

*'I don't expect a dramatic recovery in property-related activity'*



**Peter Walsh  
Orpen Franks**

Peter Walsh (37) joined Orpen Franks in 1999 and was elected Managing Partner in March 2009. He acts for corporates and financial institutions in various projects and now increasingly in restructuring, enforcement and insolvency. Recent high-profile matters involving the firm include acting for the liquidator of the Piers Group and the examinership of the

Pilot Training College in Waterford. "We are particularly pleased with the success in the Commercial Court action in the area of pyrite damage, where we acted for James Elliott Construction against stone supplier, Irish Asphalt," says Walsh.

Walsh adds that commercial litigation and insolvency, coupled with general commercial activity dealing with contracts and procurement, are resilient. "It is these areas of practice we will be looking to grow. With litigation, it is a question of managing the cashflow and timing of payments. Conveyancing is still very quiet, and though there was an upturn in the residential market at the end of 2012, I certainly don't expect a dramatic recovery in the property-related activity. In the debt recovery and insolvency arenas, we have become very active for financial institutions, insolvency practitioners and individual borrowers."

What attracts clients to Orpen Franks? "Capacity, responsiveness, accessibility, results and value," is Walsh's response, adding that the firm has recruited three solicitors in the past year. "We have a good record of retention and development of quality professional staff coming from the trainee programme through to partner level," he adds.

*'We are better at understanding the needs of our commercial clients'*

**Joanne Griffin  
Kilroys**

In January 2013, Joanne Griffin took over from Eamon Jones as Managing Partner of Kilroys, a law firm that has been in business for nearly 60 years. Griffin was a lecturer until 1996 when she joined Kilroys as a trainee. She qualified as a solicitor in 1999 and was appointed partner in 2003. Griffin has extensive expertise of dealing with company restructurings, amalgamations and mergers and the structures and taxation issues arising in connection with such transactions.

Kilroys also advises company directors being pursued by the ODCE, and counsels clients in proceedings involving liquidators, receivers and examiners. "Commercial litigation has been very strong in the past 12 months, though we see this area slowing in terms of new instructions," says Griffin. "We have seen an increase in commercial instructions work in the insurance, retail and financial sectors."

Griffin says that one of Kilroys' key selling points is the availability of partners to deal with client matters on a day-to-day basis. "We are primarily a partner driven firm and this is what many corporate clients look for," she explains. "It means that we are better at understanding the needs of our commercial clients and we can identify closely with management requirements



in our client companies."

In Griffin's opinion, credit in the economy is extremely tight. "Cash is king and transactions that are happening involve international clients and are funded with cash resources primarily and with little leverage. In the final quarter of 2012 there was a realisation that an indefinite hold cannot be put on commercial transaction work, restructurings and acquisitions. There is a more upbeat, can-do attitude in terms of clients making decisions. Legal costs budgets, whilst still very tight, recognise the benefits of timely and proportionate legal advices."

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*'We are seeing more activity on the lending side'*

**Sean Twomey  
Eugene F Collins**

Managing Partner Sean Twomey joined Eugene F Collins as a result of a merger with George D Fottrell and Sons in 2003. Twomey and David Cantrell, EFC's boss at the time, were the driving forces behind the merger and Twomey succeeded Cantrell in 2009. He says his role spans formulating the firm's strategy, developing the business and maintaining close links with many of the firm's most important clients.

Twomey specialises in banking and commercial property and he has extensive experience in commercial property lending and acts for all major lending institutions. He also advises on lending restructurings and enforcement of securities, as well as the property aspects of mergers and acquisitions and of joint venture transactions.

Eugene F Collins is celebrating its 120th year in business in 2013 and its Managing Partner is happy to talk up the reasons for

the firm's longevity. "Our firm has a long and established history of giving first-rate legal advice and exceptional client service," says Twomey. "We know that our knowledge, coupled with our ability to provide relevant business-centric legal solutions, will help our clients to continue to succeed in their business. We have striven to attract and retain leading legal talent and the reputation of our partners reflects the expertise and professionalism of a long-standing firm."

Twomey says the firm has seen an increase in corporate activity. "Our capital markets team has been busy, giving advises to the likes of Johnson and Johnson, IBRC and Bord Gais. Our banking team is busy too; we are seeing more activity on the lending side and there are a number of restructurings going on. We continue to work with all the major banks, Nama and the leading insolvency practitioners. Our media lawyers have also dealt with a number of high-profile defamation cases."



*Survey continued on page 74*

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*'Today's client is a more discerning customer'*



**Brian Gill**  
**Callan Tansey**  
 Callan Tansey is the largest law firm in Connacht, employing 55 people at its offices in Sligo and Boyle. Brian Gill (40) has been Managing Partner since October 2011 and he believes that law firms have to

re-evaluate the traditional business model that sustained them in times gone by. "Today's client is a more discerning customer and law firms must adapt or face the consequences," he says.

