



Matthew Mills

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Barrister

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Matthew Mills has a broad chancery practice encompassing wills, trusts and estates, charities, property, insolvency, company and commercial matters. Matthew is ranked for private client and charities work in both *Chambers and Partners* and *The Legal 500* and has been nominated as Star Junior at the *Chambers and Partners* High Net Worth Awards 2024. In 2022, Matthew was appointed to the Attorney General's C Panel of Junior Counsel to the Crown. Alongside full-time practice, he is a Lecturer in Land Law at the University of Oxford.

WILLS, TRUSTS AND ESTATES

Matthew is ranked in wills, trusts and estates matters in both of the leading legal directories, with solicitors recently reporting that he is "an exceptional advocate" who "relates to clients incredibly well and puts them at ease" (*The Legal 500*, 2024). Matthew's work covers the full spectrum of private client practice, from substantial and multi-jurisdictional trusts and estates to a will allegedly written by hand on the back of a coffee-stained letter.

Matthew regularly advises personal representatives and beneficiaries in relation to wills and the administration of estates, including:

- Advising on want of knowledge and approval and testamentary incapacity in relation to an estate worth c.£15 million
- Advising the executor of a c.£10 million multi-jurisdictional estate on how to finalise the administration when a beneficiary refuses to agree the estate accounts
- Advising beneficiaries on executors' expenses and solicitors' professional negligence in relation to an estate worth c.£8 million
- Advising beneficiaries on a claim for an account in relation to an estate worth c.£6 million
- Advising the executor of a c.£2 million estate on the revocation of English wills by a foreign will, the chances of proving a lost will, and the doctrine of mutual wills (the Claimant instructed a KC)
- Advising clients on claims under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975 against multi-million-pound estates.

Matthew also regularly represents personal representatives and beneficiaries in litigation relating to estates. For example, his recent court work has involved:

- Successfully representing a defendant in the leading authority on delay and laches in probate claims: *James v Scudamore* [2023] Ch 391
- Successfully obtaining a removal order and indemnity costs against recalcitrant executors in relation to a multi-jurisdictional estate
- Representing a child of the deceased in a claim in relation to the properties held in his mother's c.£6 million estate
- Successfully representing various beneficiaries in claims to progress the administration of an estate and pay the legacies promptly
- Successfully representing a beneficiary in a six-figure derivative claim brought on behalf of the estate against the executor in his personal capacity.

In addition to his estates work, Matthew advises and represents trustees and beneficiaries of lifetime trusts. For example, his recent trusts work has involved:

- Advising the children of a lottery jackpot winner on when equity will perfect an imperfect conditional gift, and proprietary estoppel
- Advising the former trustee of substantial Jersey trusts on a claim for breach of trust brought by the current trustees
- Advising the trustees of a multi-million-pound farm on disputes between the trustees and the beneficiary-occupant of the farm
- Advising the trustees of a 100-year-old trust on the rules against perpetuities
- Advising the beneficiary of a multi-million-pound trust on the terms of retirement of the trustees
- Advising a discretionary beneficiary on how he could try to persuade trustees to execute their discretion in his favour by making a £1 million distribution to him
- Representing an individual in a *Quistclose* trust claim against a local authority in relation to a payment of more than £250,000
- Successfully obtaining the first orders in the Business and Property Courts pursuant to the Guardianship (Missing Persons) Act 2017.

In 2020, Matthew went on secondment to Dickinson Gleeson in Jersey. While offshore, Matthew worked on *Z Trust* [2020] JRC 072 (part of the leading litigation on insolvent trusts), the *Crociani* litigation, and *Trico Ltd v Buckingham* [2020] JCA 067 (a contractual dispute heard by the Jersey Court of Appeal). He also assisted with an expert report on Jersey trusts law in an international dispute worth \$200 million, *EFG Bank AG v Surewin Worldwide Ltd* [2021] SGHC 227.

Matthew regularly gives seminars and webinars on private client topics. His recent talks have covered challenging wills, claims against personal representatives, and the duty to account (see [here](#)).

Matthew also writes on private client topics (see publications below), and previously taught and examined trusts law as a Teaching Fellow at UCL.

CHARITIES

Matthew is one of just nine junior barristers in the country who are ranked in both *Chambers and Partners* and *The Legal 500* for charity law. Clients describe him as “*experienced beyond his years*” (*Chambers and Partners*, 2024). Matthew regularly advises charities of all sizes on contentious and non-contentious matters and has represented charities as sole counsel and junior counsel in court. As a result, his work covers the full range of issues on which charities need advice and representation.

