Welcome to your first Firm *friends* yearbook!
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Welcome to our first annual edition of Firm friends!

Ben Tidswell, Chairman

It’s always inspiring to hear about the successes of our alumni, their passions and the diversity of their interests. Through our new Firm friends yearbook, we aim to deliver a selection of in-depth alumni interviews to help keep you connected with your global alumni network.

We catch up with Mary Padbury, who was our Vice Chairman of partners, and warmly welcome her as an alumna of our firm. After more than 35 years at Ashurst, Mary retired at the end of April 2018 to focus on a non-executive director career.

We hear from Michele Scibetta, who was a senior associate in our Milan office from 2010 to 2014 and is now Head of Corporate, Legal & Public Affairs at Sirti Group; Howard Pargeter, Regional Legal Counsel with Temenos in Singapore, who is an alumnus of both legacy firms; and Toby Mander-Jones, who went from advising on M&A in Asia, to running a fast-growing consumer electronics company in Utah. We also catch up with former Blake Dawson Sydney partner Paul Mallam and talk about the “50-minute” paintings he has recently been working on.

We congratulate Justice Lea Armstrong who has been appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of NSW. In an Australian story of three friends, we catch up with alumna, Rachael Falk, and partner, Sarah Ross-Smith, who both attended Justice Armstrong’s swearing in ceremony in October last year.

It seems fitting that we celebrated the first 100 years of women in law in Australia, asking our alumni, clients and staff to contribute their photos to a photomosaic of Ada Evans, the first woman to graduate with a Bachelor of Laws from Sydney University in 1902, but who could not practise at that time. The project commemorates the journey of women in the legal profession. New South Wales became the penultimate state in Australia to allow women to practise law when it passed the Women’s Legal Status Act in 1918. The UK is celebrating 100 years of women in law this year.

We were proud to announce that Ashurst has been named the Most Innovative Law Firm (Internationally Headquartered Law Firms) at the Financial Times Innovative Lawyers Awards Asia Pacific 2018. This award is testament to our focus on delivering innovative solutions to our clients and embracing progress. On page 19 we interview Mike Polson, Head of Ashurst Advance Delivery, who speaks to us about the firm’s focus on innovation.

I’m excited to have started a second four-year term as Chairman last year. I am really proud of the excellent work we do for clients, our unique culture of working together and our willingness to take on challenges and do things differently. I believe we are making strides in ensuring that we have a progressive, collaborative and high quality international firm.

We kicked off our 2019 programme of global reunion events in Brisbane in April (pictures on p25), and we look forward to welcoming more of you to events across our global network throughout the year (see p23 for more details) including to our first London alumni event in our new offices at Spitalfields.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in their news and updated their contact details. We look forward to staying in touch. Do please let us know your news.

We hope you enjoy this edition and that it helps you to keep in touch with alumni and Ashurst news.

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We meet Lynda Goetz, Freya Darvall and Adrienne Showering in a joint interview. They were articled clerks (trainee solicitors) in London at Ashurst Morris Crisp & Co, as Ashurst was then known, in the late 1970s. While by no means the first women lawyers employed by the firm, they were among a small group of women in the legal profession in the City of London – at that time very much a male bastion. Their interviews give us a sense of the changes the firm and the profession have seen.

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The portrait, created by multimedia artist Rocco Fazzari, is made up of a collection of over 160 photographs.

Commenting on the project and the launch of the photomosaic, Ashurst partner Sarah Dulhunty said: “We are delighted to have partnered with the First 100 Years project team on this initiative to recognise and celebrate the contribution women have made to the legal profession. The photomosaic initiative has been a great way to mark this significant centenary and reflects our continued support for progressing gender equality within the profession. Thank you to all our staff, clients and alumni who participated in this fantastic initiative.”

The UK is celebrating 100 years of women in law this year, and we are contributing to the celebration by marking the achievements and contributions of the first generation of female lawyers at Ashurst with a publication and an event later in 2019. If you would like to learn more about this project, or have stories, memories, or photos you would like to share, please get in touch with alumni@ashurst.com.
After more than 35 years at Ashurst, Mary Padbury stepped down as Vice Chairman and retired as a partner at the end of April 2018 to focus on a non-executive director career. Mary joined what was then Blake & Riggall in Melbourne as a graduate in 1981. She was appointed to the Blake Dawson Waldron partnership in 1989 after working on secondment in London. She served in a number of roles at Blake Dawson, including as a board member, London Resident Partner and Executive Partner before being elected Chairman, a position she held for three terms from 2005 until the full merger with Ashurst in 2013, when she was elected Vice Chairman of the global firm.

Mary has made an immense contribution to the firm, including leading the negotiations for Blake Dawson which led to the merger and playing an active role in post-merger integration. She was also a key member of our Tier One IP practice for many years. At the time of retirement from the firm she was listed as an Eminent Practitioner in *Chambers* in IP: Patents and as a Leading Individual in IP in *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*.

Mary is currently a board member of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Chair of the Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health Limited, Chair of the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board, the Australian and NZ Government body which regulates the patent and trade mark attorney profession, Chair of Clinical Genomics Technologies Pty Ltd, a member of the Victorian Legal Admissions Committee and a Custodian of Ormond College at the University of Melbourne. She is also a member of Chief Executive Women and a World Intellectual Property Organisation Domain Name Panellist.
Q. What have you been doing since April 2018?
Aside from my NED roles, which obviously take up a fair bit of time, I have really enjoyed having a bit more time and flexibility to catch up with family and friends, including some fellow Ashurst retirees. This has included walking dogs Lucy (a sedate elderly Golden Retriever) and Fred (an energetic Border Collie puppy), assisting with child care for my great nephew and nieces – Mac (4), Stevie (2) and Chloe (1), spending more time in the Yarra Valley where our family grow Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes, and completing some longer guided walks with friends in Tasmania and New Zealand. Late last year, I completed the beautiful Queen Charlotte and Milford Tracks in the South Island of NZ, both of which I highly recommend.

Q. What did you enjoy about your work at the firm and what has been your most rewarding achievement?
I feel very privileged to have had an incredibly enjoyable, rewarding and varied career with the firm, which included two opportunities to work in London – on secondment with boutique IP firm Bristows in 1985-86 and as our resident partner from 2000-2002. I am very grateful to the firm for all the diverse and challenging opportunities I was given as a lawyer, manager and leader, which allowed me to grow through experience and do different things at and beyond the firm. The highlights have included the work I was able to do with others for our clients; the close friends I made at the firm; being an IP lawyer who saw the practice grow in size, client base and stature through the work of the entire group; seeing talented people I worked with grow; and leaders of the firm or succeed outside the firm and, of course, being involved in the merger – a transformative and important step for the firm which involved a huge team effort and spoke to the ambition of our partners to be part of an internationally competitive firm. This remains one of the largest integrated law firm mergers and I am thrilled to see the firm doing so well.

Q. You started with the firm in Melbourne when it was Blake & Riggall and you have seen the merger with Sydney firm Dawson Waldron and Perth firm Collison, Hunt & Richardson to form the Australian national firm Blake Dawson, and then the combination with Ashurst to form an international firm. Tell us about the changes that you have seen.
The firm’s use of technology has changed a good deal. When I started to practice as an articled clerk to Cam Johnston, who was a banking partner, most communication was undertaken by mail with some use of telex and, occasionally, the relatively recently introduced and washing machine-sized facsimile machine. The speaker phone was also a new innovation. As articled clerks, we undertook much of the firm’s city mail delivery and court filing. Over time, of course, we saw the introduction of computers and then email, which has speeded up requests for and the provision of advice considerably.

