

## William Wood QC

YEAR OF CALL: 1980 YEAR OF SILK: 1998

*"William Wood QC is 2018 Mediator of the Year"*

Who's Who Legal - UK Bar: Mediation 2018

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## Practice Overview

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Bill Wood QC is one of the UK's leading commercial mediators.

He is consistently ranked in the top tiers by Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners. He has been included in the Who's Who Legal top ten list of commercial mediators globally every year since the list was first published in 2011. His mediation practice now takes him to Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore, France, Switzerland, Spain, South Africa, Kenya, Mexico and the US as well as to all parts of the UK and the Channel Islands. In all he conducts around 80 mediations each year.

His mediations involve complex and high-profile matters including

- **Financial services and banks** with extensive experience of mis-selling disputes as well as bank-to-bank disputes including derivatives and trading
- **Internet, computer and telecoms** disputes including major government and utilities contracts
- **Construction and engineering** including contractor disputes and professional liability disputes involving architects, engineers and surveyors.
- **Professional negligence** claims against lawyers, accountants and insurance brokers
- **Shipping and international trade**
- **Pharmaceutical** claims including products liability and IP and joint venture disputes
- **Insurance and reinsurance** disputes
- **Oil and gas** including pricing, trading and delivery disputes as well as offshore and onshore engineering and technical disputes
- **Competition** disputes including cartel follow-on damages claims and industry restructuring
- **Planning** including planning-related professional negligence and intra-community planning issues
- **Pensions** including employer/fund disputes and professional negligence claims arising eg from equalisation
- **Employment** including discrimination and restrictive covenant disputes
- **Human Rights** including disputes around allegations of pollution, torture and physical abuse committed in overseas jurisdictions

Bill Wood QC sits as an ICC arbitrator, and mediates for the ICC as well as for the Kuala Lumpur (KLRCA) and Singapore (SIMC) panels.

Bill is the ADR representative on the Civil Justice Council and chairs its ADR Working Group.

## Mediation

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### Cases:

Mediations are and usually remain confidential. But Bill Wood's involvement as a mediator in two high profile disputes, both competition cases, is in the public domain:

- The dispute between the British Waterways Board and the British Marine Federation over the structure of the marina industry.
- The dispute between certain leading bookmakers and TurfTV over the supply of live television pictures to betting shops.

## Insurance and reinsurance

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### Cases:

- *Lloyd's litigation* (Wellington, Janson Green and Secretan claims)
- *British Sugar v NEI* (interpretation of consequential loss limitation clause in engineering contract)
- *In re Firm X* (solicitor's conflict of interest)
- *Pangood v Barclay Brown* (duty of Lloyds broker to explain policy terms)
- *Fitzgerald v Williams* (international art fraud)
- *Glo-lite v Jasper Conran* (dispute over termination of manufacturing licence)
- *Coral UK v Rechtman* (liability of company director where company non-existent)
- *Cementation v Aegon* (interpretation of insurance policy in engineering project)
- *Saipem & Conoco v Dredging VO* (liability of dredger owners for damage to pipeline)
- *CTI v Oceanus* (non-disclosure in insurance contract)
- *New Hampshire v Strabag Bau* (Brussels Convention)
- *Killick v Rendall* (construction of travel insurance policy)

The Directories:

*"has a knack bringing warring parties together, you go against him as an opponent and end up becoming his friend"* Chambers & Partners 2009

*"Insurance and Reinsurance Leading Silks: William Wood QC is a 'first-rate advocate'".* Legal 500 2008

*"A talented mediator and litigator, William Wood QC is highly praised for his "extremely user-friendly" approach.... "Funny, articulate and precise", he's a "joy to listen to, whether in court or behind the scenes.""* Chambers & Partners 2007

# Aviation

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## Cases:

- *Killick v Goss* (application of Warsaw convention to helicopter crash)
- *ABTA v BA, Virgin and Lufthansa* (dispute over travel agents' commission on airline tickets)
- *Kegworth Air Crash*
- *British Airways/Cityflyer merger* (appeared for BA before Competition Commission on merger inquiry)
- *British Airways/the European Commission* (travel agents' commissions Article 82 complaint to the European Commission)
- *Helicopter crash* (private arbitration)
- *Polynesian v Tonga* (airport security/stowaways Court of Appeal of Tonga) Advising on application to CAA concerning runway extension at a major regional airport
- *Protea Leasing Ltd v Royal Air Cambodge Co Ltd* Economic Tort claim.

