

## Steven Bird Director



### Practice & Background

Steven Bird is a founding Director of the firm. He is also the founding director of Birds Solicitors established in October 2000 prior to which he was a partner at Simons Muirhead & Burton from 1993 to 2000 having been with that firm as a trainee, qualifying in 1990. He remains the managing director of Birds Solicitors dividing his time between both firms.

He specialises in serious fraud, regulatory and criminal cases but especially:-

- serious fraud, including insider dealing, bribery and corruption;
- murder and other serious offences of violence;
- gross negligence manslaughter;
- large drug cases;
- confiscation and restraint proceedings;
- various regulatory matters (including corporate compliance under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, trading standards investigations, health and safety investigations or investigations involving financial regulation);
- rape and other serious sexual offences.

He is well known for taking on cases where there has been a potential miscarriage of justice and has a busy appellate practice both in the Court of Appeal and by way of applications to the Criminal Cases Review Commission. He represents previous victims of miscarriages of justice in claiming compensation from the Home Office.

Steven has been rated as a star individual in the Chambers and Partners directory since 2011 and has been described as having “excellent technical experience and ability, allowing him to identify issues at an early stage”. In various directory entries he has been described as “a true class act”, “a lawyer’s lawyer” and “a superb solicitor whose judgement can be trusted implicitly” and it is said that “he has incredible procedural knowledge and he prepares and supports fabulously.” He remains in that position in the Chambers and Partners rankings and as a leading individual in the Legal 500 for 2020.

In 2016 Steven was admitted to the List of Counsel at the International Criminal Court. He has been included in Who’s Who since 2014.

### Recent and notable cases

In previous years Steven has defended in numerous high profile fraud cases such as the Guralp Systems corruption case, the Alstom corruption case, two large FCA insider dealing cases, Operation Elveden (involving illegal payments from journalists to police officers for information), land banking frauds, various boiler room frauds, the LIBOR and Foreign Exchange investigations and corruption involving the EBRD.

He also represented Jonathan King in his aborted trial in 2018, which collapsed following considerable defence pressure concerning the flawed disclosure regime of the investigation and which was widely publicised during the summer of 2018. The case was stopped by the trial judge as an abuse of process. A brief list of his cases at Birds Solicitors includes:

### Fraud and Regulatory Matters

- The Guralp Systems case involving an allegation of conspiracy to make corrupt payments for contracts to provide instruments used in the seismology industry in the Far East. He represented the Finance Director who later became CEO and who was acquitted at trial in December 2019. The case was well publicised as the company signed a Deferred Prosecution Agreement with the Serious Fraud Office but no individual was convicted after a lengthy criminal trial.

- Representing a defendant in a conspiracy to accept corrupt payments and money laundering case within the EBRD involving corrupt payments in relation to loans to international companies;
- Representing a defendant in a private prosecution brought by a well-known insurance company concerning a company providing medical reports to solicitors in personal injury cases
- Operation Tabernula, a large insider dealing investigation brought by the FCA which was a flagship prosecution for the Financial Conduct Authority;
- One of the “Alstom” corruption cases, representing an engineer in an international corruption case concerning contracts for the decommissioning of overseas power plants;
- an investigation into the expense claims made by an MP following the controversy brought about by the Daily Telegraph investigation (his client was not charged);
- a land banking case of significant size, value and which attracted publicity in the national media. The client was the only one acquitted after a lengthy trial;
- representing a journalist in the corruption investigation known as Operation Elvedon. After considerable time and effort, the CPS finally agreed that it was not in the public interest to pursue the prosecution and a nolle prosequi was entered in early June 2103;
- a large alleged boiler room fraud prosecuted in south Wales where his client was an accountant and was acquitted of conspiracy to defraud charges.
- a large insider dealing investigation brought by the FCA which was a flagship prosecution for the Financial Conduct Authority (Operation Saturn); representing a banker in both the LIBOR and Foreign Exchange investigations;
- a large “boiler room” type fraud involving the sale of coloured diamonds to investors (which has just ended in an acquittal);
- manslaughter following the Tebay rail tragedy where 4 people were killed by a runaway trailer
- representing a doctor accused of administering poison to procure a miscarriage (the first trial of its kind since the introduction of the Abortion Act over 40 years ago) and subsequently the same man in relation to an attempt to pervert the course of justice from prison.
- two unrelated cases involving allegations of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice against a criminal defence solicitor (both successfully defended);
- a solicitor charged with making telephone calls to his client who was in custody in breach of the Prison Act 1952
- various rape cases including a successful appeal against conviction where he did not act at trial and an acquittal of a man accused of raping his estranged wife.
- representing a number of professional footballers on various allegations of rape, indecency, GBH and perverting the course of justice (in a murder case), on each occasion without charge or conviction
- a case involving the death of an elderly woman alleged to have been caused by the neglect of family members caring for her at the time of her death

His appellate caseload includes a number of murder cases including some of high public profile as well as some appeals relating to serious sexual and drug offences.

### Membership of professional bodies

#### Steven is a Committee member of:-

- London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association (LCCSA);
- Criminal Appeal Lawyers Association (CALA) (where he is also Chairman)

#### He is a member of:

- Fraud Lawyers Association
- Proceeds of Crime Lawyers Association

He was a Police Station duty solicitor from 1992 to 2004 and a former member of the Funding Review Committee for the Legal Services Commission.

He is a member of the Editorial Board of LexisNexis PSL.

### Serious Crime

- numerous murders including the murder of a young boy by a gang of youths in the East End, a prominent contract killing case in Sussex and the highly publicised murder of a financier at his Chelsea home, a gang related murder in Battersea and a six handed murder in south London involving the shooting of a young man at point blank range with a shotgun
- representing Jonathan King in his successful defence of numerous historic allegations of sexual abuse dating back to the late 1960s and which was dismissed as an abuse of process due to major concerns in the disclosure process in 2018;
- representing the person formerly known as Jon Venables in relation to the possession of indecent images which led to his recall to prison and which case had an extremely high profile in the media;

## Publications

He is the co-author (with Brian Spiro) of the “Police Station Advisers Index” first published in September 1995 and now on its fourth edition (published by Thomson Sweet & Maxwell). This is one of the three main texts on advising suspects in police stations and is widely used by legal representatives in police stations throughout the country.

He contributed a chapter to a book entitled “The Criminal Cases Review Commission: Hope for the Innocent?” published by Palgrave Macmillan.

He has also contributed a chapter to the recently published second edition of Taylor on Criminal Appeals dealing with the funding regime for appellate work including applications to the CCRC and appeals from the lower courts up to the Supreme Court. He contributed two chapters to Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Law and Practice (Bloomsbury 2018) and is also the co-author of the article “Does the new Slavery Defence Offer Victims any Greater Protection” (Archbold Review 9th November 2015 issue 9). F

He wrote the chapter on Confiscation and Restraint in the Drugs Offences handbook (Bloomsbury 2018).

## Lectures

He has lectured on accredited courses for:

- Justice at their Human Rights Conference;
- London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association;
- Criminal Appeal Lawyers Association;

In addition he has given his opinion on national News bulletins and appeared on Legal Network Television and “CPDCast” podcasts on witness anonymity, funding for appellate cases and advising suspects at the police station.