



## James Morgan KC

Silk: 2017 | Call: 1996

King's Counsel

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**James Morgan KC** is a highly-regarded commercial practitioner, with particular expertise in the fields of restructuring and insolvency, company and commercial dispute resolution. He has a wealth of trial experience (including cross-examining experts) and considerable expertise in applications for interim relief, including freezing orders and injunctions. James is featured as a leader in his fields of expertise by both Chambers UK Bar and The Legal 500 UK Bar. James also sits as a Deputy High Court Judge (Chancery) and as a Recorder of the County Court. James is called to the Bar of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, British Virgin Islands

James is experienced in dealing with cross-border issues in commercial and insolvency litigation. He has recently appeared in the Privy Council on an appeal from the Eastern Caribbean CA (BVI) concerning the interaction of arbitration and insolvency law. He has previously appeared in the Gibraltar Court of Appeal and been involved in applications for recognition of Hong Kong bankruptcies and a British Virgin Island liquidation. He has ongoing cases involving issues of Jersey law and German law where it has been necessary to liaise closely with local lawyers in those jurisdictions. He also successfully acted for an African oil company in an ICC Arbitration.

### RESTRUCTURING AND INSOLVENCY

James is experienced in dealing with cross-border issues in commercial and insolvency litigation. He has recently appeared in the Privy Council on an appeal from the Eastern Caribbean CA (BVI) concerning the interaction of arbitration and insolvency law. He has previously appeared in the Gibraltar Court of Appeal and been involved in applications for recognition of Hong Kong bankruptcies and a British Virgin Island liquidation. He has ongoing cases involving issues of Jersey law and German law where it has been necessary to liaise closely with local lawyers in those jurisdictions. He also successfully acted for an African oil company in an ICC Arbitration.

## RESTRUCTURING AND INSOLVENCY

James has a leading reputation for handling a wide range of restructuring and insolvency matters. A client quoted in Chambers UK Bar 2019 describes him as “very good at insolvency – he’s one of the go-tos. He’s extremely intelligent and his knowledge of the law in that area is second to none. He is good with clients and highly approachable. He’s happy to speak to the clients and find a commercial solution.”

James’ work in this area includes:

- *Adams v FS Capital Ltd* [2023] EWHC 1649 (Ch) – leading Josh Lewison in a 2-week trial involving trusts, constructive trusts, the meaning of an “insolvent trust” and the application of the decision in *Sequana* as a matter of Jersey law
- *Re Lyphe Group Ltd* [2023] 12 WLUK 427 – acting for administrators in obtaining an urgent order under paragraph 71, Schedule B1 confirming that, in light of their obligations under the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds Regs 2017, they did not have to proceed with the highest bid for the company’s assets
- Acting for BVI liquidators in obtaining a recognition order under the Cross-Border Insolvency Regulations 2006 in the context of an international Ponzi scheme  
Acting for a large action group of investors in relation to a complex disclaimer / vesting order application arising out of a failed development scheme where fraud is alleged
- *Re Li Shu Chung* [2021] EWHC 3346 (Ch) – leading Katie Longstaff in successfully acting for Hong Kong trustees in bankruptcy in resisting an application for security for costs and then obtaining a recognition order under the Cross-Border Insolvency Regulations 2006
- *Re Fowlds* [2021] EWHC 2149 (Ch); [2022] 1 WLR 61 – leading Andrew Brown on an appeal before Trower J, which is the leading decision on “change of position” as a defence to avoidance claims in insolvency  
Acting for a national firm of insolvency practitioners in successfully resisting a substantial claim for professional negligence arising out a trading administration and dealings with ROT goods
- *Elston v King* [2020] EWHC 55 (Ch); [2020] BPIR 501 – Successfully acting for a trustee in bankruptcy in relation to the operation of the doctrine of common mistake in the context of an income payment agreement entered into by the bankrupt
- *Baltic House Developments Ltd v Wing Keung Cheung* [2018] Bus LR 1531 – Appearing in a contested application for an administration order  
*Re TPS Investments (UK) Ltd* [2018] EWHC 360 (Ch) – Successfully acting for administrators in defeating an application to remove them on the grounds of a conflict of interest
- *Re Capital Funding One Ltd* [2017] EWHC 3567 (Ch) – Successfully acting for a company in establishing that administrators were invalidly appointed  
*Ready Rentals Ltd (in liquidation) v Ahmed* [2016] EWHC 1996 (Ch) – Appearing in a notable case considering the interaction of POCA 2002 and insolvency law in the context of a payment into court
- *Re Cosy Seal Insulation Ltd (in administration)* [2016] EWHC 1225 (Ch) – Successfully acting for an administrator in obtaining a judgment from HHJ Behrens for over £1m against a director and connected party for breach of duty and a transaction at an undervalue
- Advising as to the interaction of insolvency and shipping law in the context of the administration of travel companies with various cross-border issues
- Successfully acting for an Irish liquidator in bringing proceedings in the High Court in England in reliance on the provisions in the EC Insolvency Regulation