Gill adds that 2012 was challenging for the firm. "Thankfully our activity and instruction levels have held up, particularly in litigation. The early signs in 2013 are good. There is an increase in corporate advisory work as SMEs face the challenges of the depressed economic climate."

Gill describes Callan Tansey as the 'go to' law firm for both private and corporate clients in the North West and Connacht. "We promote a high-performance culture amongst our staff which is dedicated to securing excellent value for money outcomes for all our clients," he explains.

"We have implemented a staff performance programme which involves a unique 360-degree peer-review process, critiqued by international consultants. Given the increasing importance of risk management in the legal services sector, we were delighted to secure the Q6000 Gold Standard accreditation for risk management from the Irish Institute of Legal Standards & Research."

*'Many of our clients have weathered the downturn in good shape'*

**John C. O'Connor**  
**O'Connor Solicitors**

Does having a good legal firm strengthen a company's chances of surviving a recession? Yes it does, according to John C. O'Connor, Managing Partner of O'Connor Solicitors in central Dublin. "Our business clients value the quality of service and cost effectiveness of the practice," he says. "We seek to develop a close working relationship with all of our clients, together with a detailed understanding of their businesses. This leads to a progressive and efficient method of dealing with legal issues that arise. Many of these clients have weathered the economic downturn in good shape and we would like to think these factors are all connected."

O'Connor's areas of expertise include regulatory law and he advises a number of governing bodies, trade unions and charities. "The firm has continued to perform strongly in the healthcare and regulatory areas," says O'Connor. "Employment law and commercial leasing have been particularly busy and we have also seen additional work in the charity sector in anticipation of the full implementation of the Charities Act."

O'Connor believes that some economic green shoots are starting to emerge. "Landlords are now becoming more realistic about rental income,



realising the danger of having property vacant for long periods. Therefore businesses are in a position to move, expand and develop and are no longer as constrained by high rents. We are also starting to see the first signs of improved credit conditions for SMEs and increased volumes of lending to individuals in connection with residential purchasing."

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*'Enforcement and insolvency work continue to be busy'*

**David Phelan**  
**Hayes Solicitors**

David Phelan (38) became Managing Partner of Hayes Solicitors in May 2011. He heads up the firm's commercial law team and has specific expertise relating to the manufacturing and retail sectors. He also advises on regulatory matters and has represented numerous businesses and individuals in Competition Authority

investigations and criminal prosecutions. Phelan also advises on intellectual property issues.

Hayes recently represented PTSB Finance in the sale of an assorted loan portfolio to a European bank and the establishment of First Citizen Finance. "There are encouraging signs of M&A activity increasing over the last six months or so, which hopefully is one sign of a recovery in business activity," says Phelan. "Enforcement and insolvency work continue to be busy, which has been a trend over the last few years."

According to Phelan, Hayes focuses on achieving pragmatic solutions for clients in a way that gives them value for money. "We are conscious that all businesses need to keep their legal spend to a minimum and we provide service to our clients on that basis," he explains. "We have continued to grow our numbers in a measured way so as to meet the needs of existing clients and a number of new clients won over the course of the year."

*'The level of M&A activity in the past year was surprising'*

**Orlaith O'Brien**  
**McEvoy Partners**

Orlaith O'Brien (41) is a founding partner of McEvoy Partners and is Managing Partner. She has guided a number of Irish and UK companies through the AIM listing process and she works with these clients on their fundraisings, acquisitions and disposals. The boutique practice is a regular award winner from legal journals for its M&A counsel and the firm is also active in commercial property, corporate restructuring and litigation.

According to O'Brien: "The level of M&A activity in the past year was surprising, given that the ability to obtain bank funding remains difficult. We have been engaged in quite a number of corporate restructurings and in M&A transactions, and also in advising private equity and venture capital investors in relation to various investments. Of particular note, we advised Mater Private Hospital in a joint venture arrangement in the opening of a new private hospital in Cork."

O'Brien says her firm takes a team-based approach to problem solving and legal advice. "The partners work



closely with the other solicitors within the firm in a cost-effective team environment," she says. "As many of our solicitors previously worked in large corporate firms, we provide the expertise and professionalism of a large corporate law firm combined with the personal service and flexibility associated with a smaller boutique firm."

She adds: "The firm's ability to deliver practical commercial advice and results within deadlines, and its dedication and personal service to clients, has ensured client loyalty and attracted a steady stream of new commercial clients."

*Survey continued on page 76*



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*'There has been an increase in property transactions'*



**Cómhnall Tuohy Kane Tuohy**

Cómhnall Tuohy (42) was appointed Managing Partner of Kane Tuohy on the founding of the firm in February 2009. He specialises in commercial litigation, large-scale debt recovery,

enforcement of security and employment law, for which he has a proven reputation.

