

Alumni newsletter



February 2025

Welcome to the latest issue of Alumni newsletter. Since last writing to you I have stepped down as Senior Partner and Chris Schwer has taken on the mantle. However, I have been tasked with ensuring that we continue with the progress we have made over the last few years to grow our alumni network. To this end we will be **holding our third Alumni event on 15 May 2025** and so please save the date as a formal invitation will follow shortly.

It has been an exciting year at Birketts. The people and revenue statistics speak for themselves and there are some articles below concerning our continued growth and consequent rise in rankings of UK law firms - click on the "read more" links and they will take you to the relevant pages on our website. This has been achieved without damaging our culture and that is perhaps our greatest achievement.

The firm's biggest highlight was the opening of our office in Bristol. Although we have had a presence there for a while in the form of a "hub" we now have an office to match the quality of the remainder of the Birketts' estate. We have found that there is plenty of appetite amongst lawyers in the west of the country to join us and headcount has already reached 26. If you know of anyone in that part of the country who might be interested in joining us then please ask them to make contact with us.

Finally, we are keen to hear more about what you are doing in your life after Birketts. If you feel like letting sharing your post-Birketts life with your fellow alumni, please get in touch. You will see below that Julie Hunn, Janet Rudge, Nigel Farthing and Robert Howard have kicked us off. We are also keen to grow the alumni network and so if you know of anyone who is missing out then please encourage them to make contact.

See you in May!

Join our alumni LinkedIn group →



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Where are they now?

Julie Hunn

"With 3 of our 4 children (and both our grandchildren) living abroad, travelling was always going to be high on our list of things to do. Our destinations have therefore been influenced very much by visits to see them all! Last year we took in a couple of trips to Switzerland and then The Philippines, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. We also camped 'under canvas' in Northamptonshire and Cornwall and then had a fun trip to Kent in an old VW camper van – it rained, a lot, on all three trips - the jury is still out on the merits of camper vans! I can say with certainty that one of the joys of retirement is being able to go where and when we please, for as long as we like.

"One of the most difficult things to adjust to after retiring was losing structure to the week so we have tried to find something for every day. Pilates two or three times a week, gym membership and walking in the park keep me fit(-ish!). Joining the Ipswich Institute has been great for the slightly off-the-wall weekly play reading group (really good fun!), a family history group and monthly book group. With some voluntary work at one of the local food top-up shops, weekly singing with the Ipswich Rock Choir and garden work when the weather suits, my days are full and varied. So, I think people who like to be busy will always find many things to fill their retirement days.



"However, I do still miss the day-to-day interaction with colleagues – there is no replacement for that. How lovely, then, to have been invited to the Alumni Event in May – I shall so look forward to catching up with old friends."

Janet Rudge

"Life in the slow lane continues to be a complete joy, probably because it is mostly spent in Hampshire and Norfolk in the company of my nine adorable grandchildren. I try to fill my time with as many of my favourite activities as possible such as walking, swimming, gardening, Pilates and playing cards with my 93 year old Dad. I volunteer at Home Start, a charity supporting local families with young children (they are always looking for new [volunteers](#)). Steve and I have been fortunate to manage some travel, a highlight being a trip to Canada and Alaska and we're very much looking forward to visiting Australia and New Zealand next month. A walking break in the UK still takes some beating though!

"Since retiring in 2020, I've enjoyed catching up on news of Birketts from former colleagues: it's been great to track the firm's continued success and I still very much miss being a part of it all."



Nigel Farthing

"I am about to celebrate my 70th birthday and yet it does not seem possible that it is nearly half a century since my first day as an articled clerk at Birketts. Much has changed since then but much remains familiar. I am continuing to work part time as an inspector for the Planning Inspectorate hearing public rights of way and common land cases.



"It is fascinating to sit on the other side of the table and I have come to realise that having to make a decision is in many ways more challenging than advocating a case for one party. But it is stimulating and enjoyable. I continue to watch the progress of the firm from the sidelines."

Robert Howard

"After I retired in May 2022, I was lucky enough to have a long hot summer when I could sit in the sun, look after my allotment and sit in the sun a bit more! That soon ended...come that September my daughter became a director of regulatory medicine on the Cambridge Science Park and my son took on the role of Sports Medic at Northampton Saints Rugby Club. Guess who ended up doing all of their school runs!?"

"Ever since then it has been one end of Ipswich on Mondays and Tuesdays and the other end of Ipswich on Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesday is now my only day off when I can work on my allotment, re-learn Handel's Organ Concertos and wander freely around Lidl spending my pension. At least I no longer have to deal with excel spreadsheets, the same old training courses or County Court Judges!"



Our latest highlights



Our seventh office is open

In November we officially opened for business in Bristol, making it the firm's seventh office.

[Read more →](#)

Birketts named 15th most inspiring workplace

We were included in the Inspiring Workplaces Top 50, coming in at 15th place.

[Read more →](#)



New UK £100m firm

The Lawyer recognised Birketts as a £100m firm in August, highlighting what we've always known - that our culture is one of our greatest strengths, driving our success and setting us apart in the industry. The article focused on Birketts, Farrers and Lewis Silken, all of whom breached the £100m revenue threshold for the first time.

It considered the reasons for the success of all three firms which included sound management, good decision making and reluctance to coast. It also identified culture as a similarity stating *"Whether the tone is dress-down trendy or genteel civility, all three firms have a good reputation for the way they treat their people. There are ambitious sweatshops and lovely firms that are floundering. But it's not impossible to get the perfect mix of both. The newest members of the £100m club prove it."*

Legal rankings boost

Birketts has boosted its rankings in the annual legal sector league tables, climbing in both the Legal 500 and Chambers UK rankings for 2025. We also climbed from number 46 to 44 in [Law.com's](#) UK Top 50.

[Read more →](#)





Ipswich Town partnership

We were delighted to extend our partnership with Ipswich Town last year, which saw us commit to being an Elite Partner for at least the next three years.

[Read more →](#)

Birketts joins Law Works pro bono protocol

The protocol, which is endorsed by the Law Society, the Bar Council and the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, was developed to promote and support consistently high standards of pro bono work in the UK and provides clear guidance on the core values associated with such work.



[Read more →](#)

Colleague celebrations

We celebrated several colleague milestones in 2024, including promotions and qualifications, and a new class of trainees.

[First cohort of graduate solicitor apprentices qualify →](#)

[Record number of trainees qualified →](#)

[Trainees class of 2024 →](#)

[45 promotions across the firm →](#)

The Big Oardeal

We are proud to share our documentary covering The Big Oardeal, a four-man crew we sponsored who completed the World's Toughest Row in 41 days, 6 hours and 44 minutes, raising £114,167 for charity.

[Watch here →](#)



Join the team

We have some exciting new opportunities across the firm, with some highlight Partner and Legal Director roles in Sevenoaks and Bristol. If you know anyone that might be interested, please share our current vacancies page.

[View our vacancies here →](#)

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