



## here to help

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- Commercial & Agricultural
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- Employment
- Family Arbitration
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- Family Mediation
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- Personal Injury
- Residential Property
- Social Housing & Development
- Wills, Trusts, Tax Planning & Probate



From left, Wace Morgan director Keir Hirst, senior partner Jeremy Taylor and solicitor Clare Dalby.

## Support for Armed Forces is strengthened

**Wace Morgan has stepped up its support for the Armed Forces by launching a new service.**

The Wace Morgan Military Law Service is designed to strengthen the firm's links with service personnel and offer additional help and guidance to them.

The business has specialised in this sector of legal work for many years, being founder members of Forces Law, a national, independent network which provides a wide range of services to meet the legal needs of serving personnel and their families, as well as retired service men and women.

Keir Hirst, a director at Wace Morgan who is also currently secretary of Forces Law, said that the new Military Law Service would enhance the firm's work even further.

"We are excited about the launch of the new service. Military law is complex with its own rules and it is easy to come unstuck. There are very strict time limits to progress matters and we recommend that clients take early advice.

"We find that having a specialist knowledge of the unique legal issues raised in Armed Forces cases is a huge advantage and our new initiative will be more visible and accessible, reaching out to an even wider range of service people," Keir added, explaining that the service would have separate branding, a dedicated email and phone and a separate Twitter account.

Last year Wace Morgan signed the Armed Forces Covenant. This government initiative acts as a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly when receiving any public and commercial service.

A range of partners such as businesses, local authorities, charities and the public throughout the country were asked to sign a specially-drawn up document as a commitment to service people.

**For more information email [military@wmlaw.co.uk](mailto:military@wmlaw.co.uk), call 01743 280 123 or follow us on Twitter @WaceMilitary**



# Four new starters join the team.

**Our private client team has been strengthened with the recruitment of three new members of staff.**



Private Client Executive **Toni Mathieson** has been working in the legal industry since 2009, at several Shropshire firms. She has experience in residential conveyancing and private client work, starting her career as a legal assistant and going on to specialise in residential conveyancing and private client work.

"Private client law has always been my passion and I am really pleased to be working in a busy,

experienced team here at Wace Morgan," she said.

During her employment she has been studying with CILEx Law School in order to gain the qualifications to become a Chartered Legal Executive and has successfully completed her Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law and Practice in 2012 and was admitted as an associate member of CILEx five years ago.

Currently studying for her final professional diploma module, she hopes to qualify as a Chartered Legal Executive in 2019.



**Nicola Ward** first started working in the legal profession in 1990 as a trainee legal executive before going to university and then proceeding to qualify as a solicitor.

With her previous firms she divided her specialisation between conveyancing and private client departments but

now just works with private clients. She is studying for the STEP diploma in Trust and Estate Administration (England & Wales) and has so far passed half of the exams required to gain the qualification.



New secretary **Ann Thomas** has worked in solicitors' offices in North Wales and Shropshire for over 20 years as a legal secretary and legal assistant, gaining experience in a range of departments, including litigation, property, probate and family.

There has also been a new addition to our commercial department.



**Sarah Cussen** started off working in law firms about 25 years ago as a legal secretary in both Oxford and then Liverpool and has recently relocated to Shrewsbury to be nearer family. A former legal IT trainer for eight years, she has now come full circle - working once again as a legal secretary.



## Season's Greetings to all our clients and contacts



*The Directors and Partners from left: Fiona Barnes, Robert Adams, Sallie-Anne O'Byrne, Jeremy Taylor, Zara Oliver, Rory O'Byrne, Keir Hirst, Chris Detheridge and Diana Packwood*

**It is now more than two years since we moved to our St Mary's Street offices and during that time we have seen Wace Morgan successfully expand its services and teams.**

We have welcomed new lawyers and support staff into our various legal departments and have grown our client base.

We enjoy being part of the Shrewsbury town centre community and believe our clients benefit from having a centrally-based office.

Our support for local agricultural, artistic and charitable events and organisations in Shrewsbury and Mid Wales continues and we are already planning our programme of community involvement for next year.

The network infrastructure at our Newtown office is currently being updated and we will be installing a new phone system and IT equipment as part of our on-going IT and communications improvement programme.

And as you will have read on the front page, the firm's support for the Armed Forces has been strengthened with the launch of a new initiative.

**We wish all our clients and partner organisations a very Happy Christmas and send our warmest greetings for the New Year.**

**Diana Packwood**, Managing Director



# Family law expert warns unmarried couples

**Hundreds of unmarried couples in Shropshire and mid Wales are at risk of losing everything if their relationship breaks down, one of Wace Morgan's family law experts has warned.**



Robert Adams has called on such couples in the county to take action to protect themselves, as they could be financially vulnerable.