“I feel very privileged to have had an incredibly enjoyable, rewarding and varied career with the firm.”

The firm is also much bigger. I joined a firm where the partners in Melbourne practised locally and could sit around one large table. I retired from a firm with 400-odd partners and global reach after initial expansion in Australia, then the region and thereafter internationally. I expect that the firm’s founders were very good businessmen but the level of professionalism in running the firm as a business (and the tools and subject matter experts available) increased considerably over time. I think the things that didn’t change throughout my time at the firm include the fundamental desire to serve our clients well, the care, hard work and passion with which lawyers and those supporting them approached their work and the desire to act in a professional manner. The firm also retained a modest, practical and collaborative culture which I think is shared across the firm.

Q. You are recognised as a leading practitioner in intellectual property. What are some of the most interesting cases you have been involved in?
It is always dangerous to ask a lawyer about their old cases so I will only mention a couple. I have been privileged to represent a wide array of multinational companies, research institutes and universities over a long career in a diverse range of industries, primarily in litigation but also in technology transfer and the development of technology strategy. This has involved dealing with some amazing scientists, travel to places like the UK, Italy, the US and Sweden and gaining a rudimentary understanding of some fascinating technologies and incredibly impressive entities. It is hard to pick a highlight but I am proud of our High Court victory (by a comfortable 4:3 margin) in ATMA v Commonwealth, in which an attempt by the Commonwealth to impose a royalty on blank tapes to compensate copyright owners was struck down as a tax which had not passed both Houses of Parliament – much to the pleasure of our clients who included BASF and TDK. I think the case I enjoyed the most was for our client, Heinz, in which we litigated the meaning of a comparative advertising claim to the effect that our client’s dog treat product lasted twice as long as a competitor product and tasted just as good. Although the case settled (much to the delight of my previous dog who got to eat the exhibits), we saw evidence to the effect that some dogs buried both treats and from the marketing manager of our opponent reporting on how he found the taste of both products.

Q. Do you have any tips for lawyers wanting to make the move to senior management and director roles?
I thoroughly recommend the AICD week-long Company Directors course. It is excellent. I also think I benefited from accepting opportunities to serve on professional bodies and for external organisations like the council of my old high school when they arose. I didn’t have any grand plan but you realise in retrospect that every opportunity teaches you something which helps the next time the same or a similar issue arises.

Q. What’s the best career advice that you’ve been given?
Focus on solutions.
Meet Michele Scibetta

Michele Scibetta was with the Milan office from 2010 to 2014. He was a senior associate in the firm’s RSSG Group. Michele is currently Head of Corporate, Legal & Public Affairs at Sirti Group, the leading Italian company in engineering, construction and maintenance of technological infrastructures in the telco digital solutions, energy and transport markets. Since 2016 Sirti has been controlled by the investment platform Pillarstone set up by the credit arm of the US private equity firm KKR.

Q. Tell us about your role as Head of Corporate, Legal & Public Affairs at Sirti Group.

Sirti’s goal is to connect people and things on a sustainable and intelligent basis and to create digital highways that connect us to our future. Sirti was established on 21 November 1921 and it is one of the oldest Italian companies. We are leaders in engineering, construction and maintenance of technological infrastructures.

“I think that a good in-house lawyer must have a mix of different skills, enhanced by a 360-degree curiosity and knowledge of the company’s business and its mission, together with a deep understanding of the relevant risk profiles.”

Starting from Italy, over the years, the Group has carried out important projects in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

I joined Sirti in 2014 and I lead the Corporate, Legal and Public Affairs department, as well as acting as Company Secretary.

Embracing my new career as general counsel of Sirti has meant further developing and strengthening my previous experience along three different streamlines:

1. integrating the legal strategy throughout the group, proactively working in constant collaboration with other functions to make legal expertise a competitive advantage;

2. broadening legal contributions to a wider business perspective to be an integral and assimilated player of the upper echelon of the top management; and

3. devoting a significant portion of my time to driving the legal team to perform at a higher level and embrace the company’s new vision.
I think that a good in-house lawyer must have a mix of different skills, enhanced by a 360-degree curiosity and knowledge of the company’s business and its mission, together with a deep understanding of the relevant risk profiles.

Now I can really understand what “standing in the client’s shoes” means, because it is exactly what my company expect from me and my team.

Q. What is the best career advice that you have been given?

One of the most valuable pieces of advice was “never forget your human values”. Leading people in a complex work environment with demanding goals to be achieved is not an easy task, so balancing rationality and emotionality is fundamental in my view.

To this end I would like to mention an inspirational quote from Daniel Goleman: “Gifted leadership occurs when heart and head – feeling and thought – meet. These are the two winds that allow a leader to soar.”

Q. Do you keep in touch with Ashurst colleagues?

I really enjoyed my time at Ashurst and I built genuine and long-term relationships there. I regularly meet with a number of people outside of work. There are excellent lawyers at Ashurst and the firm is one of our panel’s law firms.

Q. What are your hobbies and the things you love to do in your free time?

First of all, I am passionate about being father of my two fantastic sons. This helps me to put all the other things in the right perspective. During my free time, which unfortunately is too little, I like playing guitar, cooking and I recently started gardening.
Meet

LYNDA GOETZ, FREYA DARVALL AND ADRIENNE SHOWERING

(a London story of three friends)

Lynda Goetz, Freya Darvall and Adrienne Showering were articled clerks (trainee solicitors) at Ashurst Morris Crisp & Co, as Ashurst was then known, in the late 1970s. The offices at that time were in an old building in Throgmorton Avenue – very different from our current London offices and our new offices in the London Fruit & Wool Exchange in Spitalfields from mid-2019 (see more on p26). While by no means the first females in the firm, they were among the pioneering women in the legal profession in the City of London – at that time very much a male bastion.

Q. Tell us about starting your careers at Ashurst.

Lynda: Well, rather naively, I applied to all the London firms with offices in France or Spain, as I had a French degree and had spent the two years after university teaching English in Seville, Andalucia. My university, Exeter, was one of the first to offer an LLM in European Law and that had got me thinking that I could combine my languages with law in some way.

I was lucky with the timing of my application because the partners, of which there were only nine(!) at the time, had realised they were going to be short of articled clerks. I was interviewed by three partners, which was somewhat intimidating, but they made practising law in the City sound like fun! As it happened they took on two other women at the same time, both called Jenny. We weren’t the first female articled clerks though. That honour had gone to another woman called Linda who had been a contemporary of John May, I believe. As for other female lawyers in the firm, there were two or three in Litigation, one in Conveyancing, and Beatrice Toll, a Legal Executive who did Wills and Trusts somewhere in the “attic”, but there were none in the “powerhouse” of the firm, in Company/Commercial.

Freya: I transferred my Articles from another firm in the City, so only did 18 months out of my two years with Ashurst. I sat with legal executives, Ron Rumsey (Litigation) and Fred Brock (Conveyancing) and with partner, Andrew Soundy (Company/Commercial).

Adrienne: I had not intended to become a lawyer, but planned to qualify and then change careers. I was heading down the route of the Bar (as it was faster) until I was advised by numerous people that, as a woman, I would find it really tough and would be forced into family law. I had left it too late to apply to firms of solicitors and so contacted Ashurst, as the then senior partner, Martin Lampard, was a family friend. He agreed to take me on and told me that his only other articled clerk had been struck off before qualifying.
Q. When were you at the firm and in what areas did you practise?

