas supply contract against MPL, an SSE plc subsidiary. The claim involved complex technical (engineering, chemistry, metallurgy) issues regarding MPL's force majeure defences. It settled shortly before the 6-8 week trial was due to start
- High Court claim by the Hong Kong branch of the French Bank, Natixis, for principal and interest under a Facility Agreement which financed instalments under a shipbuilding contract (2011).
- **CMA CGM v. Hyundai Mipo Dockyard** [2009] 1 Lloyd's Rep 213: Claim under novated shipbuilding contract for damages arising out of a breach of an arbitration agreement (led by Christopher Butcher QC).
- **Rosewood Trucking Ltd v. Balaam** [2006] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 429 (CA): Successfully resisted claim for indemnity under Art 37 of the CMR after two-day trial. Case subsequently went to Court of Appeal.

## Insurance & Reinsurance

---

Alexander's core area of practice relates to insurance and reinsurance. He has considerable experience in large-scale disputes, both for policy holders and insurers, often of a technical nature. He is currently involved in the claim brought by Single Buoy Moorings Inc against Zurich and others in respect of the alleged constructive total loss of the MOPUstor in the Yme field. He is acting for the owners (led by Alistair Schaff QC) in the claim brought by the owners of the B Atlantic, which was heard by the Supreme Court in March 2018. He has also advised in respect of potential insurance claims arising out of the Madoff Ponzi scheme. In recent years Alexander has been involved in a number of reinsurance / alternative risk transfer disputes, relating to events including Hurricane Ike, Deepwater Horizon and the Christchurch II earthquake.

### Selected cases:

- **SBM v. Zurich and ors** (2015-ongoing): claim for in excess of USD1.2 billion in respect of the alleged total loss of the MOPUstor in the Yme field.
- **AtlasNavios v. Various insurers (The "B Atlantic")** [2016] EWCA Civ 808: Acting for owners in claim under war risks marine insurance policy in respect of detention of vessel by the Venezuelan state authorities as the result of drugs having been hidden beneath the vessel by malicious third parties. Due to be heard by Court of Appeal in June 2016.
- Arbitration between bank and various insurers (2013-2015): acted for policy-holder bank in claim under comprehensive Crime Policy in respect of large-scale mortgage fraud suffered by bank (led by David Edwards QC). The case settled shortly before the main hearing.
- Arbitration between IFA and primary and excess insurers relating to costs and compensation arising pensions mis-selling, and costs arising out of s.166 FSMA 2000 skilled persons review (2013-2014) (led by Christopher Butcher QC)
- Acting for insured in claim for sue and labour expenses under a marine insurance policy (2011 – 2012) (led by Peter MacDonald Eggers QC).
- Advising large energy utility in connection with a number of complex claims arising out of the construction or operation of traditional and renewable energy generation facilities.
- Arbitration between Bermudian reinsurer and reassured under an industry loss warranty policy relating to losses arising out of the Deepwater Horizon incident (2012-2013) (led by David Edwards QC)
- **Stonebridge Underwriting Limited v. Ontario Mutual Insurance Exchange** (2010-2012): acted for reinsurers seeking negative

declaration under excess of loss reinsurance policy; involved issues relating to alleged breach of claims notification provision and coverage; claim for approximately C\$5 million; settled before trial

- Arbitration involving claim under export credit insurance policy covering advance payments under 'red clause' letter of credit (2011-ongoing) (led by David Edwards QC)
- Arbitration between reinsurer and insurer involving a claim under a Gulf of Mexico windstorm cover for an indemnity in respect of Hurricane Ike losses (2010-2011): case settled during final hearing (led by David Edwards QC)
- **MyLotto24 Ltd v. Great Lakes Reinsurance (UK) PLC** (2010-2011): Dispute under prize indemnity insurance policy covering an online lottery; the claim was for jackpot prizes totalling over €40 million; dispute involved allegations of non-disclosure/misrepresentation and coverage defences; also involved issues of the effect of EU law on the legality of certain competitions; case settled before trial (led by Gavin Kealey QC)
- **American Reliable Insurance Company and Bankers Insurance Company Ltd v. Willis Limited** (2008-2009): Alexander acted for the Claimants in a US\$230 million Commercial Court action arising out of the PA LMX reinsurance market in the 1990s, which settled before trial (led by George Leggatt QC and Simon Picken QC).
- **Halifax Life Ltd. v. The Equitable Life Assurance Society** [2007] 1 Lloyd's Rep. 528: Case concerning a challenge to an expert determination made as to the premium payable in connection with the reinsurance by Halifax Life of The Equitable Life's unit linked and non-profit business (led by Christopher Butcher QC).
- ICC arbitration between English reinsurers and South American reassured (2006): Claim under reinsurance of a Bankers' Blanket Bond policy insuring a State Central Bank (led by Gavin Kealey QC and Julia Dias Q.C.).
- **(1) Interpart Comercio E Gestao SA (2) Longen SA v. Lexington Insurance Co** [2004] 1 Lloyd's Rep IR 690: Successfully resisted (led by Dominic Kendrick QC) reverse summary judgment application brought by insurer. Case concerned (amongst other things) allegations of fraudulent claim under policy of marine insurance, and questions of causation of loss.
- Arbitration between insured and various London Market insurers (2002-2004): Acting (led by Gavin Kealey QC and Paul Stanley) for US insured under a product liability policy on the Bermuda form (governed by New York law) in respect of losses arising out of the US silicone gel breast implant litigation.

