

Lateral  
Partner  
Moves  
in  
London



 May - June 2020

Welcome to the latest round-up of lateral partner moves in the legal market from Edwards Gibson; where we look back at announced partner-level recruitment activity in London over the past two months and give you a ‘who’s moved where’ update.

With law firms having to rapidly adjust to the economic challenges thrown up by COVID-19, their cash-conservation strategies have so far ranged from capital calls, drawing deferrals, rent reductions, pay-cuts and promotion/hire freezes (to name but a few). Although there have so far been mercifully few redundancies, with the UK government already tapering furlough payments, which are due to end completely in October 2020, it is likely many more firms will instigate formal or informal redundancy programmes over the next quarter.

Against this backdrop it is unsurprising that at the half-year point, the number of partner moves (195) is down more than a fifth on the statistical average (244) for the same January–June period last year.

Nevertheless, a complex picture appears to be developing. On the one hand, despite elevated caution around lateral partner hires, the picture for transactional lawyers is likely still flattered by a lag effect reflecting processes which were in advanced stages, prior to the impact of COVID-19. Against this, expectations of a pending boom in COVID-induced workflow - such as disputes and restructuring - along with potential “bargains” to be had from disruption-induced voluntary and involuntary movement of partners (including perhaps the odd émigré returning from a beleaguered Hong Kong), has boosted lateral numbers which may explain why, in the past two months, the number of laterals (61) is down only 14% on the same period last year (71).

#### Top partner recruiters in London May – June 2020

✓ CMS Cameron McKenna	4
✓ Addleshaw Goddard	3
✓ Morgan Lewis	3
✓ Squire Patton Boggs	3

In addition, a further eight firms: **DAC Beachcroft**, **DLA Piper**, **Greenwoods GRM**, **Hogan Lovells**, **Hunton Andrews Kurth**, **Linklaters**, **McDermott Will & Emery** and **Ropes & Gray** hired two partners-a-piece.

#### Also of note in this edition

- ✓ 21% of all laterals were non-partners moving into partnership;
- ✓ Four US headquartered firms: **Faegre Drinker**, **Latham & Watkins**, **Paul Hastings** and **Ropes & Gray** hired laterals whose practices were primarily restructuring or insolvency related.

## **Lateral hire market outlook**

In our [March-April 2020](#) edition we painted a bleak prognosis for the lateral recruitment market due to the economic impact of a COVID induced global recession. Nevertheless, we pointed out that the fall in London lateral recruitment will be mitigated by two main factors:

- **Disruption induced voluntary and involuntary movement of partners/teams.** May 2020 saw the collapse of Top 100 UK firm **McMillan Williams**. Whilst that firm is unlikely to have produced many individuals or teams to have whetted Big Law's appetite, if the current global GDP projections prove accurate, it is probable that many more mid-tier law firms will collapse and/or, in the case of some US headquartered law firms, close loss-making London operations over the next 12-24 months. This will inevitably enable other firms to opportunistically cherry-pick from the resulting flotsam and jetsam at a discount. Moreover, whilst most law firm partners – even those who are likely to be very busy – will probably see their compensation fall over the next 12-24 months, in many instances busy, profitable, teams will not want to be tied to an underperforming law firm – particularly one which requires a significant increase in capital contributions. Equally, many law firms will themselves shed underperforming partners (and practices) who will resurface at new homes.

- **An increase in COVID-induced workflow.** Most employment and property litigation specialists have reported sharply increased utilization rates. More significantly, a host of matters - from fraud and anti-trust to complex refinancings, as well as sustained elevation in English law governed disputes - are likely to arise from a combination of hastily drafted legislation allied to the foreseen and unforeseen impacts of COVID-19 on virtually every major economic actor in the Western world. More obviously, restructuring/insolvency partners - who were already finding themselves *de rigueur* prior to COVID-19 - are likely to become increasingly sought after as the lock-down induced economic shock waves increasingly find their mark. If law firms are unable to re-tool their existing resources in time to take advantage of the above, they will need to hire laterally.

One interesting question posed at the start of the COVID-19 crisis was whether, due to lockdown restrictions in London and New York, traditional "Big Law" firms would ever hire lawyers into their partnerships without ever actually physically meeting them. Having now completed assignments on that basis, Edwards Gibson can testify that, whilst entirely virtual lateral recruitment certainly has its challenges, for the right candidate, they can, and they will.

**Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this article or any other aspect of the market in more depth.**

[Please click here to understand our methodology for compiling Partner Moves](#)

✓ **Addleshaw Goddard**

A trio of hires for Addleshaws in this edition; regulatory lawyer **David Young** joins from Eversheds Sutherland, white collar crime specialist **Polly Sprenger** joins from Katten Muchin Rosenman, and energy specialist **Martin Stewart-Smith** arrives from Bracewell. Young co-founded the health and safety group at his former firm and led its food sector offering, Sprenger specialises in corporate crime and investigations and Stewart-Smith has expertise in electricity and oil and gas.

✓ **Baker McKenzie**

Corporate lawyer **Adam Eastell** joins from Eigen Technologies where he was general counsel and chief legal & strategy officer. Eastell, formerly a partner at Slaughter and May, has a TMT focus and expertise in the legal tech sector.

✓ **Boodle Hatfield**

Private client lawyer **Matthew Bennett** arrives from Fladgate. Bennett advises both UK and international individuals and families on the management of their legal, personal and tax affairs.

✓ **Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner**

Corporate finance lawyer **Ariel White-Tsimikalis** joins from Davis Polk & Wardwell where she was European counsel. White-Tsimikalis specialises in equity capital markets, corporate governance, and public company representation.

✓ **CMS**

A quartet of hires for CMS this round-up. White collar crime lawyer **Eoin O'Shea** joins from Reed Smith, real estate tax specialist **Phil Nicklin** joins from Deloitte, financial services lawyer **Owen Ross** joins from Skadden, where he was an associate, and asset finance lawyer **Gwen Edwards** joins from Hogan Lovells, where she was a senior associate. O'Shea joins as the joint head of the white collar crime practice and advises on government and regulatory investigations and

corporate crime. Nicklin, a chartered tax advisor who is not legally qualified, joins as the new head of REITs and structured transactions. He advises real estate companies and funds. Ross has experience in transactions involving insurance companies, reinsurance and regulatory matters in the life and non-life sectors. Edwards specialises in aircraft finance and leasing.

✓ **Covington & Burling**

Financial services regulatory specialist **John Ahern** joins the Washington D.C. headquartered firm from Katten Muchin Rosenman. Ahern advises foreign banks, multilateral trading facilities, broker-dealers and asset managers in the UK, European and Asian markets.

✓ **DAC Beachcroft**

DAC Beachcroft welcomes two new partners - insurance lawyer **Alex Stovold** joins from Clyde & Co, and employment lawyer **David Speakman** joins from Linklaters where he was a counsel. Stovold advises on aviation matters for insurers and reinsurers, with a focus on general aviation, product liability and coverage advice. Speakman specialises in both contentious and non-contentious employment and has a particular focus on the financial services sector.

✓ **DLA Piper**

DLA Piper nabs a brace of laterals in this edition. Restructuring lawyer **James Davison** joins from Addleshaw Goddard and intellectual property lawyer **Deborah Bould** joins from Pinsent Masons. Davison advises companies, investors, and creditors on financial and operational turnarounds. Bould has experience in technology focused patent litigation.

✓ **Euclid Law**

The competition law boutique has hired **Becket McGrath** from US firm Cooley where he worked in the London and Brussels offices. McGrath has expertise in technology markets, electronic distribution, and e-commerce.