Lynda: I joined in 1977 and stayed until 1981. During my Articles I rotated, as most did, through Litigation, Conveyancing and Company, then stayed on for another 18 months dealing with a large litigation case. I still remember Martin Lampard coming into my office, hugely pleased that he had managed to negotiate a settlement (I think with his opposite number at Clifford Chance), only to return the following day very apologetic that he hadn’t realised that the end of the case meant the end of my career at Ashurst!

Freya: I arrived in 1978/79 and qualified in summer 1980. I remember one major court case which involved days of sitting in court with the legendary Max Thum, feeding him Murray Mints and eating some exceptional lunches in El Vinos. Those were the days! I also remember finding myself in the extraordinary position of being the only person available in the firm with any aviation law experience when a client was suddenly mandated to provide the international observers' plane for the elections duly done by 4 pm (when the Treasury closed); somewhat miraculously the deal was observed, with the result that Zimbabwe was born. As most of my mother’s family were Rhodesians, it was a particularly significant moment for me.

Adrienne: I was at the firm as an articled clerk between 1978 (the “Winter of discontent” when we worked by candlelight due to power cuts and blackouts due to industrial action) and 1981. My seats were Property, Corporate and Litigation.

Q. What did you do after leaving Ashurst?

Lynda: Well, I rather shocked everyone by going off to do a ski season! I got a job as a Rep with Supertravel, one of the first big chalet companies. When I came back six months later I tried to move away from law, but generally got told I was “overqualified” for jobs I had applied for. Eventually, I saw a job advertised by the notaries De Pinna Scorers and John Venn for “a lawyer with language skills” at the fabulous salary of £10,000 pa. I got the job and, as their offices were in Finsbury Square, I was just around the corner from my old pals at Ashurst – several of whom had managed to stay on, including James Nimmo, whom I went on to marry and who in due course became a partner. Thus, my relationship with Ashurst went on for a great deal longer than my own career there! I stayed with De Pinna’s for seven years until James volunteered to go to Japan to set up the Ashurst joint office with Chicago law firm, Sidley & Austin, in Tokyo in 1990.

Adrienne: After qualifying I went to Sydney at the start of 1982 for a working holiday, joining Freehills (now Herbert Smith Freehills). When I left Ashurst, a lot of work was undertaken by telex, secretaries used golf ball typewriters (the height of technology) and we had a couple of word processors in the attic. Editing was done by literally “cutting and pasting”. When I arrived in Sydney I was amazed to find how advanced they were; every team had computers and all secretaries were connected to word processors and laser printers — no more cutting and pasting. Work was faster, less hidebound and things were changing fast in the business and legal world. It was exciting to be a part of it.

I stayed in Sydney and qualified as a solicitor in New South Wales in 1982. I married an Australian lawyer who became a partner of Freehills at the same time that we married. I left Freehills towards the end of 1983 to join Stephen Jaques Stone Jaques (later Mallesons Stephen Jaques, now King & Wood Mallesons).

I became a partner of Mallesons Stephen Jaques in April 1987 and remained a partner for 25 years, working in the corporate and structured finance areas. I spent seven of those years in the Hong Kong office and two in the London office.

Freya: I had decided that I wanted to specialise in Tax but Ashurst had only one tax associate, Jack Amos, who was not at that time a partner, so the partners were reluctant for me to stay. I left and went to work for a sole practitioner tax accountant, where I spent many a challenging hour setting up offshore companies, discovering hidden links in the world’s international double taxation treaties and learning how to structure cross-border commercial deals tax-efficiently. Somehow I also ended up being appointed as international sales manager for a Danish medical publishing house; attending the Frankfurt Book Fair and travelling regularly to the US and Denmark on marketing trips. I learnt a lot from cold-calling busy medics in US teaching institutions!

In 1984 I decided to go to INSEAD. Business had always intrigued me and I thought it could only be a benefit to study finance and strategy more closely. The 10 months I spent in Fontainebleau doing my MBA was challenging, exacting and rewarding. I loved it. By some strange quirk of fate, a fellow classmate was none other than Max Thum’s son, Nic, who became a dear friend.

Armed with my new degree, I joined the legal and documentation team at Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB), which supported its Capital Markets department. Thrown straight into the deep end, I was documenting euronote programmes and bond issues, complicated swaps and the odd equity issue for clients worldwide. Within nine months I was working on the UK’s £4 billion floating-rate note issue (September 1986) and was intrigued by the Bank of England’s high security — including staggered arrivals through different doors so no-one could tell that the “bankers” were coming. I became a specialist for Australian clients and there went my social life. Catching the Singapore Airlines 10 pm flight from Heathrow on a Saturday evening became a regular occurrence, as it meant arriving conveniently at 6:30 am Monday at the beginning of the working week Down Under.
I had a wonderful group of clients in Australia including the Australian Wheatboard (AWB), Mount Isa Mines (MIM), BHP, Elders, ANZ Bank, Rural & Industries Bank of Western Australia and Coles Meyer. I recall my first visit to MIM in Brisbane most fondly – a junior member of the finance department was astonished that CSFB had sent a woman to handle their most prestigious deal yet and came out involuntarily with the unforgettable comment: “Jesus Christ, they’ve sent a bleeding Sheila!” when he realised that I was the banker and the male solicitor (from Linklaters) with me just the lawyer! It was an invaluable lesson and a character-building experience. I did their next five euromarket transactions, so I guess I came good, even though I was a “bleeding Sheila”…

It was following one of my MIM visits that I flew back via Sydney and persuaded my preferred Australian law firm, Mallesons, to hold a surprise meeting for me and a certain partner in their Sydney office – yes, it was, of course, Adrienne Showering. I well remember sitting in a corner room with a glorious view over the harbour studded with white sails and trying to catch up with all that had happened over the years since we had last met.

From CSFB I was headhunted to become head of the legal department at Baring Securities Limited in early 1990. The next four and a half years were a constant battle of time zones and deadlines – I opened offices in a large number of emerging market countries; spoke at various conferences; sat on a panel of a major emerging market’s index and was constantly on flights, to the Far East in particular. I did a considerable amount of unofficial “consultancy work” in both South Korea and Taiwan – members of their ministries of finance needed non-judgmental friends from Europe whom they could ask every potentially “silly question” without loss of face. There was no way they could justifiably ask a law firm the myriad questions they had about every conceivable foreign investor and what sort of documentation is required from, say, a US LLP, a British Life Assurance Society or a French SICAV. They wanted to be able to ask these in confidence. By way of reciprocity, we were able to reduce the onerous translation, notarisation and consularisation requirements by encouraging the recruitment of the necessary, mainly English-speaking, staff to handle foreign investor applications. I persuaded one major Seoul-based law firm with which we worked that we were effectively in a joint venture and that we were both learning from each other so our legal bills needed to be cut by 75%. After much wrangling I succeeded, but was known simply as “lawyer woman” ever after. I do hope I did not delay the appointment of their first woman partner – having given the senior partners a hard time about the fact that I saw no women other than secretaries in their offices.

It was a very rewarding role and I loved every minute of it until things clearly started to go a little awry in Southeast Asia with the futures and options book. I left well before the balloon went up and like many others was devastated to see our painstaking work of opening and building up so many emerging markets to foreign investors being blown away in a matter of days.

“I believe in yourself, it is important, but be very aware that life can throw unexpected setbacks in anyone’s way.”