Out of court, clients have described Matthew as “*invariably helpful, comprehensive, clear, and detailed in his advice*” (*Chambers and Partners*, 2024). In his non-contentious practice, Matthew has advised various charity trustees on questions relating to governance, including:

- Advising the trustees of a charity associated with a FTSE 250 company on how they could replace themselves with a corporate trustee

- Advising two almshouse charities with assets of c.£2 million on how they could merge and ‘incorporate’
- Advising a London Council on whether it holds a multimillion-pound educational site on charitable trust and, if so, whether it could repurpose the site for housing
- Advising a City Council on the impact of the creation of a new parish on the management of local charities
- Advising the trustees of an industrial and provident society on various technical issues relating to deregistration, vesting orders and merger
- Advising one of the largest agricultural societies in the country on the nature and terms of its longstanding relationship with another society
- Advising a Diocese on the validity and scope of a reverter clause in the conveyance of a vicarage from 1857
- Advising a village hall charity on how it could ‘incorporate’ in a cost-effective way.

Matthew also advises charities on issues relating to fundraising and substantial spending projects, including:

- Advising a substantial medical charity on how it could create an expendable permanent endowment for its c.£45 million of reserves
- Advising religious and almshouse charities on whether, and if so how, they could spend or sell over £1 million of their permanent endowments
- Advising the trustees of a tennis club on how they could free themselves from restrictions in the club’s governing document on granting a lease over charity land
- Advising on the construction of ambiguous charitable bequests and the scope of the royal sign manual procedure
- Advising a start-up on how the rules regulating charity fundraisers would affect the new company’s business.

In his contentious charity law practice, solicitors have described Matthew as “*extremely client-friendly and exceptional on his feet*” (*The Legal 500*, 2024).

Matthew has advised and represented a range of charities in disputes, including:

- Successfully representing (with Robert Pearce KC) the Defendants in the leading authority on when the court will appoint a receiver over a charity: *Jaffer v Jaffer* [2024] EWHC 135 (Ch)
- Representing the charity trustees of a Grade I-listed church in a landlord and tenant claim involving alleged disrepair of up to £6.5 million
- Successfully representing a substantial national arts charity in bankruptcy proceedings against a debtor in relation to a debt worth over £2.25 million
- Advising a grant-making charity worth over £60 million on how to bring appropriate insolvency proceedings against one of the charity’s debtors
- Advising a senior religious figure on charity proceedings in relation to a Hindu temple worth c.£15 million
- Successfully representing the trustees of a mosque in High Court litigation over the outcomes of elections and control of the charity’s assets
- Successfully representing a pastor in an appeal against a possession order relating to a church on the ground that the claim was issued by the trustees for improper purposes
- Assisting various substantial national charities which are beneficiaries of a will with disputes relating to their inheritance and estate administration
- Advising substantial national charities on various disputes with their landlords.

Alongside his practice, Matthew regularly gives talks on charity law topics. In 2023 and 2024, he was invited to speak at the Charity Law Association’s Annual Conference. Among other things, his talks have covered schemes, charity trustees’ powers, duties and decisions, and recent Charity Commission guidance (see [here](#)).

Matthew has also published several academic and practical articles on charity law topics, including the registration of grant-making charities and the Supreme

Court's decision in *Lehtimäki v Cooper* [2020] UKSC 33 (see publications below).

Matthew previously taught charitable trusts to undergraduates as a Teaching Fellow at UCL.

PROPERTY

Matthew practises extensively in all aspects of property law alongside teaching Land Law at the University of Oxford. His expertise encompasses trusts of land, estoppel, easements, charges, and adverse possession (both freehold and leasehold). Matthew's recent cases have involved:

- Advising on a contractual dispute arising out of the sale of a c.£5 million Grade II* listed property
- Advising on a proprietary estoppel claim relating to property development companies worth over £10 million
- Advising a hereditary peer on a dispute over the ownership of a seventeenth-century chapel
- Successfully representing the trustees of a large, landed estate in an adverse possession dispute
- Successfully representing the owners of a c.18th Grade II listed property in a dispute over various easements
- Successfully representing the freeholder of a c.£2 million house in a dispute over the interpretation of restrictive covenants
- Successfully representing a farmer in a claim against a descendant of the Russian royal family relating to the interpretation of 100-year-old conveyances: *Dunlop v Romanoff* [2023] UKUT 200 (LC)
- Advising the owner of a multi-million-pound house in the exclusive St George's Hill estate on a nuisance claim
- Advising with a KC on when equity will save an imperfect transfer of land
- Advising on misrepresentation claims in relation to various conveyances of houses worth c.£1 million