## International Arbitration

---

### Selected cases:

- Acting for operator in large UNCITRAL arbitration claim against owner of drill ship relating to multi-faceted disputes arising out of long term charter

## Shipping & Transport

---

Alexander has acted in a large number of shipping disputes as an advocate and in an advisory capacity, concerning amongst other things shipbuilding disputes, cargo claims under charterparties and bills of lading, hire and demurrage disputes, and claims for delay.

### Selected cases:

- Dispute between Korean yard and purchaser relating to unpaid instalment under and purported cancellation of a shipbuilding

contract relating to a drillship (2015-2016).

- **Moondance Maritime Enterprises SA -v- Carbofer Maritime Trading APS (The “Moondance II”)** [2013] 1 Lloyd’s Rep 269: Decision relating to security for costs/payment into court in connection with arbitration appeal, including issue as to effect of set-off
- LMAA arbitration between Korean Shipyard and Norwegian shipowners (2010): Arbitration concerning allocation of risk of loss for physical damage under conversion contract.
- LMAA arbitration between German Shipyard and six purchasers (2009-2011): Alexander acted for a German shipyard in connection with a high profile dispute concerning the construction of 6 ‘mega-yachts’, and successfully (led by David Bailey QC) obtained a preliminary award concerning an outstanding instalment.
- Arbitration between disponent owner and charterer (2010-2012): claim for over US\$10m arising out of losses alleged to arise out of incorporation of Hamburg rules into charterers’ bills. Arbitration involves issues of foreign law and navigational error.
- **CMA CGM v. Hyundai Mipo Dockyard** [2009] 1 Lloyd’s Rep 213: Claim under novated shipbuilding contract for damages arising out of a breach of an arbitration agreement (led by Christopher Butcher QC).
- LMAA arbitration between disponent owner and charterer (2009): acted alone in claim by disponent owner, successfully recovering over US\$5m in respect of lost hire under three charters for specialised ethylene carriers. Arbitration involved issue as to whether charterer entitled to rely on illegality under foreign law, and validity of notice of withdrawal.
- **Jl MacWilliam & Co inc v. Mediterranean Shipping Co SA** [2005] 2 A.C. 423: Appeal to the House of Lords concerning whether a “straight” bill of lading was a “bill of lading or similar document or title” under the Hague-Visby Rules (led by Alistair Schaff Q.C.).
- **Interpart Comercio E Gestao SA (2) Longen SA v. Lexington Insurance Co** [2004] 1 Lloyd’s Rep IR 690: Successfully resisted (led by Dominic Kendrick QC) reverse summary judgment application brought by insurer. Case concerned (amongst other things) allegations of fraudulent claim under policy of marine insurance.

## Education

Trinity College, Cambridge: MA in Law, first class (1999). Georgetown University Law Center, Washington DC: LL.M in International and Comparative Law (2000); Inns of Court School of Law, London: Bar Vocational Course (2001)

During his time at Cambridge, Alexander was awarded the Tripos Prize, a Senior Scholarship and the Lizette Bentwich Prizes by Trinity. Subsequently, Alexander supervised Contract Law and European Law, at Trinity and Churchill Colleges, University of Cambridge, in 2000-01 and 2004-05. Georgetown University awarded him the Thomas Bradbury Chetwood, SJ, prize for the most distinguished academic performance in his programme. Alexander was also awarded Pre-pupillage and Major Scholarships by Lincoln’s Inn, and a pre-pupillage scholarship by Trinity College, Cambridge.