Tuohy says the firm has benefited from increased activity in its insolvency, corporate restructuring, litigation, property and banking departments, resulting in new hires. "There has also been a notable demand for advice in commercial transactions and agreements, and in the handling of debt, both from the perspective of the creditor and the debtor," says Tuohy.

"There has been a significant increase in activity in property transactions, mostly due to distressed property sales. There has been an increase too in instructions in private residential property sales and purchases, along with an increase in landlord and tenant work, particularly in the food sector."

In Tuohy's view, there has been no noticeable improvement in credit conditions in the economy, apart from the agricultural sector and loan restructuring. "The economy is still adjusting and each sector is different in terms of bottoming out."

*'I have been surprised at the level of M&A activity'*

**Neil Keenan LKG Ballagh**

LKG Ballagh was created in 2012 by the merger of Lavery Kirby Gilmartin with partners in KMB Solicitors. The firm is led by Managing Partner James Flynn while Neil Keenan is its Head of Corporate and Commercial and is the public face of the firm. "The merger has resulted in us being able to develop a number of specialist practice groups within the firm," says Keenan.

LKG Ballagh's clients include Eddie O'Connor's Mainstream Renewable Power and Keenan advised on that company's raising of around €60m from Macquaire Capital in 2012. "This was a complex transaction and one that we were delighted to have been involved with," says Keenan. "The firm also acted in a number of substantial equity fundraising transactions by companies who have developed alternative energy technologies, including Endeco and Aer Bio. We also acted for the AIB Seed Capital Fund and the Western Development Commission on a range of equity investments and disposals."

Keenan adds: "We have found the past year particularly busy in corporate transactions. I have been surprised at the level of M&A activity, particularly disposals of Irish businesses to foreign investors. There are a lot of good early stage



businesses raising funds at the seed and early stage capital stage and a number of VCs who are active at this level."

In Keenan's view, there is an increased need in the Irish market for boutique commercial firms who are entrepreneurial and business focused. "We believe there are very few firms such as ours who have a track record in handling large and complex corporate transactions, as well as banking and finance and large litigation cases, without the overhead and additional cost that goes with a large commercial firm.

"I would like to see more state and bank work being spread beyond the large city centre firms, as there are many firms throughout the country who can offer an expert and efficient service without the seemingly extraordinary costs that some of the larger firms seem to be charging to some of the state agencies."

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*'There has been a sharp increase in professional indemnity claims'*

**Katie da Gama**  
**DAC Beachcroft**

International law firm DAC Beachcroft set up a Dublin office five years ago, headed by senior partner Katie da Gama. Globally DAC has around 2,500 lawyers and support staff and the expansion into Dublin was prompted by demand from London market insurers for the establishment of an Irish firm that would provide a continuity of service. The firm specialises in insurance law, professional indemnity claims, injury matters, healthcare and clinical risk, commercial litigation and employment law.

"There has been a sharp increase in professional indemnity claims during the past year," says da Gama. "These have

been focused on both the solicitors' and construction professionals' arena. The volume of commercial litigation has increased and a key theme is claims against financial institutions and/or financial advisors connected with the alleged mis-selling of financial products and investments."

In the past year, DAC Beachcroft has recruited 13 people to bring the staff total in the Dublin office to 39. "We have expanded into two new areas of practice, namely injury risk fraud and employment law," says da Gama. "We are a truly specialist, global firm and we put our clients at the centre of everything we do. We also offer innovative and flexible pricing models."



*'The economy has just about touched bottom'*

**Daniel Hughes**  
**Hughes & Associates**

Most solicitors in Ireland are self-employed and Daniel Hughes of Hughes & Associates has just been shortlisted for the 'Sole



Practitioner of the Year' award at the Danske Bank Irish Law Awards 2013. Hughes has developed a strong litigation practice and he says there has been a significant increase in the advices being sought by directors in their personal capacity.

"Our practice provides comprehensive legal advice on a par with larger firms but with significantly reduced fees," says Hughes. "We have recently relocated to new offices on Eustace Street in Dublin 2. We have implemented a new IT system with cloud computing, and we anticipate a significant growth in our practice in the next 18 months and a requirement for further personnel."

Hughes believes that the economy has just about touched bottom. "I am starting to see an appetite by clients to develop new startup businesses and there has been more positivity among clients in the last six months."

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# *To what extent have credit conditions improved and has the Irish economy bottomed out?*

**Andrew Doyle** (Maples and Calder):

There are signals from our market which would draw us to the conclusion that there are positive times ahead for Ireland's economy:

- Increasing interest in Irish corporates from overseas financial investors.
- Increased availability of credit, development and turnaround capital with the investments being made by the NPRF in funds managed by BlueBay, Better Capital and Carlyle. This could have a very significant effect on the transactional landscape.
- An increase in corporate confidence in line with recovery in equity capital markets.
- Ireland continues to punch well above its weight in attracting inward investment.

