



Northern Law Awards 2015

Showcasing Success

Personal injury winners expand

NATIONAL law firm Irwin Mitchell has been in Newcastle for more than 10 years and recently opened its base in Middlesbrough to help more people across the North East.

The firm, which was also nominated for community initiative award, won team of the year in the personal injury and clinical negligence field. Irwin Mitchell is also the current law firm of the year in the rehabilitation first awards for its work in helping seriously injured people to get their lives back on track.

Irwin Mitchell in the North East is the most recognised law firm, achieving more leading rankings in two independent directories, Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners. This is reflective of the work and commitment to supporting its clients' overall advancement by not only focusing on the specific legal issue in hand.

The team also recognises the importance of being ingrained in local communities within the North East and the social responsibility programme is a fundamental part



► The opening of Irwin Mitchell's Middlesbrough office

of who they are, ranking in the Corporate Responsibility Index for the Top 100 businesses. Registered charity the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation has made more than £1m in donations to a wide range of communities and charities.

John Davis, regional managing partner in the North East for Irwin Mitchell, said: "We are immensely proud to win this award. We are extremely passionate about the work we do in helping people to restore their lives after they have suffered injuries, whether that is in

a road accident, as a result of medical negligence or through exposure to asbestos at work.

"Our team has grown from strength to strength in the 10 years we have been in the North East and it's a pleasure to be working with some of the best lawyers in the country right here in this region.

"We have recovered millions of pounds in settlements for our clients, which really helps them to access the best possible rehabilitation, treatment and therapies to get their lives back on track."



IM, irwinmitchell
solicitors



Helping you to get the most out of life after serious injury or illness

At Irwin Mitchell, we are widely regarded by experts as the number one personal injury law firm*, helping our clients and their families get the best possible advice, rehabilitation and support. Call us to see how we can help you. Irwin Mitchell, standing by you.

08000 28 29 30 www.irwinmitchell.com @irwinmitchell

Just rewards for valuable work

THE outstanding success and achievements of the North's legal community were celebrated in style last month at the inaugural Northern Law Awards, sponsored by NWG Property Solutions.

Organised by Newcastle-based events agency Echo Events, a range of talented teams and individuals were celebrated, from the Ward Hadaway duo of Jamie Martin (Outstanding Achievement Award) and James Fairman (Trainee of the Year) to firms such as David Gray (Family Law Team of the Year) and organisations such as

Newcastle University (Pro Bono/Community Initiative of the Year), demonstrating valuable work done by legal professionals in challenging economic circumstances.

Hosted by BBC Breakfast News presenter Colin Briggs, the black-tie event took place on June 11 at Newcastle's Biscuit Factory, bringing together more than 260 people from some of the region's foremost legal firms and institutions in a celebration of individual and team success.

Tonia Reeve, property solutions manager of NWG Property Solutions, said: "We were delighted to be

involved with the Northern Law Awards in its very first year. The event was of an extremely high quality, as were all the entrants, and it really was great to see the northern legal community get the recognition that they deserve!"

The most prestigious award of the evening was for outstanding achievement, sponsored by title sponsor NWG Property Solutions, and it was bestowed on Jamie Martin of Ward Hadaway. On the evening, Jamie was congratulated for his drive, ambition, commitment and strategic vision which, in his role as managing partner of Ward Hadaway, has seen the firm expand and grow, having doubled its size since 1998 and established offices in Leeds and Manchester in addition to retaining its strong Newcastle base.

Jamie has also been awarded an OBE for services to business in the North East and commissioned as Deputy Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear in 2011.

He said: "I was truly honoured and humbled by my award, which is much appreciated and one of the highlights of my career. To be given an accolade such as this by one's peers is something very special."

Other key awards of the event were won by Alison Leith of Tilly Bailey and Irvine Solicitors in Teesside (Lawyer of the Year), Square One Law



➤ The black-tie celebration is to be an annual event

(Law Firm of the Year – six-plus partners) and Silk Family Law (Small Law Firm of the Year).

Team awards included an award for law practice management highlighting the invaluable contribution of non-lawyers to a firm's success, which was won this year by the Winn Solicitors' costs department.

Claire Westgate, operations director at Echo Events, explained why award ceremonies such as these are so important to the sector: "Until now, there has been no forum in the North for those working across the legal profession to showcase and cel-

ebate their talents and achievements.