LYNDA GOETZ

Q. Are any of you still working in the legal field?

Adrienne: I have just renewed my practising certificate, although I don’t do much in the way of legal practice these days. I retired from Mallesons in 2012 and did a Masters in Medieval Studies at King’s College London. At the same time I joined the main board of an Australian-based company called Ingeus (a former client). I remained a director (both in Australia and the UK) until the company (and subsidiaries) were sold in 2014.

In 2015 I started a PhD in early medieval history which I abandoned after two years, when it became clear to me that my Latin was never going to be as good as I needed it to be to tackle the source material of my research.

In 2017 I was invited to join the board as chair of Integro Funding (trading as “Level”) – a start-up company. I had previously provided ad hoc advice to the founder of the company, a friend of one of my daughters. I really like being part of a new young company. I enjoy using my varied experience to help him and the company as it grows.

Lynda: I retired from law ages ago. Truthfully, I was never sure it was quite the right choice of career and I have subsequently dabbled in various things, including teaching French as an Adult Education subject; tutoring children who needed that extra bit of help to get through GCSE or A level; writing for style magazines such as House Beautiful and Ideal Home; working as the alumni officer for a private school and attempting to get work as a garden designer! I currently work on my own garden and write for The Shaw Sheet, an online weekly news and current affairs magazine set up by former Ashurst tax partner, John Watson. I do not get paid for this, but love doing it!

Freya: I am currently a consultant to a hedge fund research group called Albourne Partners Limited, which was set up by a former client of mine and some other colleagues.

Q. What have you enjoyed about your work and what has been your most rewarding achievement?

Freya: To have helped build a multimillion-pound business which began with four people in a small house behind a butchers shop in Sussex in 1995 to an operation with more than 350 staff operating out of 13 offices in 11 different countries has been a thrilling and absorbing experience. Would I do it again? No way!

Adrienne: I loved being a lawyer – it was a wonderful career. Apart from in the early years (when being female was rare and entering an all-male meeting
Q. If you were able to write a letter to your younger self, what would you now tell her?
Adrienne: You are more capable than you think you are!

Lynda: Believe in yourself; it is important, but be very aware that life can throw unexpected setbacks in anyone’s way.

Frey: I would suggest that she consider being an accountant rather than a lawyer. In commercial life, particularly in financial institutions, I have found that lawyers are almost always regarded, at best, as Middle Office and often as Back Office boffins and rarely given credit for being capable of being commercial.

Q. Do you have any advice for women working in the law today?
Adrienne: Yes, set your sights on becoming partners of law firms! We need more women partners in the top law firms. It is quite possible and until firms have a more flexible profession. In the more competitive areas job sharing is not really an option and clients in all fields are increasingly demanding, so you do “need to want to”. If you have children it probably helps to have a partner with a less demanding career/j ob. The first and third female partners at Ashurst, Linda Bailey (Conveyancing) and Susan Roy (Company), who is still a consultant with Ashurst, had no children. The second, Elizabeth Morris, nee Gatling (Litigation), had a husband who was a teacher, stressful in its own way, I have no doubt, but with hours and holidays enabling him to be the main carer for the kids.

Lynda: Again, I’m not sure I am qualified to give advice, having effectively left the profession so long ago. I think one of the things which has slightly surprised me is the way increased numbers of women in the profession have changed so few of the less appealing aspects of the profession, particularly in the City – indeed women have simply had to adapt to the macho working practices which prevail. Perhaps my advice would be to encourage a little “feminisation” of some aspects, (eg fewer all-night meetings fuelled by coffee and not much else!) and more flexible working opportunities for both men and women.

Frey: Be confident; know your stuff and do not allow yourself to be patronised. You can be as good as most of your male colleagues and better than some – although clearly not all, unless you are truly exceptional.

Q. What changes have you seen over the years?
Adrienne: As one of the first female partners in my firm, I had expected that by now women would be on an equal footing with men in the law. It is sad to see that this is not the case. I struggle to see why.

Lynda: There are clearly many more women going into law these days, both as solicitors and to the Bar, which, as Adrienne pointed out earlier, was extremely hard to break into when we were starting out. However, I think the
Q. What has inspired you this year?
Adrienne: My son! He had a training contract with King & WoodMallesons in London, and the UK, Europe & Middle East arm of the firm folded and revoked all training contracts a month before he was scheduled to start. He never gave up and threw himself into securing a new training contract. Not easy in the current environment when training contracts are hard to come by. Some of his fellow future KWM trainees have left the law altogether. He had worked really hard and, last week, accepted an offer as a newly qualified lawyer with CMS.

Lynda: Those friends who are retiring after a lifetime of hard work and who are rediscovering long-lost talents they haven’t had time for whilst working and bringing up families. Some are also doing amazing things like fundraising to build schools in Africa (Gambia School Support) or using their many years of professional skills to volunteer their services either here or abroad.

Freya: The idea of retiring!
Q. Who has been the biggest influence in your career?
Adrienne: My first client and mentor who gave me the courage to ignore my youth and gender and started me on a rewarding career path.

Lynda: Well, apart from the fact that I have not had the impressive careers which Adrienne and Freya have had, I feel that my father and my first headmaster were the people who gave me the confidence to get on and not be influenced by negativity and naysayers. I honestly never considered that being female was anything other than a privilege – maybe not always an advantage, but certainly no disadvantage.

Q. Do you keep in touch with Ashurst colleagues?
Adrienne: Yes, I was away for over 25 years, so reconnected when I returned to live in London. Catching up with Lynda and Freya is always fun.

Lynda: A few, although geographical distance (I now live in Devon) precludes regular meetings. I enjoy seeing people if/when I attend the alumni gatherings in London and, although not all of these people can be described as friends, many have nevertheless been part of my life as colleagues of my ex-husband. Ashurst has been the backdrop to significant aspects of the last 40 years, including, for example, living in Tokyo for 15 months when the office was being set up there (worthy of a whole article on its own!).

Freya: Yes, intermittently, with a few dear friends of my vintage.

Q. What are your favourite things to do at weekends or on holiday?
Adrienne: Walk the dogs, chat to the parrot, see friends and family, read and cook.

Lynda: Well, I have to confess that for a long time now, the distinction between weekends and weekdays has been somewhat blurred! I do and have always done a fair bit of gardening. I used to play quite a lot of tennis, but have not done so since moving to Devon nine years ago. I still ski every winter and have recently tried my hand at painting, both in oils and watercolour, although I haven’t yet decided which I prefer. Like Adrienne, I love cooking and reading (I even managed to get a cookery book published many years ago whilst still at Ashurst! Called Top Level Cookery for Two, it was published in 1981 by The New English Library; it’s no longer in print, but can still be found on Amazon – where it has two 5-star reviews!) and dogs and family somehow seem to take up a lot of time.

Freya: Porter around in my garden in the country; walk the dog, do the crossword, cook good food and catch up with my husband and daughter. Spending time in our house in Greece.

Q. What, if any, are your ambitions for the future?
Freya: Being retired with more time to do more of the above!

Lynda: You mean apart from continued good health and the time to enjoy it?! Oh, probably to get the novel I wrote decades ago published and to write a better one; create some worthwhile paintings; still be skiing when I’m 90 (preferably without breaking anything else in the meantime); manage to achieve year-round colour in my half-acre garden and to get the work on my house finished – preferably before another nine years have passed! I am also hoping that at some point my children might produce grandchildren, although it’s not looking too likely at present.