- *Power v Hodges* [2015] EWHC 2931 (Ch), [2015] EWHC 2983 (Ch) – Obtaining summary judgment and suspended orders for committal on behalf of the liquidators in substantial misfeasance proceedings
- *Sharma v Top Brands* [2015] EWCA Civ 1140 – Appearing in a case, in which the Court of Appeal upheld the trial judge’s finding that the breach of duty claim against a former liquidator was not barred by reason of illegality.
- *Top Brands v Sharma* [2014] EWCA Civ 761 – Acting in an expedited appeal, where the decision upheld the first instance judge’s finding that a former liquidator had no standing to challenge the status of the applicants as creditors, thereby meaning that their misfeasance claim against the former liquidator should proceed
- *Re Casa Estates Ltd* [2014] BCC 269 – Appearing in a Court of Appeal case (on a second appeal) concerning the meaning and effect of the “cash flow” and “balance sheet” insolvency tests in section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986 following the decision of the Supreme Court in *Eurosail*
- *Masters v Furber* [2014] BPIR 263 – Decision of HHJ Purle KC that a supervisor of an IVA could, relying in part on a Power of Attorney in his favour, obtain a mandatory injunction requiring the debtor to comply with the terms of the arrangement in relation to the realisation of certain motor vehicles for the benefit of creditors as a whole.
- *Re GP Aviation Ltd* [2014] 1 WLR 166 – Acting in a case concerning whether a bare right to appeal was “property” within the meaning of the Insolvency Act 1986 in the context of an application by liquidator for directions as to whether he should assign the right to conduct a tax appeal to the directors of the company.

## COMPANY

James has a busy and well-established company law practice and is ranked for expertise in the area by both Chambers UK Bar and The Legal 500 UK Bar it being said that “He has the ear of the court is very confident on his feet”.

His work includes:

- *BNM Parkstone LLP v Khazai* [2022] EWHC 345 (Ch): acting for defendants in a 2-week trial concerning allegations of breach of fiduciary duty in the context of membership of an LLP and a form of joint venture agreement
- A range of substantial shareholder (including s.994) and joint venture disputes
- *Northampton Borough Council v Cardoza* [2019] EWHC 26 (Ch) – Successfully acting for the claimant in a high profile 10-day misfeasance trial arising out of the affairs of a football league club
- *Dickinson v NAL Realisations (Staffordshire) Ltd (in liquidation)* [2017] EWHC 28 (Ch) – Acting for defendants facing claims for breach of duty, under s.423 and under the Companies Act 2006
- *Chubb v Rafidain Bank* [2017] 7 WLUK 701 – Acting for an Iraqi bank in relation to an application for a declaration regarding the effect of a scheme of arrangement
- *Harris v SSBIS* [2014] 1 BCLC 447- Appearing in a case concerning the principles to be applied on an application for permission to act under sections 1A and 17 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

## COMMERCIAL

James is instructed in a wide variety of business disputes in the Business and Property Courts. He is ranked for his commercial expertise in both Chambers UK Bar and The Legal 500 UK Bar being described as a “very persuasive trial advocate” and “an excellent cross-examiner”.

His recent work includes:

- *Mussa v Issa* [2024] EWHC 763 (Ch): successfully acting for defendants in a challenge to the jurisdiction of the English courts on the basis that the proceedings were abusive and Malawi was the forum conveniens for trial of the claims
- X v Y: advising a specialised industrial services provider in relation to a multi-million pound contractual dispute with a well-known food producer  
*Wirecard v Greybull*: acting for the claimants in a multi-million pound Commercial Court claim arising out of the collapse of Monarch Airlines, listed for trial in 2024
- *Castle Trust Management Services v Wild*: appearing in the Gibraltar Court of Appeal in connection with an appeal against the making of an administration order against a trust management company
- X v Y: appearing for the respondent to a multi-million pound claim proceeding in the ICC Court of Arbitration (London) arising out of the supply of petroleum products in West Africa, which settled shortly prior to the final hearing
- *Primus v Triumph* [2020] EWCA Civ 1228: appearing for the appellant in a case in which the Court of Appeal considered the legal meaning of “goodwill” in a share purchase agreement
- *Uavend v Adsaax & Vistra* [2020] EWHC 2073 (Comm): acting for an international trust company in defending an unusual claim for procuring a breach of a commercial contract
- *Triumph v Primus* [2019] EWHC 2216 (TCC), [2019] EWHC 2722 (TCC): acting for an international company in relation to an assessment of damages in a multi-million dollar share warranty dispute arising out of a business sale
- *Jones v Hamilton* [2019] EWHC 877 (Ch): 5-day hearing in the Business and Property Courts to establish an account of profits arising out of a profit sharing agreement requiring complex expert accountancy evidence
- Acting in a multi-million pound contractual dispute arising out an agreement for the UK-wide supply of maintenance services
- Appearing in a trial in the Chancery Division for a mortgagee concerning a £3m property portfolio
- Acting in a trial in the Mercantile Court for a major energy company
- Making injunction applications for various franchisors
- *Pooni v Nazran* [2015] EWHC 1899 (QB) – Acting for a defendant to a claim for breach of warranty/guarantee arising out of a property investment in Dubai.