"It was great to see firms and lawyers from all areas of the region, and across different areas of specialism, take part in what was a fun evening celebrating a lot of very hard, specialised work by lawyers we are fortunate to have access to in this region.

"We'd like to offer our congratulations to all those nominated for the Law Awards and we're looking forward to launching next year's event."

For the full list of winners and more information on the Northern Law Awards visit www.lawawards.co.uk



➤ The Biscuit Room in Newcastle hosted the event



Family law team that stood out

DAVID Gray Solicitors was judged to be the stand-out family team at the Northern Law Awards.

The firm, based in Westgate Road, Newcastle, won the family team award.

Members of the team received their award from Stephen Gowland, former president of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx), who said: "There was one stand-out family team. The winning team were able to highlight their legal expertise in the field, as well as demonstrating their exemplary strong team ethic and structure."

"A big factor was also the impressive range of work this talented team have undertaken within the private and public sectors."

Mary Shaw, head of family at David Gray, said: "I am so proud of the family law team. It is thanks to their talent, hard work and innovation that we have won this award. I am especially pleased that the judges noted the team's innovation, as well as our ability to carry out a full range of both private and public work to the highest standards."

"It is such an honour to win and be recognised for all our hard work. The unusual and great thing about our team is that we have experts in every area of family law. In addition our team is always looking for new and

"The service and client care I receive is excellent. I have recommended, and will continue to recommend, David Gray to colleagues and friends."

2015 client

"Many law firms could provide the services required for a divorce – what David Gray gave me was a positive way forward for my life."

Client

"This team spirit...is massively to the benefit of their clients."

Local barrister

better ways to meet our clients' family law needs."

Glittering testimonials from clients and professionals locally and nationally demonstrated to the judging panel the team's strengths.

As well as delivering legal expertise, the team's holistic approach means that each client is treated as a unique individual, with tailored legal and support services provided accordingly.

This results in very high levels of client satisfaction. In the words of one client: "Many law firms could provide the services required for a divorce – what David Gray gave me was a posi-



► Claire Hunter, Elspeth Thomson and Mary Shaw, of David Gray with former president of CILEx Stephen Gowland

tive way forward for my life." Testimonials also demonstrated the importance of team working. A local family barrister commented: "The team really is a team. They all seem genuinely to like and respect each

other, and to enjoy being part of the team."

This team spirit is no doubt very good for them but, more importantly, it is massively to the benefit of their clients."

■ For more information about the family team at David Gray Solicitors contact the customer relationship manager Louise Law on 0191 232 9547 or chat live on their website www.davidgray.co.uk.

 **DAVID GRAY**
Solicitors LLP

"...there was one stand-out family team"

Northern Law Awards Judging Panel

www.davidgray.co.uk



A hat-trick of awards for Ward Hadaway

WARD Hadaway, which has offices in Newcastle, Leeds and Manchester, walked off with three awards at the inaugural Northern Law Awards.

Ward Hadaway trainee solicitor James Fairman was named trainee of the year, the property team at the firm's Newcastle office was named property team of the year and Ward Hadaway managing partner Jamie Martin won the outstanding achievement award.

Covering legal practitioners across the North East and Cumbria, the Northern Law Awards showcases and celebrates outstanding achievement in the legal industry.

The trainee of the year award aimed to recognise trainee solicitors who were able to demonstrate excellent legal skills, initiative and contribution to their practice.

James Fairman, who is in the second year of his training contract at Ward Hadaway, won the award for what the judges described as his "combination of commitment, enthusiasm and initiative that show what a significant contribution a trainee can make to a firm".

Oxford graduate James, who is currently working as part of Ward Hadaway's healthcare team, spent nine years in the Royal Air Force as an officer and helicopter pilot, including spells in Iraq, Kenya and Northern Ireland, before embarking on a career in the law.

He was nominated for displaying

"aw constant hunger" to improve his legal skills, his "excellent" all-round ability and client service skills and his "infectious" passion for his work.

James said: "It was terrific to be shortlisted for the award but to win it ahead of some really outstanding candidates is a real honour."

Managing partner Jamie Martin said: "James thoroughly deserves this recognition."

"Not only is he a real credit to the firm but he is also extremely popular among his fellow trainees and colleagues at Ward Hadaway so I am delighted that he has won this award."