We are seeing some increase in loan origination and in new money refinancings to existing clients. Obviously the banks are being prudent in relation to some existing clients in restructuring debt appropriately to the reality of the situation. We are also seeing some fresh credit being provided by Nama/IBRC in appropriate circumstances.

**Neil Keenan** (LKG Ballagh): All the indications are that the economy has touched bottom and that a slow

improvement has started. There has definitely been an increase in business startups and corporate activity, in inward investment and even in property activity in certain areas. The macro indicators such as the slight rise in house prices in Dublin, the stabilisation in the unemployment numbers and the limited return to the bond markets are all positive.

I am finding that there has only been a very limited improvement in credit conditions. The SME sector to which I have a substantial exposure through my presidency of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber of Commerce is still struggling to get credit. Our clients are also finding that decisions by banks are slow and the terms of facilities difficult to negotiate, and that lenders are slow to agree deals that are quite obviously in the best interests of the borrower and the bank. However, there does appear to be an increased appetite to provide credit to certain sectors, such as the renewable energy sector.

**John White** (Beauchamps): Credit conditions for businesses, particularly SMEs, continue to be very tough. There is no real sense of banks lending any more than they did this time last year, or indeed credit conditions easing. More

trust and increased credit has returned to trading arrangements between corporates because the weaker players in many industries have gone into receivership or liquidation. Banks are now more willing to facilitate restructuring plans and this is an encouraging sign.

Demand is certainly increasing for centrally located commercial property space and Beauchamps has seen the number of international referrals double in the last year. This is a strong indication that outside the country, at least, the bottom is being called.

**Catherine Guy** (ByrneWallace): The retail sector is currently under significant pressure. Many multiunit retailers are having difficulties in negotiating more manageable lease terms and rental payments with landlords. Other sectors that are also in difficulty include services and construction. Five of the top ten construction companies have become insolvent since 2007 and that has resulted in a significant knock-on effect on suppliers and subcontractors. However, activity levels on the transactional side have been creeping up over the last six months and we are very confident that this acceleration will continue.

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Partners pictured from left to right:

**James Flynn** Head of Private Client,  
**David Ballagh** Head of Commercial Property,  
**Agatha Taylor** Head of Litigation,  
**Neil Keenan** Head of Corporate and Commercial.



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**Brian Gill** (Callan Tansey): Overall, the credit squeeze remains tight for corporate clients. Over the last two years the government's focus has been on improving its own credit lines to the outside world. The focus now needs to shift to the domestic market and a more robust approach needs to be adopted with the banks regarding the flow of credit to business. Consumer confidence has not yet improved, hampered no doubt by the scourges of high unemployment and high personal debt. The impact of the public sector pay talks will also play a key role in shaping the economic landscape during this coming year.

**Mark Thorne** (Dillon Eustace): Credit conditions for our clients have improved significantly. Over the last year we have seen additional credit available from Irish and non-Irish banks, and indeed non-bank lenders, particularly in the area of healthcare and nursing home development. We have also seen a number of international banks looking to finance acquisitions of distressed commercial property-backed loan portfolios, and again we see this to be a very positive sign.

**Sean Twomey** (Eugene F Collins): We are seeing a number of restructurings taking place. This would involve refinancing and this seems to be available. The credit conditions would not be as favourable as before, as the banks are looking for higher margins, but credit is slowly coming back to the

## 'Clients are looking forward rather than standing still'

market. I think Ireland's economy has reached the bottom. All the economic indicators are heading the right way. We still have a lot of work and adjustment to do but there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel.

**Alan Murphy** (Eversheds): We believe the austerity measures have helped to restore international confidence in the Irish economy. The perception of Ireland abroad is very positive and international clients respect the efforts Ireland is making in dealing with its problems. There is definitely a perception internationally that Ireland is starting to recover and is the standout achieving economy among the bailout countries. Lending conditions remain tight, though we are seeing movement in credit facilities by lending institutions to trading companies in food, manufacturing and technology sectors. Other forms of investment, such as private equity, funds and private investors, are taking precedent.

**Michael Lavelle** (Lavelle Coleman): Credit conditions have shown some improvement. In the past year, we have seen an increase in property purchases and there is evidence of more stability. Clients seem to be more likely to look at business and investment opportunities. There are fewer job losses, less instructions in redundancy related employment issues and evidence of some clients creating jobs. Clients are looking forward rather than standing still. Ireland remains a destination of choice for foreign investors and Ireland Inc is still very much open for business. Lavelle Coleman is seeing increased activity in the technology sector in particular and is advising companies on establishing businesses in Ireland.