Adrienne: Like Lynda, health and plenty of time whilst healthy. And grandchildren are a must! I might even get back to painting – at which I have had some success in the past. I am told by Lynda that John Watson even bought a painting of mine from an exhibition I had some years ago. Now maybe that’s a retirement career.

FIRM FRIENDS 2019 | ASHURST ALUMNI YEARBOOK
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Congratulations
JUSTICE LEA ARMSTRONG
who has been appointed as
Supreme Court Judge (and an
Australian story of three friends)

Congratulations to Justice Lea Armstrong (lawyer, Sydney until 1995) who was sworn in as a Supreme Court Judge on 31 October 2018 and also began a five year term as President of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

Before her appointment, Justice Armstrong was NSW’s first female Crown Solicitor, and prior to becoming Crown Solicitor, Her Honour was the NSW Treasury’s first general counsel and has also held senior roles in the Crown Solicitor’s Office, as general counsel and as Assistant Crown Solicitor leading the administrative law and the commercial law groups at different times.

Previously a lawyer with Blake Dawson Waldron, Her Honour was also an associate for now-retired High Court Judge Michael McHugh AC QC.

Q. What are the highlights of your career?

Highlights of my legal career to date include being appointed as the Crown Solicitor in 2015, and leading that Office in its bicentenary year in 2017 (being 200 years since the appointment of the first solicitor to the Colony of New South Wales in 1817).

And of course, most recently, it was indeed an honour to be appointed to the NSW Supreme Court and as President of NCAT. With these appointments come significant responsibilities. My immediate focus is on my term as the second President of the Tribunal; the Tribunal only having been established in 2013. Currently receiving over 66,000 applications a year, the Tribunal facilitates access to justice, dispute resolution for ordinary citizens, and enables public decision-making to be challenged, and, as the reach of legislative regulation expands, the Tribunal’s role grows in social importance.

Q. What do you remember about being at the firm?

After completing three rotations as a graduate solicitor (commercial litigation, environmental, and intellectual property/communications groups), I settled in IPC where my supervising partner was Dr John Griffiths, now His Honour Justice Griffiths of the Federal Court, who taught me (amongst other things) the finer points of administrative law proceedings (including in the context of broadcasting and telecommunications). I also worked on significant competition law matters. As well as gaining some valuable experience in the law I made some lifelong friends at the firm, who I still see regularly. I also recall BDW’s legendary Friday night drinks, which were a great way to meet other people at the firm especially from different practice groups.

“It is just so funny to reflect on what I got up to in the 1990s at BDW with alumni such as (now) Justice Lea Armstrong and Rachael Falk! And to know that all these years later, we are all still friends. I think that one of the things I have always valued is the enduring friendships I have formed (and continue to form!) at the firm. Maybe it is our culture? Who knows. All I can say is that things were very different when I first started!”

SARAH ROSS-SMITH, PARTNER IN OUR CANBERRA OFFICE
Q. What’s your advice to younger lawyers?

Find an area or areas of law or legal practice you feel passionate about – and if you don’t feel passionate about the work you’re doing then consider switching roles. There are lots of different ways you can use your legal training. I think most people only excel at what they’re doing when they feel passionately about it.

One of the things I’ve enjoyed in the later part of my legal career has been the leadership and management aspects – I’ve found this challenging but ultimately rewarding. I don’t think leadership comes naturally to most lawyers and we’re generally not trained in leadership and management at law school or in our early legal careers. I am also a believer in the need for strong representation of women in leadership roles in the law, including in private law firms, government legal practice, amongst barristers and in the judiciary. It’s important for younger women in the law to see women in senior roles and for those younger women to aspire to those positions. I think all senior lawyers, both male and female, have a responsibility to encourage more junior women in this regard.

“As well as gaining some valuable experience in the law I made some lifelong friends at the firm, who I still see regularly.”

JUSTICE LEA ARMSTRONG

Meet Rachael Falk

Rachael Falk (Sydney, lawyer until 1999) was appointed CEO at the Cyber Security Research Centre in Canberra in May last year.

Q. Tell us more about your current role.

I am the CEO of the Cyber Security Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). It is a not-for-profit, but with strong funding and also significant reporting and compliance obligations. Primarily, we are about producing cyber security research with impact and hopefully commercialised products as well as being an authoritative voice on cyber security issues. We get a significant amount of funding from the Commonwealth, government agencies, industry and our participating universities. We are industry-led which means our fantastic team of academics work with industry and government solving their cyber security issues or working on big ideas around cyber security. We do this by providing scholarships from honours right through to post doc students who are supervised by a range of Professors and other senior academics from our universities. I certainly never thought I would do this kind of role and it has challenged me in many unexpected ways.

Q. What do you enjoy about your work?

No day is the same and I enjoy the mix between corporate governance, stakeholder management but also the opportunity to build the CRC and shape the next seven years. Having to prepare for board meetings has always been in my role (even as a Telstra lawyer you inevitably were drawn into some board reporting); however, it is very different when you are in the role of CEO. That’s when you appreciate all those years as a lawyer although possibly not overthinking some of the recent decisions around board obligations and corporate governance.

Q. Do you have anything else that you would like to share, for example, what are your recent highlights, achievements or travels?

I am always amazed at where my fellow BDW now Ashurst colleagues end up. It was wonderful to attend the swearing in of Justice Lea Armstrong and sit with Ashurst partner (and friend) Sarah Ross-Smith. Lots of memories about times in the firm but also that we had all been friends since the 1990s.
Meet

HOWARD PARGETER

Howard Pargeter is an alumnus of both our legacy firms. He worked at our Ashurst Singapore office from 2006 to 2008. However, he also had earlier experiences working with Blake Dawson Waldron (as the firm then was in Australia), on a “reverse” secondment from ANZ bank in 2004.

Q. How did you make the move to Asia from Australia?

Sometimes the stars really do align! Whilst on secondment at Blake Dawson Waldron (as the firm was then in Australia) from ANZ bank, I had formed the view that, if ever I was going to make a move to private practice, that Matthew Bubb would be my first port of call, as I thoroughly enjoyed working with him, saw him as an exemplary lawyer to learn from, and a great leader and team player, who absolutely “led from the front”.

Fast forward a couple of years, I decided it was time to move to private practice in Australia, and was also at that early stage of my legal career, when many lawyers in those days headed to London to gain experience (almost as a rite of passage). I was no different, and saw that as something to aim for once I had spent some time in private practice in Australia. Interestingly, on canvassing the opinion of my then partner, she suggested we look at Singapore instead given her positive recollections, having lived there for some time as a child.

True to my earlier intention, I contacted Matt Bubb. However, I found out that he was no longer in Australia, and was in fact in Singapore at Ashurst. On speaking to him, he mentioned he was actually about to start recruiting for a junior lawyer in Singapore. I was on a plane in a matter of weeks, and the rest is history, as they say! And 13 years later I am still in Singapore.

Q. Tell us about your current role as Regional Legal Counsel with Temenos in Singapore.

Temenos is a software provider, creating software only for banking and finance. As a company we have been doing this for over 25 years (having recently celebrated our 25th birthday), and we are the clear market leader in this space. Over 3,000 companies in more than 145 countries across the globe, including 41 of the top 50 banks, rely on Temenos to process the daily transactions of more than 500 million banking customers. Temenos is headquartered in Geneva, but operates out of more than 60 offices worldwide, and has grown both organically and through acquisition, with one acquisition per year on average since 2007; the most recent two such acquisitions being companies founded in Australia, Rubik in 2017 and Avoka in 2018.