The property team based at Ward Hadaway's Newcastle office won the property team of the year award for its strong track record of advising clients across a wide range of areas from housebuilding to commercial development.

Judges praised the team's combination of legal expertise, client service excellence and team working, saying Ward Hadaway's team "were able to not only meet the criteria for this award but surpass it".

The judges added: "The team showed excellent client service across all aspect of complex property legal and planning issues and are a clear asset to their firm."

Lesley Fairclough, partner and head of development at Ward Hadaway, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have won this award, which is testament to the hard work, dedica-



➤ Representatives from Ward Hadaway's property team accept the Property Team of the Year Award at the Northern Law Awards from compere Colin Briggs, left, of BBC Newcastle and, second right, Tonia Reeve of award sponsors NWG Property Solutions. Members of the team pictured are, from second left, Sharon Mathieson, Jonathan Yates, Phillip Dunn, Lesley Fairclough, Nick Gholkar, Melissa Walker and, right, with the trophy, head of property Neil Robson

tion and skill of everyone who works in our property department.

"Despite having one of the largest specialist legal property departments in the region, we strive to deliver exceptional service to each and every one of our clients, from large national housebuilders to individuals buying and selling their own homes.

"It is very rewarding to see this work independently recognised by the Northern Law Awards, particularly since client service excellence is one of the key criteria for winning the award."

Ward Hadaway managing partner Jamie Martin won the award for outstanding achievement in recognition of his long-standing contribution to the legal profession in the North East and his integral role in the growth of Ward Hadaway, where he has been managing partner since 1998.

In the citation for his award, judges said: "Since he became managing partner, the firm's income has increased four-fold to £33m and the firm has more than doubled in size, with more than 450 people now based in Newcastle, Leeds and Manchester.

"Ward Hadaway has risen to be ranked in the top 75 law firms in the country and is recognised as a leading firm by the independent guides published by Legal 500 and Chambers.

"Jamie's drive and determination, combined with a clear strategic vision, have seen the firm expand from its North East base into the major legal centres of Leeds, in 2008, and Manchester in 2012.

"It is a significant achievement to have successfully entered these very competitive market places while still maintaining independence."

Judges also praised Jamie's contribution to business in the North East with roles at the CBI and the Institute of Directors and his work in the wider



➤ Ward Hadaway managing partner Jamie Martin is named as the winner of the Outstanding Achievement Award at the Northern Law Awards

community with a number of charitable organisations in the North East and as chairman of Newcastle College Group.

Jamie Martin said: "I am honoured to be the first recipient of this award.

"Ward Hadaway is a team effort and I am truly grateful for all the hard work and support from my partners and colleagues over many years, together with the support, loyalty and trust placed in us by the firm's clients.

"We could not have achieved what we have at Ward Hadaway without the support, commitment and loyalty of partners, staff and clients.

"These awards are a testament of the strength of the legal sector in the region, and the serious and important work that the legal sector does to help communities and the economy to thrive.

"Well done to all those who received awards and to those who were shortlisted."

Jeffrey Keeble, partner and head of healthcare at Ward Hadaway, and a long-standing colleague of Jamie Martin, said: "Jamie is a truly worthy winner of this award for his contribution to the legal profession, to business and to the wider community in the North East.

"However, knowing him I know that he will be most proud of the fact that Ward Hadaway has won two other awards for its work with and service to clients in the Northern Law Awards!"

Ward Hadaway is a team effort and I am truly grateful for my partners' and colleagues' support

Jamie Martin



➤ James Fairman of Ward Hadaway, centre, accepts the Trainee of the Year Award at the Northern Law Awards

A double success for Square One Law



➤ Square One Law picked up two awards at the inaugural Northern Law Awards

COMMERCIAL law firm Square One Law was delighted to pick up two awards at the inaugural Northern Law Awards.

The entrepreneurial firm, set up four years ago, was named a law firm of the year and corporate/commercial team of the year, and was the only firm in the region to be shortlisted for four awards – Firm of the Year, Corporate/Commercial Team of the Year, Property Team of the Year and Lawyer of the Year – property partner Barney Frith.

Managing partner Alan Fletcher said of the awards success: “We are absolutely delighted to come away with two Northern Law Awards as it

demonstrates how far we have come. Four years ago Ian Gilthorpe and I saw an opportunity to challenge the way legal services are delivered in the North East. However, we had no idea the firm would grow as fast and be supported by such high-quality clients and attract so many talented people.