## Qualifications

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1974 Open scholarship to Worcester College, Oxford University

1977 Oxford University First class BA in law (undergraduate degree).

1978 Oxford University First class BCL (postgraduate degree).

1978 Kennedy Scholarship to Harvard Law School

1979 Master of Laws degree Harvard Law School (postgraduate degree).

1980 Bar Finals, Council of Legal Education, London

1998 Queen's Counsel

Bencher of Middle Temple

Member of the Bar of Tonga

Accredited CEDR mediator

Member of CEDR Faculty and CEDR Panel

Member of PIM

Mediator for Sport Resolutions (UK) and Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)

ADR representative on the Civil Justice Council. Member of the Accreditation Committee of the Civil Mediation Council.

Adjunct Professor at Shue Yan University Hong Kong.

## Publications

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Bill Wood QC lectures and teaches widely on mediation matters in general and the resolution of insurance disputes in particular.

His publications include:

"*Juggling Act*" The Lawyer

"*Opinion: Halsey v Milton Keynes*" The Lawyer

"*Mediation: The Next Ten Years*", 2007 Master's Lecture to the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators subsequently published in the Chartered Institute Journal.

"*My Toughest Mediation*" The Mediator Magazine

"*When Girls Go Wild: The Debate Over Mediation Privilege*" The Mediator Magazine.

## Directory Quotes

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William Wood QC (Brick Court Chambers) is a "very affable and even-handed" performer: "You always feel confident when he is there that a mediation will resolve." He has a sterling reputation for his handling of a wide variety of disputes, and extensive experience in insurance, banking, oil and gas, construction and product liability matters. (Chambers & Partners 2019)

Brick Court Chambers' '*extraordinarily well-prepared*' William Wood QC is '*such an effective mediator because he is extremely cerebral and, at the same time, immensely modest; he is able to bring enormous scholarship to bear in a manner which gains the utmost respect of the parties, but does so in a way that is extremely self-effacing and that does not intimidate the parties*'. Wood handles approximately 75-80 disputes a year; his practice embraces business disputes of all kinds but he is particularly focused on insurance, banking, oil and gas, construction and engineering, product liability and professional negligence. In 2017, Wood mediated in Mexico City, Johannesburg, Hong Kong, Geneva, Singapore and New York, as well as throughout the UK. Recent work included an oil rig fire insurance claim in an overseas jurisdiction; a dispute over family business and assets worth approximately \$10bn; and an excess loss reinsurance dispute arising out of product liabilities and pollution exposure. (The Legal 500 2018-19)

William Wood QC is "totally stunning in every respect" according to peers, who consider him "the best international mediator out there". They praise his "beautifully light touch" and "would put him top of the list". (Who's Who Legal - UK Bar: Mediation 2018)

William Wood QC is described as "the number-one mediator in the UK today" by clients and peers. He brings his "rare blend of good humour, professionalism and experience" to an expansive scope of disputes on an international scale. (Who's Who Legal - UK Bar: Mediation 2018)

William Wood QC is an experienced mediator who ably handles claims in a variety of practice areas, and is regarded by one commentator as being "energetic and very enthusiastic" with "a very impressive ability to grasp technical matters." He is regularly chosen for difficult and high-value matters, particularly those with insurance or financial services elements, and is equally adept at mediating both international and domestic disputes. (Chambers & Partners 2018)

"Highly experienced and creative" mediator and arbitrator William Wood QC is praised by solicitors for his "friendly and constructive style," and is noted for his large and diverse practice. He is regularly chosen for difficult and high value matters, particularly those with insurance or financial services elements, and is equally adept at mediating

both international and domestic disputes. (Chambers & Partners 2017)

"William Wood QC enjoys commendations across the board from his peers for his distinguished record as a mediator. One respondent says, "He is very skilled and tenacious with an excellent manner with all parties."" (Who's Who Legal: Mediators 2017)

