

**NEIL BERRAGAN | MANCHESTER,  
LEEDS & BIRMINGHAM**

Year of call: 1982

Qualifications: Pembroke College  
Oxford MA (Jurisprudence), Holt Award,  
Gray's Inn

Clerked by: Harry Young Gary Young

**AREAS OF EXPERTISE:**

Banking & Finance Civil Fraud  
Dispute Resolution Insolvency  
Sport

**Profile**

Neil practises in the specialist business courts (Mercantile, Chancery and TCC) in Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham. He also appears in the High Court in London (including the Companies Court, Commercial Court and TCC) and in the Court of Appeal.

His practice is focused on advocacy, both oral and written.

Neil is recognised as one of the leading juniors for commercial work in the North West, and he is regularly instructed against KCs.

Neil frequently acts on applications for interim relief, where his experience and understanding of the court process enables him to provide clients with practical and realistic advice, and to focus case preparation to the client's best advantage.

He has acted in a number of commercial arbitrations, domestic and international.

He has acted for a large number of major plc clients in the in substantial commercial disputes. He also has advised and acted in many substantial shareholder disputes, and other important company and insolvency matters.

Neil has advised and represented numerous solicitors and other professionals in partnership and LLP disputes.

**Year of Call:** 1982

**Areas of Expertise****Banking & Finance**

Neil has provided comprehensive advice on SWAPs mis-selling to a number of corporate clients, leading to successful claims against various banks.

He recently represented a group of Iranian customers who brought claims for race discrimination against high street banks. He represents banks and customers in loan disputes and recovery claims.

**Civil Fraud**

A significant part of Neil's practice involves applications for pre-emptive injunctions in fraud cases (freezing and search orders, restraining breaches of fiduciary duty, misuse of confidential information etc). Neil has a recognised ability to identify the crucial evidence, and advise accordingly. He is acknowledged as an effective cross-examiner of difficult witnesses, building on thorough trial preparation.

## Significant Reported Cases

***Ticket2Final OU v Wigan Athletic AFC*** [2015] EWHC 61b (Ch) LTL 2/2/2015. Successfully defended allegations of fraud in connection with a commercial sponsorship deal.

***Ecoco Ltd v Eco Installer Funding & others*** [2015] (Merc.) Obtained freezing injunctions for an installer of home insulation which had been conned into “banking its carbon” under the Green Deal / ECO scheme with a sham company.

***Anthony McGill v SEM Group & others*** [2014] EWHC 3000 (QB) (Merc.) Successfully defended a football club, executives and senior coaching staff against a football agent’s claim that he had been fraudulently ‘cut out’ of a transfer agreement.

***Kammac plc v Hancox*** [2013] (Ch), successfully defended a former factory manager against claims of fraud and theft

***UECL & Birwelco Ltd v Hirst & Guest*** (2013) successfully resisted a claim for £2M damages for deceit and fraudulent misrepresentation arising out of a share sale agreement, raising complex contractual, commercial and engineering issues.

***CVS v Cooper*** [2013], successfully defended claim to set aside a prior compromise allegedly obtained by fraud

***Shaw v API Group plc and Ferguson*** LTL 11/6/2008 (Merc.) Successfully defended the company against various claims claim including fraudulent misrepresentation by the unsuccessful bidder for the purchase of a subsidiary company

***DDT Trucks of North America Ltd v DDT Holdings Ltd*** (2007) Arbitration under AAA rules, defending allegations of fraudulent termination of an exclusive supply agreement

## Dispute Resolution

Neil is widely recognised as a leading junior for business disputes in the North West. As comments in the professional guides testify he is recognised for his ability to focus on the central issues, and to explain them to clients. He appears regularly in the specialist courts on interim applications and substantial trials, where he is recognised as a very effective cross-examiner.

## Significant Reported Cases

***Currie v Brooks*** [2015] (Merc.) Successful claim for damages for breach of a non-circumvention and confidentiality agreement by a property developer; issues of interpretation and application of the contract.

***Hanlon v Rayson and Quadrant Holdings Ltd*** [2015] (Ch) Successfully represented an investor recovering a loan from a borrower who had already repaid the company which acted as intermediary; issues of agency and the without prejudice rule.

***R (May) v CIMA*** [2013] EWHC 1574 (Admin), successful application to quash finding of professional misconduct arising out of a charge of misuse of confidential information. Led by Richard Clayton QC. We demonstrated that the information in question was not “confidential” contrary to the views of the disciplinary tribunal, and to the approach adopted by the client’s previous advisors.