Given the nature of our business, licensing software and selling services to clients, my role is, and has been since I started with Temenos in November 2015, largely a transactional one. However, the role has changed significantly in that time. The software and IT industry generally, and banking and the regulatory environment in which banks operate, have both undergone, and
continue to undergo, change. Sometimes that change is generally universal, and at other times it is anything but (such as in regard to the regulatory environment, which varies in each jurisdiction). Think buzz words such as data protection, privacy, cyber security, the cloud, material outsourcing, KYC, AML, digital transformation, SaaS, challenger banks, open banking and fintech. As a primarily transactional lawyer, and contracting with banks, these are the areas where I have seen and felt firsthand the effect of such change the most, going from primarily (what now seems comparatively simple) on-premise software licensing and implementations, involving relatively short contracts and contracting processes, to highly complex licensing and SaaS arrangements, with voluminous contracts and lengthy contracting processes. However, with responsibility for all legal matters in the Asia Pacific region, the role and my day-to-day work is not just transactional, and, as is the case for most (if not all) such regional roles, a large part of it involves managing a team of lawyers, and “keeping the lights on” for Temenos more generally, in every country in which we operate in the region. As you can imagine, I am no stranger at all to Changi Airport!

“...and being an integral part of other team members’ development and growth, and sharing in their successes and achievements.”

Q. What’s the best career advice that you’ve been given?

The best career advice I have been given came from the ANZ graduate program. The first piece was to always remember that you were hired for you (and not for you to be anything other than yourself). This was explained with a story about a peacock that lived with penguins. The penguins loved the peacock and its brilliant colourful “difference”, but over time the peacock stopped showing off its colours and difference, and was almost indiscernible from the penguins. Over time the penguins forgot why they loved the peacock in the first place. The moral of the story was key, that they make the difference, and are the most important and valuable company assets. Temenos certainly lives and breathes this value, and such a value statement could not be truer than in the legal team at Temenos.

Q. Do you keep in touch with Blake Dawson/Ashurst colleagues?

Yes, both from the Singapore office and Melbourne (and not just on social media), including one colleague whom I shared an office with in Ashurst Singapore 13 years ago, and who is still in the Ashurst Singapore office today! Unfortunately, it is quite the challenge trying to get a few of us together in Singapore, given our hectic travel schedules, so, try as we may, it only ends up being once or twice a year now.

Q. What’s your favourite thing to do on the weekend?

Ride my motorbike! Having grown up in regional Victoria, I have been riding motorbikes since my pre-teens, and have never stopped. Riding requires complete focus and attention to the road and everything going on around you, and for me that is what makes it so relaxing and my one great love. It is the only time I am not thinking about anything else other than the next sweeping bend. Living in Singapore makes for great riding too, as a weekend ride can easily involve exploring Malaysia or on a long weekend doing the same in Thailand. With my work travel, it has also meant I have been able to go on some great rides in other parts of the world, such as the Philippines and Europe.
Meet

TOBY MANDER-JONES

Toby is Co-CEO and Co-Founder of Brydge Technologies, manufacturer of premium mobile and desktop peripherals for the digital workplace, including award-winning iPad and Surface wireless keyboards.

Toby was a senior associate in our Singapore and Sydney offices from 2011 to 2015, specialising in PE, M&A, JVs and corporate finance in technology, consumer products, energy and resources and financial institutions sectors.

Q. Tell us more about Brydge.

Brydge is a fast-growing, premium consumer electronics brand. With its roots in Singapore, Brydge is now based in Park City, Utah.

Brydge started life in 2012 as a highly successful Kickstarter campaign. It instantly developed a cult following. Its philosophy was simple: the iPad was beautiful and so the keyboard should be beautiful. Designed out of 100% aluminium, Brydge created the perfect iPad/MacBook hybrid.

In 2014, with longtime friends Nick and Justine Smith, we acquired and relaunched Brydge with the mission to turn it into a market leader. Since then, Brydge has gone on to sell over 300,000 units in over 100 countries and has now been named in the Inc 5000 Fastest Growing Private Companies in the US three years in a row.

With its DNA based on the simple philosophy of creating a high quality, design-focused accessory for a high quality product, Brydge has quickly become the leader in premium tablet keyboards and accessories for brands such as Apple, Microsoft and Google. Whilst wireless keyboards have driven Brydge’s growth, Brydge’s mission is to be the market leader in the digital workplace – by delivering high quality mobile and desktop peripherals that are exceptionally well designed and create a seamless experience for the user.
Q. What's the best piece of advice that you've ever been given?

Simple: have no regrets.

Q. What's your best memory from your time at Ashurst?

I have many. Closing a large M&A deal after months of work and late nights was always a very satisfying experience and getting to savour that moment with your colleagues was great.

Q. Do you keep in touch with your Ashurst colleagues?

Yes – whilst I'm on the other side of the world from Sydney and Singapore, I stay in touch with many former colleagues in both those cities and often catch-up with them when I'm in town.

Q. How do you relax in your downtime?

Spend time with my family, exercise, mountain bike or ski.

Q. What's next for you?

I'm 100% focused on growing Brydge into a market leader. We have a lot of exciting plans for 2019 and we've started this year with strong momentum.

I have a four-month-old daughter, Isabelle, and she is keeping my wife and me busy. There's plenty to keep me busy in 2019.

Q. And what are the challenges?

As a start-up with an aspiration to be a market leader, a key challenge is sustaining a steep growth trajectory while ensuring all aspects of the business, including manufacturing, customer service, supply chain, operations, sales, finance and marketing, are aligned and the entire team is focused on the overall objective.

Q. Do you have any advice that you would give to others looking to make a similar jump?

Just jump in and don’t be fearful of the unknown. I really enjoyed my time at Ashurst and working as an M&A lawyer. Running a start-up has its own challenges and pressures; however it is ultimately extremely rewarding and exciting.

Q. What inspires you?

The passionate team we have working at Brydge. Like a law firm, business is very much about people and working together as a team. When you get a group of passionate and motivated individuals working towards a common goal, it is inspiring to see what is possible.

Q. How do you make sure you maintain a good work life balance?

It's important to set boundaries and a schedule that allows enough time to see family, friends and to do activities that you enjoy.

Being based in the mountains in Park City, I always make sure to find time to get outside for a trail run, mountain bike or ski, at least twice a week. I believe it is very important to clear the mind, especially in stressful environments, and that this leads to more efficient working and better decision-making.

Q. How did you find the transition from M&A lawyer in Singapore to running a fast-growing consumer electronics company in Utah?

Going from a client-facing role to managing a team of employees across various functions and executing a business plan was a fairly big change, that’s for sure.

Running a start-up with rapid growth has its unique set of challenges and it is certainly an exciting environment to be involved in every day.

There were many skills I learnt in my time as an M&A lawyer that I found extremely valuable in this new role. Nearly ten years in law (mostly in M&A) gave me a strong grounding across a variety of areas that have been very useful in business.

Q. What do you enjoy most about running your business?

I would have to say that leading a team of passionate individuals towards a common goal and seeing results are the most enjoyable aspects of running Brydge.
Paul Mallam’s
50 MINUTE ART

Paul was a partner in our Sydney office until 2009 and is one of Australia’s leading Telecom/Media/Technology practitioners. He has always had an interest in visual arts. In 2014 he was a Finalist in the Archibald Prize, Australia’s annual art prize for portraiture. He still practises law for a small group of clients and holds directorships. Paul tells us about his latest work.