"William Wood QC at Brick Court Chambers has 'an excellent reputation for mediations and secures deals, even after the day of mediation has passed'." (The Legal 500 2016)

"William Wood QC is described by many as "one of the best mediators in England". He has experience mediating in Dubai, Hong Kong, New York, Johannesburg, UK and Nairobi making his practice "truly international". (Who's Who Legal: Mediators 2016)

"William Wood QC is a "leading figure" in the field. His "reputation precedes him" and he is active in cases in Dubai, Hong Kong, Paris and New York, as well as in the UK." (Who's Who Legal UK Bar 2015)

"William Wood QC inspires "calmness and precision in even the most contentious and tense disputes". (Who's Who Legal - UK Bar: Mediation 2015)

"William Wood QC at Brick Court Chambers is another of the undisputed big names of mediation, and his position within the top tier is one that few would contest, particularly when it comes to large-scale financial services and insurance matters. Despite the increasingly complex and international nature of some of the mediations he is involved in, he still manages around 80 disputes a year." (The Legal 500 2013)

"William Wood QC at the same set receives high praise for his absolutely charming, commercial and engaging" approach. Solicitors note his "ability to deal with almost any type of dispute," with one interviewee stating: "You know he is a safe pair of hands if there are complex issues involved." " (Chambers & Partners 2012)

Listed in Who's Who Legal: The International Who's Who of Commercial Mediation 2011 list of ten "Most highly regarded individuals".

"The 'excellent' William Wood QC of Brick Court Chambers wins huge respect for being 'blunt and to the point' and for possessing a 'very good, easy' and 'no-nonsense style'. In addition, 'he keeps the mediation process moving forward, and always has a mastery of the relevant facts and issues'. Wood handles the full range of matters, and has recently been involved in a multibillion-dollar mediation relating to derivative investments." Legal 500 2011

"praised for his "enormous charm, light touch and tremendous humanity." Wood is one of the most well-liked and respected mediators on the circuit" Chambers and Partners 2011

"Solicitors are full of praise for his "commercial approach, innovative problem-solving, strong intellect and disarming sense of humour." " Chambers and Partners 2011

"Solicitors respect his 'razor-sharp intellect', 'clear distillation of the issues' and the air of 'good-humoured professionalism' he brings to proceedings." Legal 500 2010

"The profile of William Wood QC of Brick Court Chambers continues to soar." Legal 500 2010

"first-class" , "charismatic", "incisive" Legal 500 2009

"fantastic" , "he exudes energy and enthusiasm" Chambers and Partners 2010

"beyond the affable exterior, Wood's eagle-eyed perception and legal acuity enable him to plunge into the detail and tease out the finer points of the most complex disputes" Chambers & Partners, 2009

"a knack for bringing warring parties together."; "you go against him as an opponent, and you end up becoming his

friend" Chambers & Partners, 2009

"Bill Wood QC continues to impress big-name lawyers and law firms. His "unobtrusive" style allows "sophisticated parties to find solutions without feeling railroaded or coerced". Possessed of the charm to handle abrasive types with "sang froid", he is "probing and challenging" where required. Parties and advisers also find him "excellent company" and "thoroughly entertaining". Legal 500 2008

"The "charming" and "charismatic" Bill Wood QC is hard to ignore, and makes the top tier of the rankings this year having built a substantial city fan base with his light, facilitative style. Crackling with confidence and energy, he is swift to gain the confidence of clients and uses humour to maintain momentum and alleviate tension in a broad range of commercial disputes." Legal 500 2007

"A charismatic and engaging figure, Wood's elevated position in mediation circles is focussed on his "outstanding reputation" in insurance disputes. Peers note that he is "exceptional at establishing a rapport with parties". In part, this is due to a "relaxed and natural demeanour" that puts individuals at ease." Chambers & Partners 2007

"...he trained as a mediator in 1999 and is increasingly coming to be regarded as a top-rate practitioner in that field, winning plaudits for his lightness of touch and good humour as a mediator." Legal Week 22nd September 2005

"Barrister Bill Wood will today assume the pivotal role in the legal battle being fought...over live pictures of British racing shown in betting shops...All parties have agreed to mediation which brings in the highly experienced Wood..." Racing Post 17th March 2008