“The firm has been involved in some very interesting projects regionally, nationally and internationally so the main people we have to thank are our clients for trusting us with their work. It has been a great advantage to be involved with clients such as Able, Shepherd Offshore, the Vardy Group, Utilitywise plc, Tharsus, Lanchester

Wines and national property developers Landid and Highbridge Properties. It is because of their support, and all our other clients, that we have grown so quickly.

“We recognise that these awards are for the whole Square One Law team because a main part of our differentiation is our service delivery and the energy we bring to projects across the whole of the firm.

“You can only do that with exceptional people.

“To be named firm of the year and corporate/commercial team of the year, after winning Insider Dealmakers Corporate Law Firm of the Year in 2014, is a huge achievement for the

firm and shows the impact we have had in such a short period of time.” Corporate partner James Bryce said: “The corporate/commercial team has successfully completed a large number of deals this year, both large, complex transactions and many smaller projects on behalf of our clients.

“We now have one of the largest corporate/commercial teams in the region and are working on some of the biggest profile deals such as the recent Utilitywise acquisition of t-mac technologies and the sale of Norchem to Lexon Pharmaceuticals.

“This award is fantastic recognition for the team and its hard work, and

the arrival of Neil Warwick and Dean Murray with their state aid, competition and public/private finance experience will add another dimension to the services we can offer clients.”

Sponsor Michael Smith of Tait Walker said: “This team has managed to grow substantially over the past four years and attract top lawyers thanks to its team-based approach, agility and strength of client feedback.”

Judge Jeff Dean, said: “We were really impressed by this firm’s fresh and enthusiastic approach.

“Square One Law has shown real client focus and has built a solid platform for future growth.”

SQUAREONELAW

Winners of Law Firm of the Year and Corporate/Commercial Team of the Year



WINNERS:

Square One Law
Law Firm of the Year
(6+Partners)

www.lawawards.co.uk



WINNERS:

Square One Law
Team of the Year
Corporate / Commercial

www.lawawards.co.uk



“It is important to have a strong and trusted team of professional advisers, that is why I use Square One Law”

Peter Stephenson



“What I like about Square One Law is not just the professionalism and range of services but the high energy they bring to each project.”

Geoff Thompson



“Square One Law has established itself as an innovative force in the region. I like the fact it is challenging the status quo”

Sir Peter Vardy

www.squareonelaw.com

Nurturing talent and competing nationally

INITIALY starting life as a four-partner firm, Durham-based Swinburne Maddison LLP now boasts 10 partners, seven of whom began their careers at the firm as articulated clerks or trainee solicitors.

That fact says a lot about the nature of the practice and its ethos of nurturing legal talent and promoting from within and explains its continued success.

Operating from modern, purpose-built offices on the outskirts of Durham, Swinburne Maddison benefits from a team made up of a wide and varied skill base and actively encourages staff, at all levels, to reach their

full potential. This was demonstrated recently when the practice supported two of its secretaries through their law degrees, legal practice courses and ILEX qualification.

With staff numbers set to increase this year, the high ratio of partners to staff enables the practice to provide an exceptional partner-led personal service where its aim is always to exceed clients' expectations.

Areas of expertise

Swinburne Maddison's team of specialists advise on all aspects of dispute resolution, commercial and corporate matters, residential and commercial property, employment

and family law, as well as private client-related issues.

With this wide-ranging spread of expertise, clients encompass private individuals and owner-managed businesses to national plc's, local authorities, university colleges and registered providers of social housing.

Philosophy

The firm is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for each and every client.

This philosophy has provided a solid platform for further development: for example, many clients are based outside the region, so employees are regularly able to fly the flag for the North East and its legal commu-

nity through prominent national roles on the Council of the National Law Society and the Admissions and Licensing Committee for ILEX Professional Standards.

Culture

While Swinburne Maddison has an emphasis on employing local people and providing extensive employee training, it is also committed to supporting the development and well-being of regional businesses and the local community.

To this end, each year the practice supports a wide range of community activities and charitable endeavours as well as major events such as Lumiere and the Book Festival, which attract a significant number of visitors

to Durham City. The firm currently sponsors Durham County cricketer Gavin Main.