- ✔ **Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath**  
Insolvency lawyer **Patrick Corr** joins from Sidley Austin where he was the head of European restructuring and insolvency. Corr, who joins as part of a two-partner team move in the UK and US, advises on contentious and non-contentious corporate recovery and turnaround matters.
- ✔ **Fieldfisher**  
Disputes lawyer **Donna Goldsworthy** joins from BDB Pitmans. Goldsworthy has commercial disputes experience across a range of sectors including finance, energy, insolvency, fraud, and sport.
- ✔ **Fladgate**  
Private client lawyer **Jonathan Riley** joins from Exeter Headquartered Michelmores to head up the private wealth team. Riley advises high-net-worth individuals and related entities on wealth structuring, trust advice, estate planning and tax.
- ✔ **Forsters**  
The West End firm has hired corporate lawyer **Stuart Hatcher** from PwC LLP. Hatcher assists start-ups and privately-owned business on a wide range of matters.
- ✔ **Fox Williams**  
Corporate insurance lawyer **Pollyanna Deane** joins the financial service regulatory team from Simmons & Simmons where she was head of non-contentious insurance. Deane's clients include life and general insurance companies whom she advises on a range of corporate and regulatory matters.
- ✔ **Gibson Dunn & Crutcher**  
Finance disputes lawyer **Susy Bullock** returns to the US firm following a six-year stint at investment bank UBS, where she was a managing director and head of EMEA litigation. Bullock will focus on disputes in the banking and financial services sector.
- ✔ **Gowling WLG**  
Finance lawyer **Nath Curtis** joins from Bristol firm Burges Salmon. Curtis specialises debt and equity investments into energy and infrastructure assets.
- ✔ **Greenwoods GRM**  
Greenwoods GRM hires two disputes partners this edition: **Joseph Kosky**, from US firm Locke Lord, and **Euan Palmer**, from Rosling King. Kosky undertakes a broad range of commercial disputes whilst Palmer has a focus on the oil and gas industry.
- ✔ **Herbert Smith Freehills**  
Corporate finance and equity capital markets specialist **Michael Jacobs** joins from Allen & Overy's Hong Kong office. Jacobs' experience includes extensive IPO's as well as public and private M&A.
- ✔ **Hogan Lovells**  
After a 12-month stint at rival Paul Hastings, Hogan Lovells reclaims two of its own in the form of private equity duo **Ed Harris** and **Leanne Moezi** (see our [July-August 2019 edition](#)). Prior to decamping for Paul Hastings, Harris was head of private equity at Hogan Lovells and Moezi was of counsel at the firm.
- ✔ **Hunton Andrews Kurth**  
Projects duo **James Simpson** and **Jason Parker** join from fellow US firm Winston & Strawn, where Simpson was co-chair of the project finance practice. Both Simpson and Parker advise clients on a range of matters in the power, energy, and infrastructure sectors, with a particular focus on Africa and the Middle East.

- ✦ **Ince**  
 Asset finance lawyer **Stuart McAlpine** joins as the new global head of marine projects from Clyde & Co. McAlpine has experience in working on complex, cross-border transactions in the maritime and energy industries.
- ✦ **JMW Solicitors**  
 Sports lawyer **Nick Lewis** joins the Manchester-headquartered firm from DWF, where he was an associate. Lewis advises on governance, litigation and regulation within the sports and healthcare sectors.
- ✦ **Latham & Watkins**  
 The US firm has hired restructuring lawyer **Jessica Walker** from Mayer Brown. Walker focuses on contentious and non-contentious matters, with expertise in distressed transactions, including insolvency appointments, company voluntary arrangements, pensions restructuring and schemes of arrangement.
- ✦ **Linklaters**  
 The magic circle firm reclaims two of its own in this edition. Banking lawyer **David Irvine** re-joins from Kirkland & Ellis' Hong Kong office alongside financial services lawyer **Pansy Wong** who re-joins from JPMorgan Securities, where she was a managing director and associate general counsel. Irvine, a former Linklaters Hong Kong partner, advises private equity sponsors and private credit funds in major cross-border leveraged and acquisition financing transactions. Wong specialises in MiFID II, FinTech, Asset Management and managing operational implementation of regulation.
- ✦ **Mayer Brown**  
 Real estate lawyer **Simon Price** joins from Linklaters where he was the co-leader of the global funds and financial investor group as well as co-leader of the real estate sector group. Price specialises in the establishment of investment platforms and joint ventures and the acquisition and disposal of real estate assets.
- ✦ **McDermott Will & Emery**  
 The Chicago-headquartered firm welcomes finance duo **Mark Fine** and **Aymen Mahmoud** from Willkie Farr & Gallagher. Both Fine and Mahmoud specialise in debt financing transactions.
- ✦ **Memery Crystal**  
 TMT lawyer **Nathan Evans** joins the mid-town firm from Bristows as its new head of technology. Evans, an associate at his previous firm, has a range of commercial IT experience.
- ✦ **Milberg Phillips Grossman**  
 The New York group action boutique opens its London office with the hire of litigation lawyer **James Oldnall**, who joins alongside two associates from Mishcon de Reya. Oldnall specialises in banking litigation and arbitration.
- ✦ **Morgan Lewis & Bockius**  
 The US firm bags three partners this edition. Leading IP and trademarks specialist **Nick Bolter** joins from Cooley and alternative funds duo, **Rob Mailer** and **Oliver Rochman**, arrive from Morrison & Foerster. Bolter, whose clients include Amazon, launches Morgan Lewis' London IP practice with a 9-strong team. Both Mailer and Rochman advise sponsors and investors in private investment funds, including private equity and venture capital funds.
- ✦ **Norton Rose Fulbright**  
 Contentious intellectual property lawyer **Paul Joseph** joins the global verein from RPC. Joseph has experience in technology, data, and IP disputes, primarily acting on claims relating to tech, trademarks, copyright, licensing, data, and patents on the customer/supplier side.