**David Phelan** (Hayes Solicitors): Based on what we hear from clients, credit conditions haven't significantly improved over the past year and good, strong businesses continue to have difficulty in having the banks engage with them as they would want. However, there definitely seems to be more of a feeling of optimism now that we have turned a corner than any other time over the last couple of years. The strong retail sector performance in December, an upturn in levels of merger and acquisition activity and increasing activity (and in some cases values) in the residential property market all appear encouraging.

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**Hugh Garvey** (LK Shields): The fact that Ireland is once more seen as a location in which there is value to be had is a very welcome development. That perception, combined with an environment where there is less uncertainty internationally, has led to greater levels of commercial activity and a greater sense of optimism. However, it is no secret that the domestic economy remains challenging. Conditions for the availability of credit have improved for those (often foreign-based) seeking to invest in the Irish economy compared with credit availability for those conducting business in the economy.

**Emer Gilvarry** (Mason Hayes & Curran): There is greater confidence in Ireland at the moment. Conditions seem to have stabilised and businesses can plan more efficiently. We are unlikely to see hockey stick growth in the near future but many organisations are just happy to have stability. The international perception is very different to the local view, as Ireland is seen as a land of opportunity at the moment by global investors. Ireland still has the same great benefits of an educated work force, good corporate tax rate and strong business culture, but now has a reduced cost base, which makes it extremely attractive for investment. Investors are seeing real value now in Irish assets and recent sales such as the Gasworks building and Bank of Ireland HQ demonstrate that people are willing to invest if the price is right.

## 'The international perception is very different to the local view'

**John Cronin** (McCann FitzGerald): For small companies and businesses it continues to be difficult to raise finance. For large PLCs the refinancing of facilities is difficult but such deals are being completed. For such PLCs and certain state/semi-state organisations the US private placement market is open.

**Orlaith O'Brien** (McEvoy Partners): The ability to obtain credit remains difficult for our clients and we haven't seen any major change over the last year. One would think that there is a lot of good value to be had for property investors but we haven't really seen too many foreign investors coming in to snap up bargains. Perhaps there is a perception among such investors that even a modest rise in interest rates could have a material impact on borrowers' ability to cope. In such circumstances, property prices could drop even further. Having said that, there are some positive signs.

**Peter Walsh** (Orpen Franks): Our traditional industries of food and tourism show great potential for growth

and I believe producers and providers in this area are becoming very attuned to this. Recent concerns over food safety and provenance heightens the importance of this area and creates opportunity for native producers. Transactional activity in the non-property arena is okay but it is primarily operating in circumstances where there are no funding requirements from domestic banks. I would not be planning our own business around the likelihood of an increase in transactional activity.

**Myra Garrett** (William Fry): There are welcome signs that the Irish economy has turned a corner with employment and house prices stabilising and Irish medium-term bond yields rallying from over 8% in early 2012 to under 4% currently. The inroads made by the government in restructuring our sovereign debt repayments are very positive and the international community has been impressed by the Irish reaction to the crisis. There is definite increase in transactional activity as well as more interest from international investors in Irish property assets and in acquisitions of Irish corporates.

There has been a steady increase in the provision of new or refinanced credit facilities for cash-generative corporate business. We have seen both Irish pillar banks, AIB and Bank of Ireland, as well as foreign banks such as Barclays and Rabobank providing finance facilities, including acquisition finance.

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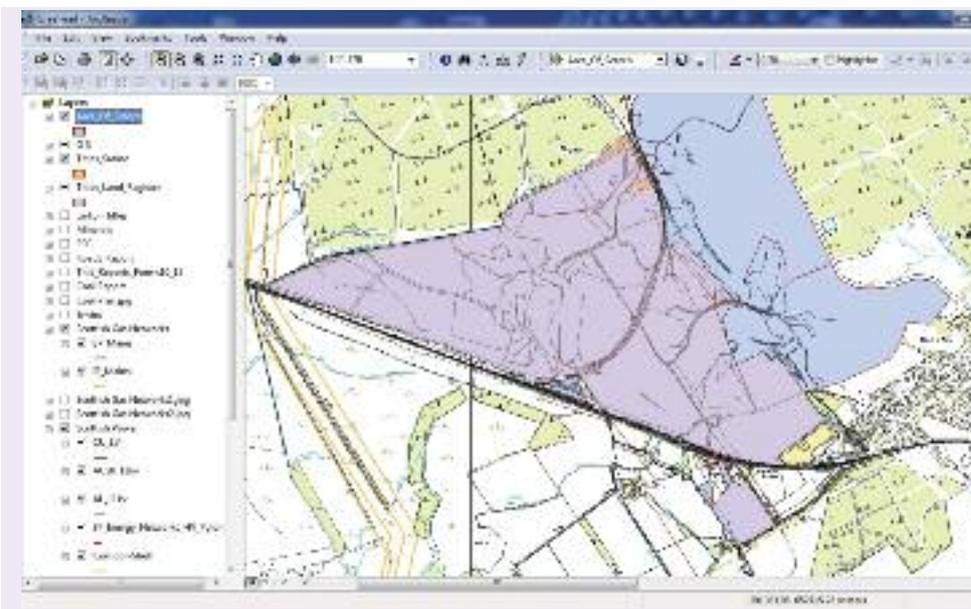
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# Law Firms Who's Who