Matthew also has a broad landlord and tenant practice. He has acted on behalf of both landlords and tenants in matters relating to the construction, rectification, enforcement and breach of leases. Recent highlights of his practice include:

- Acting on behalf of a management company against a KC in £1 million+ High Court disrepair proceedings
- Acting on behalf of a property management company in interim injunction proceedings relating to temporary accommodation during the pandemic. The Council instructed a KC: *Merritt v Thurrock Council* [2021] EW Misc 2 (CC)
- Successfully obtaining relief from forfeiture in a dispute relating to a mixed-use property worth c.£1 million
- Representing the Secretary of State for Transport in a business lease renewal claim relating to land next to HS2
- Advising the landlord of an Edwardian block of 150 flats in London on whether the tenants could be compelled to undertake various fire safety improvements to their flats
- Advising the landlord of a £5 million block of flats in London on whether £150,000 of proposed works would be recoverable as service charges
- Advising the management company of six blocks of flats on the lawfulness of the insurance premiums demanded by the landlord of the estate
- Successfully representing a freehold company in a dispute over whether it could deduct unpaid service charges from a defaulting tenant's dividend
- Advising the landlord of a block of flats in a conservation area on a disputed application to vary the terms of the leases to expand the tenants' service charge obligations.
- Advising a Jersey trust company on possession proceedings relating to multi-million-pound properties in London.

INSOLVENCY AND COMPANY

Matthew has frequently appeared in the High Court and County Court on bankruptcy petitions, winding-up petitions and other insolvency matters, including without notice applications. He acts for debtors, petitioners and insolvency practitioners. In his recent work, Matthew has successfully represented the petitioning creditor in a disputed bankruptcy petition relating to a £2.25 million debt, and obtained orders extending long-running administrations for insolvent companies with over £10 million of assets. He also successfully obtained one of the first compensation orders against a disqualified director for making a fraudulent application for a 'bounce back loan' during the pandemic.

Out of court, Matthew has recently advised an insolvency practitioner on an antecedent transaction claim in relation to a £4 million property, and advised the Insolvency Service on the merits of a potential £32 million claim against it for breach of the statutory duty of care.

Matthew has also developed a broad company law practice. He has advised on directors' rights, duties and remuneration, the rights of a beneficiary of a trust of shares, and the rectification of the register of companies. In his recent court work, he has successfully defended a director in a claim for the return of his remuneration and expenses, and persuaded a court that a claim issued by one director against the other was started with the defendant director's delegated authority.

During the pandemic, Matthew presented webinars on the latest insolvency cases and limitation periods in insolvency law (see [here](#)).

COMMERCIAL

Matthew's practice encompasses the full scope of commercial law. His recent work has raised issues of contractual construction, contractual variation, the enforceability of penalty clauses, and the delivery up of prize racehorses.

Matthew has experience of contractual disputes from the pre-action stage to trial. He has recently represented the defendant to a debt and unjust enrichment claim worth c.£900,000, and advised trustees on a claim for misrepresentation against the other parties to a six-figure settlement.

RECOGNITION

- *"Matthew is invariably helpful, comprehensive, clear, and detailed in his advice."* (Charities, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- *"Matthew is extremely thorough and experienced beyond his years."* (Charities, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- *"He is extremely client-friendly and exceptional on his feet."* (Charities, Legal 500 UK Bar 2024)
- *"Matthew is an exceptional advocate. His clarity of thought under some extremely high-pressure circumstances in court is remarkable. His presentation skills are excellent. He relates to clients incredibly well and puts them at ease."* (Private Client: Trusts and Probate, Legal 500 UK Bar 2024)
- *"Matthew is a very strong junior whose expertise is impressive. He is incredibly user-friendly and quickly gains client's trust and confidence."* (Chancery: Traditional, Chambers HNW London Bar 2024)
- *"Matthew was amazing from start to finish. His level of service was excellent. He went above and beyond to answer questions fully and very quickly. He was easy to get hold of and made very complex issues easy to understand. He went through a lot of paperwork for the instruction and he did this efficiently and thoroughly. His attention to detail is brilliant."* (Chancery: Traditional, Chambers HNW London Bar 2024)
- *"Matthew Mills never fails to impress with his well-considered arguments and calm unflappable manner. His level of knowledge of his subject area is excellent and he deals confidently with clients in a reassuring manner. He*

gives realistic timeframes for work; he works collaboratively with the instructing solicitor, and provides practical solutions.” (Chancery: Traditional, Chambers HNW London Bar 2024)