Q. You have been doing a series of 50-minute paintings recently. What subjects inspire you?

My daily 50-minute paintings are largely a diary practice of people, places and ideas. Having studied history for my first degree, I am particularly interested in the way that history shapes and culls narrative, often discarding great swathes of the past as irrelevant, unimportant and unworthy of note. Part of my practice is the use of portraiture to examine that narrative. For example, my portrait of William Barak is part of a series of great indigenous women and men in nineteenth century Australia. Barak was a person of immense moral stature, a shrewd leader and a wonderful artist, but very few people know of him. Likewise, few know that our first great cricket all-rounder was Aboriginal, as was the fastest sprinter in the world in the late nineteenth century. These portraits are fast, sketchy and fluid, as a riposte to the grand nineteenth century portrait of the “Great Man”, which invariably meant a man recognised in European society.

Similarly, my portrait of Iranian mathematician, Maryam Mirzakhani, is part of a series of great women mathematicians and scientists I am undertaking for my granddaughters (I have three). Once you research them, you realise there are women mathematicians and scientists everywhere. Very few people realise, for example, that Eunice Foote is the founder of modern climate science. These portraits are also fast and sketchy but in black and white, as a riposte to Gerhard Richter’s famous series, 48 Portraits for the 1972 Venice Biennale, which are all of men (and for which Richter received much feminist criticism).

The third portrait is of Sam, who I met studying at the National Art School. This was a 20-minute portrait I did in a CBD shopfront in Sydney, as part of a challenge to paint 7 portraits in a day. After I finished I felt every bit as exhausted as the toughest day I ever spent in court! This portrait has a relationship with some of David Hockney’s rapidly executed portraits. One of the great benefits of returning to university was meeting so many young people like Sam. I will never forget one student telling me how much I reminded her of her father. “Well, I hope you like him”, I replied, somewhat taken aback.

Q. How much time do you spend painting?

I paint at least one 50-minute painting every day. I usually also go sketching with a friend once a week and join a life drawing group every Saturday. In addition, I am in the studio for part of each week. In total, that’s usually around half of a seven day week.

Q. Do you have anything else that you would like to share – for example, what are your recent highlights, achievements or travels?

Outside art and the occasional legal advice I still give, I am very lucky to be part of a large connected family. We had 30 people for Christmas lunch last year and I am fortunate to be able to do that. I feel for people who are not as lucky as I have been, both with career and family.
Mike Polson, Head of Ashurst Advance Delivery, speaks with us about innovation related roles and how he thinks innovation will be driven forward by new talent, progressive law firms and, most importantly, our clients.

Q. When did you join the firm and what are your areas of expertise?

I joined Ashurst in early 2013, a move from being a corporate lawyer into a more business-facing role to help plan and then set up our new office in Glasgow. I was actually an Ashurst alumni as I’d been seconded to Ashurst London at an early stage in my legal career, so I got to know the firm very well and then had the fantastic opportunity to come back in this new role.

The Glasgow office was established for two purposes, one was to build an alternative legal resourcing capability, and the second was to take much more of a global and central approach to the delivery of our business services and business support activities.

My role now extends much more broadly than just Glasgow, into what we call Ashurst Advance, which focuses on the efficient delivery of legal services, and into a wider innovation role within the firm.

Q. Can you outline the work done by Ashurst Advance and the steps that led to its creation?

We created Ashurst Advance as a direct result of extensive and in-depth global research which we undertook with general counsel and leaders of in-house legal teams from a large number of our major clients, across a range of industry sectors and geographies.

The key findings were remarkably consistent. Clients had a significant “more for less” challenge arising from increasing regulation, a drive to increase the value the legal teams delivered to the wider business and a need to operate as efficiently as possible. Clients told us the top three ways they were responding to these challenges were to “unbundle matters” to ensure the right resources were being used for the risk work, to use legal technology and to have a greater focus on process and project management.

“... It was wonderful to see our commitment to the delivery of innovative client solutions recognised at the FT Innovative Lawyers Awards Asia Pacific 2018. Ashurst was named Most Innovative Law Firm thanks to initiatives such as Project 90, Integrity Due Diligence and the development of our automated transaction bible process. This award reflects our continued focus on new solutions, and is fantastic recognition for the dedicated people we have at Ashurst who drive these projects forward.”

MIKE POLSON
As a result, Ashurst Advance focuses on driving efficiency in those three areas – resources, technology and process. One of the most exciting things was that we were creating something new and truly different within the structure of a major law firm.

The work we do is all about ensuring that Ashurst delivers its legal services to clients as efficiently as possible, and responds to these client challenges.

Q. How can law firms adopt talent from outside of the legal sector in order to drive innovation?

First of all, that is exactly what law firms should be doing – bringing in talent from a diverse range of sectors, many of whom will already have been through the sort of change that the legal services market is seeing today. That external talent will bring a wealth of experience and directly transferrable skills, together with a degree of comfort around change and seeing change as an opportunity. What law firms have to do is to identify talent who have an appetite to learn about the legal sector and how lawyers work, and then translate their skills and experience into that environment. That requires an investment on both sides but the return on that investment is potentially very significant.

We have to be honest and recognise that the legal sector lags behind a number of other sectors in its evolution and therefore we should learn from the lessons of others rather than reinvent the wheel.

Q. How are changing client needs encouraging innovation within law firms?

Client needs are the greatest driver of change and that is the way it should be! Law firms should be driven by the needs of their markets and their clients. In my Innovation role, and my Ashurst Advance role, I love it when a client shares the business challenges they are facing and we are asked to deliver our legal services in a way which directly addresses those challenges. The direction of travel from clients is very clear – demonstrate to us how you are going to drive both value and efficiency in the delivery of legal services to us, with cost challenges being a key consideration. Those cost challenges simply reflect the pressures in clients’ own businesses so we have both to recognise that, and respond to it. At the same time we also need to ensure that our own business remains strong and competitive: doing things in the way they have always been done is simply not a sustainable operational strategy.

Q. Do you feel the legal sector is more open to new ideas than it has been in previous years, and to what do you attribute any changes in attitude?

Absolutely yes. And that is down to one key thing – the changing needs of our clients. I also think that, after years of doom and gloom that the future may bring “the end of lawyers”, there is now a much more open and, dare I say, positive mindset around the opportunities that the changing legal market will open up. Anything which helps to remove the archaic “lawyer” and “non-lawyer” distinction is in my view a good thing.

Q. How might the structures and delivery of legal services products need to evolve in the years to come to keep up with client expectations?

I think the question hits the nail on the head by mentioning legal services products. Learning the lessons from other industries, we will see previously paid for advice, content as it were, being easily accessible, mostly through online platforms. Clients will expect to receive that sort of advice for free as “table stakes” but will equally expect these products to be of high quality and tailored to their business needs. This will happen right across the legal market and parts of the market currently served by “Big Law” will not be immune to these changes.

As a result, law firms will need to be very clear as to their “value proposition” for clients. This will undoubtedly change the shape and structure of law firms, with many more so-called non-lawyers being directly involved in the delivery of legal services to clients. I am very positive about this change and the new roles and opportunities which will open up. Anything which helps to remove the archaic “lawyer” and “non-lawyer” distinction is in my view a good thing.