***Smile Better Ltd v Travis Perkins*** [2012] (Merc), successful claim for breach of a series of marketing contracts

***Waste Tec v H.W. Martin Waste Ltd*** [2012] EWCA Civ 859, successful claim and appeal on behalf of waste management licensees; issues of construction of the contract

***Sayce v TNT*** [2011] EWCA Civ 1583, unsuccessful attempt to persuade CA to grant permission to appeal Copley v Lawn credit hire decision to SC, on issue of mitigation of damages

***Meridian Business Support v Jared and Kennedy*** [2010] (Merc), successful claim to enforce post-termination employment covenants, raising issues of enforceability

***Pirtek (UK) Ltd v Joinplace Ltd*** [2010] EWHC 1641 (Ch), successful claim against former franchisees, raising issues of enforceability

## Insolvency

Neil’s expertise and experience in civil fraud and commercial disputes mean that he is well-placed to advise and represent both IPs, directors and other in contentious insolvency claims, particularly involving ROT, recovery of assets, breaches of duty and fraud.

## Significant Reported Cases

***Powerhouse Golf Ltd*** Neil acted for administrators appointed by Sports Direct on an urgent application for an injunction to prevent the directors of Direct Golf Ltd from interfering with the administrator’s functions.

**Portland Commercial Bodies Ltd** acted for the directors who were sued by the liquidator for £500k in connection with a share buy back and alleged financial assistance

**Currie v Brooks** [2015] (Merc.) (see above). One issue at trial concerned the effect of the claimant’s bankruptcy on the claim, whether the claim became part of his bankruptcy estate, and the effect on a partnership.

**Templeton Insurance Ltd v Brunswick & Booth** [2012] EWHC 3319 (Ch), successfully defended personal claim against trustee in bankruptcy who had received tainted funds.

**Sport**

Neil has represented a number of football clubs in a variety of commercial disputes. He acted for a rugby league player caught up in a contract dispute between Leeds Rhinos and Bradford Bulls, and currently represents a group of former Spanish and Argentinian PL players in a large film scheme claim. Neil has chaired the AGM of the British Wrestling Association and is the current chair of the BWA Selection Appeals Committee.

**Significant Reported Cases**

**Ticket2Final OU v Wigan Athletic AFC** [2015] EWHC 61b (Ch) LTL 2/2/2015. Successfully defended the club against allegations of fraud in connection with a commercial sponsorship deal.

**Anthony McGill v SEM Group, Bolton Wanderers & others** [2014] EWHC 3000 (QB) (Merc.) Successfully defended the club, executives and senior coaching staff against a football agent’s claim that he had been fraudulently ‘cut out’ of a transfer agreement.

**Henning Berg v Blackburn Rovers** [2013] EWHC 1070 Ch, unsuccessful attempt to withdraw admission of liability for manager’s severance pay made by the club’s managing director without authority of club owners – praised by judge for brave attempt to argue the impossible.

**Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police v Wigan Athletic AFC** [2009] 1 WLR 1580 (CA), defining rights of police to charge for policing football matches.

**Memberships**

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Northern Circuit Commercial Bar Association (NCCBA)

Northern Chancery Bar Association (NChBA)

Chancery Bar Association (ChBA)

Professional Negligence Bar Association (PNBA)

**Qualifications**

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Pembroke College Oxford MA (Jurisprudence)

Holt Award, Gray’s Inn

**Recommendations**

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**Chambers UK 2023**

- "He is punchy and precise."
- "Neil is respected by the judiciary and trusted by instructing solicitors and clients alike."
- "Neil is experienced and offers detailed written advice. He is commercial in his approach."
- "Neil is a really good technical lawyer who understands the relevant commercial issues to the case."

**Legal 500 2023**

- "Neil is a tenacious and persuasive advocate. A master of his papers and able to debate points of law authoritatively and precisely. Judges respect him and clients appreciate his forthright advice and realistic appraisal of the commercial position."
- "Neil brings with him to any matter a sense of calm and thoughtfulness. He is always integral to any legal team with regard to a particular legal matter and seamlessly dovetails with the clients to form a very strong working relationship. He is very good on paper and is a tenacious advocate."
- "Neil excels in high pressure situations. He is a calm and collected presence and always happy to make himself available at short notice. In Court, he is a thorough and assured advocate."

## **Chambers UK 2022**

"Neil Berragan is an experienced trial advocate who is a good cross-examiner and fights his corner." "He is a barrister of choice for high-value matters."