## Arthur Cox

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**Partners/Solicitors: 232**

**Managing Partner: Brian O'Gorman**

Arthur Cox is all-island firm, with offices in Dublin and Belfast. The firm also has offices in London, New York and Silicon Valley.



**Ciarán Bolger is taking over from Eugene McCague as chairman of Arthur Cox this May**

Recent awards include Legal Adviser of the Year for Ireland 2012, for the sixth consecutive year (FT/Mergermarket), and Republic of Ireland Law Firm of the Year 2012 at the Lawyer European Awards. In 2012, Arthur Cox established a presence in Silicon Valley. The firm recently announced that Ciarán Bolger has been appointed chairman with effect from 1 May. He succeeds Eugene McCague, who returns to full-time client work having served for two terms as chairman.

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[www.matheson.com](http://www.matheson.com)

**Partners/Solicitors: 231**

**Managing Partner: Liam Quirke**

Matheson has offices in Dublin, London, New York and Palo Alto. The primary focus of Matheson is to serve the Irish legal needs of international companies and financial institutions doing business in and through Ireland. Clients include 27 of the world's 50 largest

banks and more than half of the Fortune 100 companies. The firm is headquartered in Dublin and also has offices in London, New York and Palo Alto. It recently won the 'Client Choice' award for Ireland 2013, International Law Office, for the seventh time. Matheson was the first law firm to be recognised as one of the '50 Best Workplaces in Ireland'.

## A&L Goodbody

[www.algoodbody.com](http://www.algoodbody.com)

**Partners/Solicitors: 222**

**Managing Partner: Julian Yarr**

Headquartered in Dublin, with offices in Belfast, London, New York and Palo Alto, A&L Goodbody has a total staff of 580. The firm advises domestic and global corporations, financial institutions, intermediaries and government. The focus on the international market is evident by the level of instructions from a number of jurisdictions across the globe. In 2012 the firm was awarded Irish

Law Firm of the Year (Chambers Europe); No.1 Irish M&A Law Firm (Mergermarket, Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters) and it is the only Irish law firm to be ranked in Tier 1 in all practice areas by the International Financial Law Review. Nine new partners were announced by the firm in the past 12 months.

## McCann FitzGerald

[www.mccannfitzgerald.ie](http://www.mccannfitzgerald.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 197**

**Chairman: John Cronin**

McCann FitzGerald's recent awards include Law Firm of the Year 2012 (International Financial Law Review); Ireland Client Service Law Firm of the Year 2012 (Chambers Europe); and Ireland's Most Innovative Law Firm 2012 (FT Innovative European Lawyers report). Notable deals involving the firm over the past year include Pepper Home Loans acquisition of GE Money's Irish mortgage business; joint venture between

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Vodafone Ireland and Three Ireland; Petroceltic's merger with Melrose Resources; separation of Shannon Airport from the Dublin Airport Authority; €1.1bn bond issue by ESB; examinership of eircom; and acquisition of Cooper Industries by New Eaton Ltd.

The firm has funded the new position of McCann FitzGerald Chair of Corporate Law at Trinity College Dublin. "This reflects our commitment to the culture of learning and continuous improvement," says Chairman John Cronin. McCanns also funds early learning and legal aid programmes in the Docklands area where it is based. Inside the firm, five new partners were appointed while all 48 new qualifiers have been retained.

**William Fry**

[www.williamfry.ie](http://www.williamfry.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 164**

**Managing Partner: Myra Garrett**

William Fry is one of Ireland's

largest corporate law firms and has been firmly established in the top tier for many decades. Clients include many of the leading global and domestic companies operating in Ireland, government bodies, financial institutions and entrepreneurs. Recent awards include Law Firm of the Year 2012 (Irish Law Awards); Best Firm for Women in Business 2012 (Euromoney Law Awards); Most Innovative Deal for the financial restructuring of the Quinn Group and sale of Quinn Insurance (Finance Dublin Awards). In the past six months the firm has created 46 new positions, ranging from partner level through to 25 new entrants into the Trainee Programme. In September 2012, the firm opened an office in London headed by senior corporate partner, Stephen Keogh. "We are client focused, results driven and consistently deliver an excellent service," says Managing Partner Myra Garrett.