Q. How does the pace of innovation differ in international legal markets?

That is a very interesting, challenging question and you will not be surprised to hear that it varies greatly. And this variation is not as simple as a geographic split. In the US market, for example, we have seen much of the pioneering legal technology, while at the same time there is still a very strong attachment to the
“billable hour” in many of its market segments. So the position is complex, and we see wide variations across international markets where some are ahead of others in some aspects of change, but have not yet adopted, say, some of the technology changes that we have seen in other markets. All markets are the same in that they are sharing a direction of travel, which is increased focus on activity which will drive efficiency, but different markets are at different stages on that journey.

Q. Do you predict automation having as large an impact in the legal sector as it is expected to have in other industries, and where will its effects be felt in the legal sector?

I believe automation will continue to have an increasing impact on the way legal services are delivered. There are differing views about the pace of this activity. I certainly do not see there being one “big bang” moment, but the direction of travel is absolutely clear.

It is wrong to believe that automation will only have an impact on commoditised work or in high volume recurring activity. It’s clear the impact in this area has already been significant and that is why we are seeing some fundamentally different business models emerging in parts of the legal services market.

Even within the highest value activity, project or case, it is possible to identify elements of the required activity which are susceptible to automation and therefore we will see much greater automation of those elements delivered in an integrated way as part of the wider client delivery.

Q. How will legal education, training and skills development need to transform as automation and other forms of innovation start to be embedded into the legal sector?

I have a concern that legal education is lagging behind the changing legal market and that the focus seems to remain on teaching for the “traditional” legal market. The core legal fundamentals must of course be there but they increasingly need to be supplemented by broader business and technology skills. We need to look ahead to the “lawyer of the future” and then reverse-engineer our legal education, training and skills development to ensure that our people are equipped with the skills and tools to succeed in the legal market of the future.

Q. In what ways is Ashurst planning to innovate further?

I think it is very important to recognise that the process of change we have been talking about is an ongoing one and that we are within a very dynamic market. Therefore, one key focus is to continue the journey of how we deliver legal services as efficiently and innovatively as possible, and ensure that a number of elements of new ways of working move to become the new business as usual. That applies across all geographies and all work types.

There is no doubt that legal technology will play a bigger part in service delivery but I don’t think it is right to see new technology as a solution in itself. New technology will have the greatest business impact and benefit where it is implemented and integrated as part of the wider value proposition.

For me personally, a major focus will remain on ensuring that we create the right business environment to encourage innovation from all our employees, and that we align those innovation efforts and activities to our wider business objectives and strategic priorities.

Q. Do you have any tips for lawyers who are starting with the firm today?

There’s no doubt, I think, that those lawyers need to have an attitude to embrace change, to take advantage of new opportunities, to be very inquisitive about non-traditional legal areas such as understanding technology, and the application of business principles to the delivery of law. So really it’s about having a much broader commercial outlook, clearly with the key legal fundamentals there, and actually to understand the dynamics of the changing market and to view that very positively and to try and explore how they can contribute to that change.

Q. What’s the best career advice you’ve been given?

I’m not sure I’ve ever been given this directly, but I’ve had from an early stage a sort of mantra for myself that I wanted to feel, year on year, that I was continuing to develop. Developing new skills, learning new things, getting involved in different types of work. That’s how I judged whether I was progressing in my career and, linking to the previous question, I think that is a hugely important mindset to have among all of this change. You’ve got to keep pushing yourself to learn new things and to invest time in exploring how the market’s changing. So it’s really about personal self-development in continuing to drive yourself forward year on year.
An example of the Ashurst Advance Delivery teams in action

Our Ashurst Advance legal project management, legal analyst and legal technologist teams supported the Ashurst SDG team in the repapering of over 5,000 Credit Support Annex (CSA) on the back of the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) rules – a highly complex exercise, addressing the first regulation of its kind.

SDG TEAM
The Ashurst legal team were tasked with drafting and negotiating the EMIR amendment to existing CSAs for the global bank’s clients. The negotiations were done using an agreed playbook and escalation process.

LEGAL PROJECT MANAGERS
- Managed the allocation of negotiations to the Ashurst legal team freeing up partner and counsel time.
- Tracked performance across the 5,000 engagements, keeping the client updated about progress on a daily basis.
- Acted as the central point of contact for all client and internal queries, providing consistency and accountability.

LEGAL ANALYSTS
- Undertook initial outreach to the sales teams to establish connections with counterparties.
- Drafted complex new agreements in order to meet regulatory requirements.
- Distributed and negotiated documents with counterparties, using predefined playbooks and escalation processes.
- Coordinated document execution.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGISTS
- Automated the drafting of the standard Amendment Agreements.
- Bulk-generated Amendment Agreements from data provided through negotiations.

OUTCOME
Using the Legal Analysts to spearhead each negotiation, and the Legal Project Manager overseeing the overall delivery of the project, meant that over 5,000 CSAs were repapered within the desired deadline, resulting in significant savings as the project was more efficient without impacting on the quality of work.

"This project is a perfect example of our SDG and Ashurst Advance teams working together to provide a fully integrated ‘one firm’ solution for our client. This depth of integration provides significant benefits and ensures that Ashurst has a clear and unconditional focus on efficient service delivery."

MIKE POLSON
HEAD OF ASHURST ADVANCE DELIVERY, GLASGOW

"It made perfect sense for the Global Markets team to utilise the capabilities of the Ashurst Advance teams on a project of this size. By working together we created a more efficient process and were able to provide our client with an exceptional service."

KERION BALL
PARTNER, LONDON

Ashurst Advance is the firm’s “NewLaw” division, transforming client service by continually evolving our legal services delivery in order to provide real value and help our clients to achieve their business objectives in a highly cost-effective way.
Reunions are a great way to come together with fellow alumni, friends and former colleagues to reminisce and reconnect. We are looking forward to seeing you at one of our Firm friends Global Reunion events.

Here are some of the reunion events planned across our office locations, with more to be announced.

• Perth – May
• Sydney – June
• London – September
• Milan – September
• Dubai – November
• Port Moresby – December

With over 3,000 members across the globe our alumni family is a strong international network.

If there’s someone you would like to catch up with, but you have lost contact, please let us know by emailing alumni@ashurst.com and we will attempt to reach out on your behalf.
We enjoyed seeing so many of you at our 2018 alumni events

Port Moresby alumni reunion party

London alumni reunion party
Thanks to all those who attended the first Firm Friends Global Reunion event of 2019 at Bougainvillea House in Brisbane.

For more pictures, and information on upcoming events, please visit our alumni events page or join our alumni LinkedIn group.
London office move

In the city since 1822.
In Spitalfields from 2019.

In mid-2019 our London office will relocate to the London Fruit & Wool Exchange (LFWE), Spitalfields, E1. We are delighted to have secured this iconic building in such a prime location, offering close proximity to our key clients.

The building will offer Ashurst colleagues more flexible and collaborative work spaces with improved technology.

The London office relocation comes at an exciting time for Ashurst, as we take steps to enhance our working environment as part of our ongoing commitment to become an exceptional place to work.
Share your news

We always look forward to hearing your news. Share your news in our newsletter or let us know any suggestions for our alumni programme by emailing alumni@ashurst.com.

For more information on our alumni programme visit us online.

Join our Alumni LinkedIn group

Our LinkedIn group provides a great way of connecting with our global alumni community and features updates on our alumni events.

Make sure your current profile reflects your past employment at Ashurst or Blake Dawson so we can confirm your membership.

Join the Ashurst Alumni LinkedIn Group