- *“Matthew is a strong junior. Very diligent and thoughtful, he clearly knows his way around the law.”* (Charities, Chambers UK Bar 2023)
- *“Matthew is very knowledgeable and more than capable in the areas in question. He keeps in touch and provides realistic turnaround times. His written advices are very helpful and well set out. He makes the effort to clarify matters where required, including by phone.”* – (Private Client: Trusts and Probate, Legal 500 UK Bar 2023)

PUBLICATIONS AND SPEAKING

Matthew is very happy to speak at open events or provide training to individual teams on topics within his practice areas. His recent talks have covered developments in charity law, property law, insolvency law and general litigation. Recordings of his webinars are available to watch on the Radcliffe Chambers YouTube channel ([link](#)).

Matthew has also published articles on a range of chancery topics:

Charities:

- “Corporate trustees of charities” (2022) 28 *Trusts & Trustees* 834-841 ([link](#)).
- “Incorporating an unincorporated charity” (2021) 27 *Trusts & Trustees* 613-621 ([link](#)).
- “Where duty lies” (2020) 219 *Trusts and Estates Law & Tax Journal* 3-10 ([link](#)) (a case note on *Lehtimaki v Cooper* [2020] UKSC 33).
- “The Registration of Grant-Making Charities” (2019) 20 *Charity Law & Practice Review* 65 ([link](#)).
- “The Development of the Public Benefit Requirement for Charitable Trusts in the Nineteenth Century” (2016) 37 *Journal of Legal History* 269-302 ([link](#)).

Private Client:

- “Discharging a Court of Protection security bond after P dies” [2019] *Private Client Business* 26-30 ([link](#)).
- “Single name family home constructive trusts: is *Lloyds Bank v Rosset* still good law?” [2018] *Conveyancer and Property Lawyer* 350-366 ([link](#)).
- “Why the Supreme Court decision in *AIB Group (UK) plc v Mark Redler & Co (a firm)*, on equitable compensation for breach of trust, should be reversed” ([Estates Gazette Online](#)).

Property / landlord and tenant:

- “Costs and Co-operation: What Tenants Must do to Assist with Fire Safety” [2019] 23 *Landlord and Tenant Review* 183-187 ([link](#)).
- “Claiming an interest in someone else’s property—common intention (family home) constructive trusts (*Sandford v Oliver*)”, *Lexis Nexis Q&A*, 23rd September 2019 ([link](#)).

QUALIFICATIONS

- 2015 – 2016 BPTC at City University (Outstanding)
- 2014 – 2015 BCL at the University of Oxford
- 2013 – 2014 LLM at UCL (Distinction, 1st in year overall of 443)
- 2010 – 2013 MA in Jurisprudence at the University of Oxford (First Class)

Prior to coming to the Bar, Matthew was a Lecturer in Land Law at the University of Oxford and a Teaching Fellow in Trusts at UCL. Matthew also worked as a Legal Editor for the start-up ‘[Sparqa](#)’, where he researched and wrote practical guides to the legal issues that are most relevant to small businesses, including mortgages,

leases, service charges and possession claims.

PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2017 Cholmeley Scholarship (Lincoln's Inn)
- 2016 Buchanan Prize for BPTC results (Lincoln's Inn)
- 2015 Lord Denning BPTC Scholarship (Lincoln's Inn)
- 2015 City Law School Postgraduate Scholarship
- 2015 Hardwicke Entrance Award (Lincoln's Inn)
- 2014 Full scholarship to study the BCL (University of Oxford)
- 2014 Pump Court Tax Chambers Prize for best performance in International and Commercial Trusts (UCL LLM)
- 2014 Best performance in Restitution (UCL LLM)
- 2014 Best performance in Legal History (UCL LLM)
- 2013 Finals prize (New College, University of Oxford)

MEMBERSHIPS

- The Chancery Bar Association
- The Charity Law Association
- The Contentious Trusts Association (ConTrA)
- The Higher Education Academy (Associate Fellow)
- The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn
- The Property Bar Association

POLICIES AND OTHER DETAILS

Read Matthew's [Privacy Notice](#), [Data Protection Policy](#) and [Disposal Policy](#).