Highlights 2014/15

Swinburne Maddison has:

- completed 16 school conversions to academy status for the Enquire Learning Trust;
- advised Ramside Estates on land disposal facilitating the creation of a second golf course, 47 new bedrooms and a luxury spa;
- acted for a number of regional bar and restaurant operators expanding their regional operations;
- created five new jobs;
- advised on the sale and acquisition of land for both private developers and registered social landlords which will see the creation of a large number of new homes;
- acted for Gibbons International, a North East-based global ship supply company, on its move to larger premises;
- acted for Rowlands Accountants on the acquisition of the entire issued share capital of The Alnwick Accountants Limited;
- acted for CCHL on its corporate restructure.

Growing on a national level

As the largest legal firm based exclusively in County Durham, Swinburne Maddison's growth is impressive in terms of clients, the complexity of instructions and the number of staff.

As the practice continues to grow it is successfully spreading the message that those practising law within the North East business community can more than compete with others on a national scale.



➤ Swinburne Maddison's Martyn Tennant won the Young Lawyer Award

swinburnemaddison^{LLP}

Legal solutions that fit

swinburne

We provide
legal solutions that
fit your business
needs exactly.

maddison

We have specialist legal teams providing services equipped to provide solutions that fit with your needs exactly. We take the time to understand your requirements and deliver a tailored and bespoke service.

Why not give us a call to see how we measure up.

0191 384 2441

swinburnemaddison.co.uk

Providing excellence through experience and innovation

BASED in Newcastle, but working across the UK and Europe, the team at Echo Events specialises in delivering, and producing, high-calibre events aimed at the corporate market, cultural sector and academic conferences.

This year sees Echo deliver the North East Accountancy Awards, the Northern Law Awards, Disney Institute's Leadership Excellence Workshop (in Covent Garden) the British Association of Critical Care Nurses' 30th Anniversary Conference in London and the Music Futures Conference at our very own Sage Gateshead.

In the right hands, an event is a powerful and engaging tool, whether the aim is to educate, celebrate, innovate, inform or connect people. Echo has a dedicated and experienced team with an impressive background in event management from international organisations.

Operations directors Claire Westgate and Dorothy Inverarity have organised more than 300 events between them ranging from exclusive high-level networking dinners to



> The Echo events team

international summits. Claire and Dorothy embody the Echo ethos of applying high-level skills acquired from working with top agencies in London and Brussels over a 10-year

period to deliver outstanding events closer to home.

Claire explained: "While living in London I worked for some of the largest B2B publishing houses in the

country and delivered a wide range of events in London and Europe. This was a fantastic learning curve and gave me the opportunity to work on a large scope of events across multiple industries.

"I'm now delighted to be working back in my home town of Newcastle and to be able to bring my experience to the Echo team. The North East is a hub of activity with some fantastic new venues opening, offering a host of opportunities for events in the city and surrounding areas."

The directors share a desire to use these skills to work with organisations in the region to stage world-class events showcasing the North East at its best. With this track record in delivering results on in-house and client events, this relatively new agency is expanding its portfolio and focusing on the future with some fantastic events in the pipeline for 2015 and 2016.

To read more about Echo's events, the team and how Echo could help you deliver key messages and engage with your audience, visit www.echoevents.org

The Echo team hosts the established North East Accountancy Awards which are now in their 10th year. Following the success of the Accountancy Awards, the Echo team was delighted to launch the Northern Law Awards this year to afford lawyers across the region the opportunity to showcase their success and range of talented teams and individuals.

The Echo Events team are already looking towards next year's Northern Law Awards and, following the fantastic response from firms across the region this year, are confident that 2016 will see the event extending its reach and impact by attracting an even greater number of firms, departments, teams and individuals who do valuable work across a range of specialisms and sectors, and whose efforts and achievements deserve to be celebrated.

■ If you are interested in getting involved in the 2016 Northern Law Awards by nominating, sponsoring or attending, contact the event office on 0191 241 4523 and keep an eye on the website for more information, visit www.lawawards.co.uk



Events Management

- Event logistics
- Onsite management
- Venue sourcing
- Sponsorship & exhibition sales
- Financial administration
- Delegate co-ordination
- Event marketing
- Website & design

Association Management

- Membership management
- Full secretarial services
- Legal support
- Financial management & accounts
- Marketing and communications
- Event management
- Meeting management
- Sponsorship

Organisers of the

Northern Law Awards
Showcasing Success 2015