

CIVIL LITIGATION CONFERENCE
THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026 – 12:30 – 17:15
QUEENS HOTEL, Meyrick Rd, East Cliff, Bournemouth BH1 3DL

12:30 – 12:45	Registration
12:45 – 13:30 45 minutes	Lunch
13:30 – 13:45 15 minutes	<p>WELCOME AND OUTLINE Conor Maher, Ellis Jones and BDLS</p> <p>Conor Maher is a Senior Associate Solicitor and Solicitor Advocate (Civil) at Ellis Jones and Honorary Treasurer of the BDLS who also acts as the Civil Litigation Lead for the Dispute Resolution Sub-Committee. Conor is also a qualified Civil and Commercial Mediator, registered with the Society of Mediators.</p> <p>Conor’s practice involves a range of civil and commercial matters representing both businesses and individuals, including dealing with high-value and complex litigation before the High Court, alongside regularly appearing in claims before the County Court.</p> <p>Conor was individually ranked as a ‘Leading Associate’ by Legal500 in 2024 and 2025 and noted for “<i>An exceptional reputation for advocacy in the County Courts</i>”, and being “<i>very knowledgeable on disputes</i>”. Conor was also individually ranked as an ‘Associate to Watch’ in Chambers & Partners 2025, with a “<i>broad range of expertise in litigation</i>”.</p> <p>Conor regularly delivers training on civil litigation and dispute resolution through MBL Seminars, LegalFutures, and is an Associate Lecturer in Dispute Resolution at Bournemouth University as part of the LLM course.</p> 
13:45 -14:30 45 minutes	<p>THE CARE AND FEEDING OF EXPERTS (OR HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR EXPERT) Greg Huitson-Little, Menzies LLP</p> <p>In this talk, Greg will give some thoughts on how to get the most out of your expert and how best to leverage the solicitor-expert relationship across the lifecycle of expert evidence. A quantum expert at heart, he’ll recognise the role that quantum experts play in pulling many threads together in the assessment of losses, but also touch on the different types of experts and expert evidence you might use. He’ll consider when to engage experts, the roles experts can play in the preliminary stages of a case, and the pros (or cons) of early engagement. He’ll provide some thoughts on how to work with experts as the case develops and moves towards expert evidence, the interplay between factual and expert evidence, and the need for constant communication between solicitors and experts. Finally, he’ll address the fears around joint expert meetings and joint statements, and the final steps preparing for the hearing and testimony.</p>

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	<p>In this talk, we will explore the legal background leading up to the current epidemic of ADR/NCDR, whilst also investigating various alternative and hybrid forms and processes which litigators can deploy for their clients. We will also look in detail at some key aspects of mediation (in particular, as the most common form of formal ADR/NCDR) and how litigators can best utilise that process for their clients.</p>
<p>16:15 – 17:15 1 hour</p>	<p>ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT: REFORM; CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS; JUDGES AND THE PROFESSIONS. FOLLOWED BY Q&A. His Honour Judge Ashby</p> <p>A host of continuing developments are changing the landscape of civil justice. Judges and lawyers no longer have to consider only changes in case law. We now face a constant stream of reforms, practical developments and the rise of artificial intelligence. HHJ Ashby will consider the benefits these can bring, but also the practical problems they can pose and how to resolve them. In doing so he will reflect on the symbiotic relationship between the professions and the bench, especially following the Harman Report. He will assess the expectations each should have of the other and how matters can be approached if things go wrong. He will be considering questions from practitioners (particularly those submitted in advance).</p> <p>His Honour Judge Ashby sits in the County Court at Central London at the Royal Courts of Justice, which is the trial venue for all multi-track cases in London. As such he hears a wide variety of civil claims including clinical negligence, personal injury, housing, land, trusts, contract, the Equality Act, claims against the police and appeals. Before that he was a District Judge in the County Court at Bournemouth and Poole where he co-ordinated the Court’s approach to civil justice under the leadership of the Designated Civil Judge. He was previously at the Bar where he specialised in serious and life changing personal injury claims and was consistently ranked in the legal directories.</p>
<p>17:15</p>	<p>Networking Drinks</p>

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