**Mason Hayes & Curran**

[www.mhc.ie](http://www.mhc.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 134**

**Managing Partner: Emer**

**Gilvarry**

Mason Hayes & Curran says it is the fastest-growing full-service law firm in Ireland with personnel numbers and revenues doubling in the last decade. The firm's buoyant practice areas span technology, financial services, energy, healthcare, employment, insolvency and litigation. "At the very core of our firm is a deep and intuitive understanding of the technology sector and this spreads across a variety of practice areas, from strategic commercial agreements to tax structures for large blue chip organisations," explains Managing Partner, Emer Gilvarry. "Technology is a competency that we have developed over many decades both in our work practices and legal services. We see ourselves at the heart of the new economy, where business and technology connect."

**ByrneWallace**

[www.byrnewallace.com](http://www.byrnewallace.com)

**Partners/Solicitors: 95**

**Managing Partner: Catherine**

**Guy**

The firm positions itself as a partner of choice for privately owned indigenous firms. "We have an extensive understanding of this market and the conditions in which it operates," says Managing Partner Catherine Guy. "We have worked with many companies since their inception and some of our clients have been with us for over 20 years, a strong testament to the quality and adaptability of our service offering." In the past year, ByrneWallace has taken on a number of junior and senior solicitors to meet the increased levels of activity. "We continue to be very active in both general business advisory work and in the smart economy sector," says Guy. "Understanding what clients want and need has never been more

*continued on page 84*



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**A new trend in law firms is Of Counsel, i.e. lawyers who are employed but who are not partners or associates. At Beauchamps, Felix McTiernan (right) has been appointed Of Counsel in the firm's litigation practice. Also pictured is Managing Partner John White**

important. Focusing on quality, efficiency and experience is a key part of our service."

**Eversheds**

[www.eversheds.ie](http://www.eversheds.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 74**

**Managing Partner: Alan Murphy**

A full-service international law firm, Eversheds offers a range of multi-jurisdictional offerings across 26 countries with a single point of contact. Practice areas include corporate and commercial, life sciences, banking, healthcare, employment, pensions, litigation, energy and funds. Firm-specific global products span company secretarial services, international real estate management services, and international data protection management services. In the past year the firm has appointed three new partners: Darragh Blake

(banking and finance); Pamela O'Neill (commercial litigation); and Ian Devlin (financial services and pensions). The firm has also formalised its data protection team headed by Kate Colleary.

**Beauchamps**

[www.beauchamps.ie](http://www.beauchamps.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 70**

**Managing Partner: John White**

John White became managing partner in September 2011. A few months later the firm acquired Landwell Solicitors, the Irish branch of the international network of corporate law firms connected to PwC. This year the firm has acquired the practice of Felix McTiernan Solicitors. The firm is in growth mode and over the past two years the number of solicitors in Beauchamps has increased from 50 to 70.

**Dillon Eustace**

[www.dilloneustace.ie](http://www.dilloneustace.ie)

**Partners/ Solicitors: 68**

**Managing Partner: Mark Thorne**

The firm's key practice areas include financial services, banking, capital markets, corporate M&A, litigation, dispute resolution, real estate and taxation. The firm has a global outlook and reach with offices in Dublin, Tokyo, Hong Kong and New York. The firm has also established an office in the Cayman Islands, providing Cayman law financial services and litigation advice to its extensive financial services client base. The firm has been heavily involved in the acquisition and financing of very significant non-performing loan and distressed loan portfolios in the past 12 months and advising numerous international clients in relation to acquisitions of Irish corporates, real estate and financial assets.

**Maples and Calder**

[www.maplesandcalder.com](http://www.maplesandcalder.com)

**Partners/Solicitors: 64**

**Managing Partner: Andrew Doyle**

Maples and Calder is the first international law firm to seriously target the full-service offerings of the large domestic firms. Maples in Dublin now comprises over 200 people and notable developments in 2012 included the hiring of insurance litigator Peter Lennon and the

establishment of an Advocacy Service, offering clients the option of bypassing junior counsel in court litigation. Says Managing Partner Andrew Doyle: "Our objective in Ireland is not to be the largest law firm; it is to be, and to be known as, the law firm of excellence in our chosen areas of expertise and we believe we deliver on this objective. "

**Ronan Daly Jermyn**

[www.rdj.ie](http://www.rdj.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 54**

**Managing Partner: Richard Martin**

Ronan Daly Jermyn has total personnel of 150. It is the largest regional law firm in Ireland with offices in Cork and Galway. RDJ firm represents local, national and international clients engaged in a wide range of activities, as well as public sector bodies and governmental agencies. The main areas of commercial practice include corporate, M&A, inward investment, IT and e-commerce, tax, intellectual property, employment, insolvency and debt recovery, banking and finance, media, construction and procurement, commercial property, litigation, insurance and professional indemnity. The firm received the Chambers Europe Client Service Award for Ireland and was named Irish Insurance Law Firm of the Year 2012 by Acquisition International.