"He is very good with clients, very methodical and a details advocate - very good on the papers too." "We only use Neil for complex, high-value work: he is very impressive, has gravitas and is a heavyweight barrister."

"He is very good with clients, very methodical and a details advocate - very good on the papers too."

## **Legal 500 2022**

"Superb advocate; always master of the law and papers; his gravitas and experience is hugely reassuring for clients. "

"Neil is keen, sharp and perceptive. He is a thorough advocate and assiduous in the preparation of paperwork and meeting deadlines. He is able to integrate within a litigation team and has excellent client handling skills."

"Neil is excellent, particularly in client conference and on his feet. His advice and advocacy is compelling. He sees the 360 picture always."

## **Chambers UK 2021**

"Neil has been there, seen it, done it. He is a very calm advocate - he doesn't waste his words and he really commands the ear of the court." "You know the advice he's giving you is spot on."

"He is excellent. A very polished and persuasive advocate."

"He has a broad practice and is a strong opponent who always put his points forcefully."

"He puts you at ease and has a great presence in court."

"He is unbelievably good on his feet and is academically fantastic." "His advice is always technically sound and he has an eye on the commercial realities for his clients." "He is an excellent advocate and his calm manner disguises a steely desire to secure the appropriate result for his client."

## **Legal 500, 2020**

"Neil is first rate and my go to junior counsel in Manchester. He is academically brilliant, good with clients and his advice is straight to the point. He is superb on his feet with no weaknesses."

"Completely unflappable and has the respect of judges."

"Neil is able to quickly grasp the relevant details in an instruction and takes a direct approach to where necessary with clients."

"Incisive and detailed; excellent in court and well respected on the circuit; a QC in all but name."

"An excellent senior-junior and first-rate advocate."

## **Chambers UK 2020**

"Analytical and technical with excellent communication skills. He is able to provide advice directed towards a commercial solution." "He's down to earth, robust in his advice and pragmatic."

"He provides commercial advice and has excellent communication skills." "He is first rate – a brilliant advocate."

"Neil Berragan is a very experienced senior junior and a formidable opponent."

"He is a very good advocate and a very keen operator." "He has got an air of authority that shows his experience in high-level cases."

"He is very thorough, unflappable and measured. He is always calm and nothing gets past him." "He's wonderful to work with and handles clients very well." "A forceful advocate and fantastic in conference."

A "highly professional" barrister who "appears in numerous significant cases."

## **Chambers UK 2019**

"He's really bright, very smart and very responsive." "He presents very well, he's unruffled and works well under pressure." "He's a very tenacious advocate – very good and very forceful in court."

"He is a fantastic advocate with an extremely compelling and persuasive manner about him. He is very good in conference with clients and is able to cut through the detail and focus client's minds on the important issues." "He knows the judiciary very well and has a good sense of how things will play out."

"He is thorough and unfazed by what is going on around him in litigation and sticks to the point. He is experienced and has the sort of gravitas that shows he is comfortable with the subject matter."

"He is a safe pair of hands and someone you can rely on."

"Really smart and will get in there and fight for you."

"He is supremely bright, his paperwork is excellent and he is user-friendly."

## **Legal 500 2019**

"He has a good bedside manner with clients."

## **Chambers UK 2018**

"Neil is very able and an excellent advocate." "A tenacious and polished advocate."

"He has a sharp intelligent mind and a calm approach. He is robust and reliable." "He is thorough, detailed and very bright."

"An extremely able junior and a very clear advocate; judges rate him." "A phenomenal knowledge of this area of law and very adept at getting to the heart of the matter quickly."

"He's sound, a good lawyer and a good all-round barrister."

"Neil's ability to pick up matters quickly and to present our client's case very effectively played a crucial part in securing the desired outcome."

"He has extensive experience and is very well connected in the regulatory side of sport."

## **Legal 500 2018**

"Intelligent, perceptive and determined."

## **Chambers UK 2017**

"Realistic and commercial, and quickly gains the trust of clients." "Provides knowledgeable, solid and pragmatic advice."

"His court work is just fantastic - he's really great on his feet." "He is excellent, a very solid advocate and very good with clients." "A tough litigator who is very strong on all commercial disputes."

"He is a fantastic advocate: he is someone who will take a case and grab it by the neck." "A highly regarded barrister who is always very well prepared."

## **Legal 500 2017**

"A hugely experienced advocate; there is nothing he has not seen."