✦ **Paul Hastings**

Restructuring and finance lawyer **Mei Lan** joins the LA headquartered firm from Shearman & Sterling. Lan represents banks, corporate borrowers, and private equity funds in distressed situations.

✦ **Payne Hicks Beach**

Private client lawyer **Martin Paisner** joins the mid-town firm from Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner. Paisner has five decades of experience acting for high-net-worth individuals and charities.

✦ **Reed Smith**

Competition lawyer **Ross Mackenzie** arrives from Ashurst. Mackenzie advises on anti-trust issues related to complex merger processes as well as market investigations.

✦ **Ropes & Gray**

The Boston headquartered firm makes two hires this edition - funds specialist **Tom Alabaster** joins from Linklaters and restructuring lawyer **Matthew Czyzyk** joins from Kirkland & Ellis. Alabaster, whose experience encompasses a wide range of alternative fund and asset management matters, joins as Ropes' new head of funds for EMEA. Czyzyk advises debtors, banks, and alternative capital providers on distressed matters across the credit spectrum.

✦ **Signature Litigation**

**Tom Snelling** - Freshfields former head of commercial disputes - has resurfaced at the litigation boutique after leaving the magic circle firm earlier this year following an internal investigation. Snelling advises clients in high-profile, strategic litigation.

✦ **Simmons & Simmons**

Employment specialist **Dan Ornstein** joins from Proskauer Rose, where he was the London head of employment and co-head of international labour and employment for the New York firm.

Ornstein focuses on clients in the asset management and financial services sectors.

✦ **Squire Patton Boggs**

Squire Patton Boggs welcomes three partners from HFW this edition. HFW's global head of corporate - **Brian Gordon** - joins alongside shipping & commodities duo **Chris Swart** and **Katie Pritchard**. Gordon advises on a range of corporate matters in shipping, mining and energy. Swart and Pritchard specialise in shipping and commodities disputes.

✦ **Stephenson Harwood**

Two hires for Stephenson Harwood this round-up. Professional liability/ regulatory specialist **Adam Culy** joins from professional services firm BDO, where he was general counsel and head of practice protection. Culy's practice will focus on accountancy FRC claims and investigations. Also joining is asset and aviation finance specialist **James Collins** from Norton Rose Fulbright, where he was a senior associate.

✦ **Taylor Wessing**

Private client lawyer **Murray North** joins from Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner. North advises high-net-worth individuals and related entities on tax and trusts issues.

✦ **Trowers & Hamlin**

Litigation lawyer **Navinder Grover** joins from West End firm Teacher Stern. Grover has a particular specialism in insolvency disputes and fraud.

✦ **Van Bael & Bellis**

The Brussels-headquartered firm is set to launch its London practice in September 2020 with the hire of competition lawyer **Alexandros Stratakis**, who was an of counsel at Baker McKenzie.

✓ **Watson Farley Williams**

Real estate finance partner **Richard Hughes** joins from Pinsent Masons. Hughes advises lenders, borrowers, and other market participants on a wide range of financing transactions.

✓ **Womble Bond Dickinson**

Private client lawyer **Will Ford** joins from international trust group Anthos, where he was client advisor and head of UK estate planning. Ford advises high-net-worth individuals and related entities on wealth preservation.

**Related links:**

- ✔ [Edwards Gibson Partner Round-Up - Our Methodology](#)
- ✔ [Previous editions of Lateral Partner Moves in London](#)
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✔ **The Specialist Partner Team**



**Scott Gibson**

Director

[scott.gibson@edwardsgibson.com](mailto:scott.gibson@edwardsgibson.com)



**Sloane Poulton**

Director

[sloane.poulton@edwardsgibson.com](mailto:sloane.poulton@edwardsgibson.com)



**Mark Coates**

Senior Consultant

[mark.coates@edwardsgibson.com](mailto:mark.coates@edwardsgibson.com)

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