## RECOGNITION

- “Incisive, innovative, strategic and collaborative.” (Commercial Dispute Resolution, Chambers UK Bar 2024)  
“James provides balanced and pragmatic advice.” (Commercial Dispute Resolution, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James is bright, friendly and well prepared for his cases. He makes fair points very eloquently.” (Commercial Dispute Resolution, Chambers UK Bar 2024)  
“He is very sharp and capable in front of judges and knows when to push and pull back.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “He’s fantastic. The sort of person you can pick up the phone to: very responsive, clever and good with clients.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James is a seasoned litigator and a contentious insolvency expert. He provides much-welcomed, balanced and pragmatic advice.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James is technically very sound: cerebral, a deep thinker and a details man who gets into the weeds of documents.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James is a seasoned litigator and contentious insolvency expert. He provides much-welcomed balanced and pragmatic advice.” (Chancery, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “He is my favourite silk – incisive, innovative, strategic and collaborative. Need I say more?” (Chancery, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James’ knowledge of company law is wide and he provides, good, sensible advice both dealing with any issues in dispute and how to progress in the future.” (Company, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James has consistently demonstrated an extremely knowledgeable yet commercial approach.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “He is extremely strong in his analytical ability and presentation in court. He provides a great deal of assurance that he can deep-dive and turn around an opinion with tight deadlines.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “He is a fantastic barrister and our favourite choice for complex matters.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2024)
- “James is very knowledgeable on the law and the practicalities that go with litigation.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2023)
- “When you instruct James you know that he will approach things in a methodical manner and that his advice will be on point.” and “He is very cerebral, bright and really good on paper. He can cut through the technical issues in a very user-friendly way.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2022)
- “Technically he’s fantastic and he’s always well prepared. He’s also very persuasive and has the ear of the judges.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2021)
- “He has a great intellect and never loses sight of the client’s commercial objectives.” “Very approachable and good with clients.” (Company, Chambers UK Bar 2019)
- “An excellent operator who instils confidence with his technical knowledge and user-friendly manner.” (Restructuring/Insolvency, Chambers UK Bar 2019)
- “Very good at insolvency – he’s one of the go-tos. He’s extremely intelligent and his knowledge of the law in that area is second to none. He is good with clients and highly approachable. He’s happy to speak to the clients and find a commercial solution.” “He is very, very good; just very tidy and highly efficient.” (Chancery, Chambers UK Bar 2019)

“He’s well organised, reassuring, knowledgeable and always brilliantly well prepared.” (Commercial Dispute Resolution, Chambers UK Bar 2019)

• “A consummate courtroom performer.” (Commercial, Banking, Insolvency and Chancery law, The Legal 500 UK Bar)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

James frequently speaks and writes on his areas of interest. His articles include:

- *“Trust, not distrust”: can Quincecare apply to cryptocurrency transactions on exchanges?* Journal of International Banking and Financial Law, 2024, 39(2), 108-110
- *Wrongful trading claims: a central plank or dead in the water?* Recovery Magazine, Winter 2022
- *International commercial litigation after Brexit: uncertainty in a new world.* PLC Mag. 2021, 32(2), 22-23
- *Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery and Administration: Questions as to Timing, Security and Priorities.* Insolvency Intelligence 2020, 33(4) 115-119
- *Directors’ duties in the insolvency context.* Insolvency Intelligence 2015, 28(1), 1-5
- *The relevance of loss in preference type misfeasance claims.* CR&I 2014, 7(3), 123-124
- *Preference – when is the decision made?* CR&I 2011, 4(3), 75-76
- *4Eng v Harper – an unjustified change?* CR&I 2010, 3(1), 5-8

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

- MA Law (Cantab), Jesus College, Cambridge
- Jesus College Foundation Scholar (1994)
- Inner Temple Major Scholar (1995)
- Bar Vocational Course – Outstanding (1996)
- Attorney-General’s Panel of Provincial Advocates (appointed 2002; reappointed 2007 and 2012)
- Recorder of the County Court (2010) with chancery ticket (2013)
- Deputy High Court Judge (2019)

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

- Chancery Bar Association
- COMBAR
- London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA)
- R3 – Association of Business Recovery Professionals
- Midland Chancery & Commercial Bar Association

## **POLICIES AND OTHER DETAILS**

- Read James' Privacy Notice, Data Protection Policy and Disposal Policy