Solicitor and family arbitrator Mr Adams made the call as part of a national Cohabitation Awareness Week at the end of November.

The initiative, which aims to raise awareness about the lack of rights for unmarried couples who live together, was led by Resolution, the organisation campaigning for a fairer family justice system.

"There are about seven million people in the UK living in this type of relationship, making this the fastest growing family type," explained Robert.

He said that most couples he worked with mistakenly believed that they acquired 'common law' rights after living with their partner for a certain amount of time or having children together.

***"Unmarried couples have very limited legal rights"***

"The sad reality is that unmarried couples have very limited legal rights and responsibilities towards each other if the relationship breaks

down. I regularly meet people who have been affected in this way and because of the lack of legal safeguards. There are times when I simply can't help them.

***"You'll be in a much better situation if the unexpected happens"***

"This is why I urge all such couples to consider taking out basic protections, such as a cohabitation agreement to cover both partners if they separate and think about life insurance and making wills. By setting out your intentions in these documents, you'll be in a much better situation if the unexpected happens."

Resolution has made resources available to the public and local advice providers to help spread the word.

"It's likely the number of cohabiting couples will continue to grow in future and that more people will be affected by these issues so I would urge all couples to consider their legal situation," he said.

## Lawyers 'working to cut NHS litigation costs'

**A Wace Morgan solicitor who works with personal injury claimants in the county has responded to reports that the rising cost of litigation is threatening the financial health of the regional NHS trusts**



Clare Dalby says that her department is increasingly aware of the financial constraints placed on the trusts by claims.

A recent report by the National Audit Office said that the bill for clinical negligence had quadrupled in the last 10 years, reaching nearly £1.6bn last year, and is urging the government to do more to curb the costs.

"The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers is actively campaigning to reduce the impact of litigation on the NHS and is currently working with the Ministry of Justice to try and strike a careful balance between getting access to justice and access to health," said Clare, an accredited senior litigator with the APIL who has dealt with claims against the Shrewsbury & Telford NHS trust and others trusts.

"Acts of medical negligence are no different in their outcomes than a serious road traffic accident. They often cause life-changing injuries which have a devastating impact on the individual and their family.

"Nobody wants to victimise the NHS but equally if somebody has been affected by a negligent act then they should have the right to access financial recompense. Solicitors do not exist to punish the NHS they are simply out there to bring compensation to people who have suffered from clinical error," Clare said.



# From ghost walks to charity balls - help for the community continues

## We have had another busy year getting involved in community and charity activities.

Continuing our support for the local arts, we sponsored the **Mad Cow Productions'** performance of 'Present Laughter' in October at the Theatre Severn and will be providing backing for the group's next show, The Full Monty, next April.

We sponsored a table at the **Self Help Africa** Firecracker Ball in Telford this autumn and also funded the **Kids in the Community** 2017 Award' at a ceremony hosted by social housing landlord Fortis Living.

Staff enjoyed getting out and about meeting clients and members of the public at two popular local events – the **Minsterley Show** and **Cruckton Ploughing Match**.



Staff at the Minsterley Show: Receptionist Julie Rowlands, Solicitor Helen Alexander, Assistant Administrator Byron Kuitert, Managing Director Diana Packwood and Solicitor Rachel Wierzbinski.

And there was stiff competition in the office at the annual bake-off, when the winners were Susan Briggs and Heloise Jones.



Bake-off winners Heloise Jones (left) and Susan Briggs

Around £130 was raised by the cake sale which went towards the fund raising efforts of our social committee.

This year the committee has been collecting money for **Severn Hospice** and **Cystic Fibrosis Trust** and so far a total of £504 has been raised.

Other activities organised by the committee have included a spirit tasting evening at Majestic Wine and a summer 'bring and share' lunch.

In addition, a ghost walk around Shrewsbury was organised, with other 40 people coming along to hear about the town's spooky tales.

This raised £205 for the **Drapers Almshouse Charity**, thanks to Nigel and Bridget Hinton for volunteering their time.



From left: Licensed Conveyancer Karen Ashton, Trainee Solicitor Nathan Hinks, and Legal Secretary Ann Starr.

Festive knits brightened up the office in December when staff donned their Christmas sweaters in aid of two good causes.

At the beginning of the month we take part in the **Lingen Davies Cancer Fund** Jumper Day, collecting money for this Shropshire charity, and then the colourful creations come out again in support of the national **Save the Children** jumper, with staff paying £2 to 'make the world better with a sweater'.



Contact us to talk to some of our expert staff on these issues in 2018.

**Christmas hours...** We will be closed for the Christmas holidays from midday on Friday 22nd December 2017 and reopening at 9am on Tuesday 2nd January 2018. Our Trauma Line 07823 777 774 for domestic violence emergencies and our Bereavement Line 07875 665 689 will operate over the Christmas period.



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