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**Eugene F Collins**

[www.efc.ie](http://www.efc.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 52**

**Managing Partner: Sean Twomey**

Two recent important partner appointments at Eugene F Collins have been Joanne Finn, head of the EU, Competition and Regulated Markets group, and Sharon McCaffrey, who specialises in corporate work. "These strategic appointments add to our capacity to provide first-class advice to our clients and reflects the increase in corporate activity," says Managing Partner Sean Twomey. "We continue to be involved in a number of high-profile litigation cases. We have acted for virtually all accountants that take insolvency appointments and we have been involved in every significant insolvency case this year."

**LK Shields**

[www.lkshields.ie](http://www.lkshields.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 51**

**Managing Partner: Hugh Garvey**

The firm provides legal advice on all aspects of commercial-related ventures and disputes. The work of the business, litigation and dispute resolution, and commercial property departments are complemented by dedicated units in disciplines including banking and financial services; corporate restructuring and insolvency; employment, pensions and employee benefits; EU, competition and regulated markets; intellectual property; and technology. Says Managing Partner Hugh Garvey: "Over the past year our expertise, experience and focus on the provision of a high-quality service has served us well and assisted us to achieve some significant business wins. This year we celebrate 25 years in business."

**Hayes solicitors**

[www.hayes-solicitors.ie](http://www.hayes-solicitors.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 35**

**Managing Partner: David Phelan**

Hayes solicitors is a corporate and commercial law firm, dealing also

in the areas of employment, media law, healthcare, property and family law. Managing Partner David Phelan is a member of the Business Law Committee of the Dublin Solicitors Bar Association, tutors in commercial law, is a registered trade mark agent and a member of the Business Opportunities Task Force of Dublin Chamber of Commerce.

**Holmes O'Malley Sexton**

[www.homs.ie](http://www.homs.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 32**

**Managing Partner: Harry Fehily**

The firm is based in Limerick and has an office in Dublin, where the firm is focused on expanding.

**WhitneyMoore**

[www.whitneymoore.ie](http://www.whitneymoore.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 29**

**Managing Partner: Stephen Walker**

WhitneyMoore is a well-established Dublin law firm with a culture of providing consistently

high-quality legal advice promptly, efficiently and cost effectively. The firm has particular expertise in corporate and commercial advice, employment, insolvency and corporate recovery, intellectual property, litigation, private client and property. WM is particularly recognised for its work in the automotive, aviation, medical devices, pharmaceutical, renewable energy, natural resources and technology sectors.

**DAC Beachcroft**

[www.dacbeachcroft.com](http://www.dacbeachcroft.com)

**Partners/Solicitors: 25**

**Managing Partner: Katie da Gama**

The Dublin office of international law firm DAC Beachcroft opened in March 2009 and has grown to its current size of 39 people, including 12 partners. The firm specialises in insurance law, professional indemnity claims, injury matters, healthcare and

*continued on page 86*



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**Lavelle Coleman**

[www.lavellecoleman.ie](http://www.lavellecoleman.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 21**

**Managing Partner: Michael**

**Lavelle**

The firm is renowned for its litigation expertise, particularly class actions, covering various areas of general, professional negligence and commercial litigation.

Employment law is another specialty, and general commercial work. According to managing partner Michael Lavelle: "The firm is receiving more and more instructions from banks and other financial institutions. The firm's litigation practice is continuing to grow and the firm has specialised in many multi-party actions in recent years."

**McDowell Purcell**

[www.mcdowellpurcell.ie](http://www.mcdowellpurcell.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 20**

**Managing Partner: Thomas O'Malley**

The firm acts for financial institutions, professional regulatory bodies, public and privately owned companies, property developers, renewable energy developers, liquidators, receivers and private clients.

**Walkers Ireland**

[www.walkersglobal.com](http://www.walkersglobal.com)

**Partners/Solicitors: 17**

**Managing Partner: Garry**

**Ferguson**

Walkers was established in Dublin in 2010 and is part of a global law firm that has a presence in the British Virgin Islands, Delaware, Dubai, Hong Kong, Jersey, London and Singapore, with over 500 staff employed. In Dublin, the primary focus is funds and financial services, including capital markets and aviation finance and related taxation issues. The Dublin office has eight partners, five Of Counsel and 17 other fee earners.

**Callan Tansey**

[www.callantansey.ie](http://www.callantansey.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 16**

**Managing Partner: Brian Gill**

Callan Tansey is the largest law firm in Connacht, employing 55 people at its offices in Sligo and Boyle. Brian Gill has been Managing Partner since October 2011 and he says that the changing face of the legal market means that law firms have to radically evaluate the traditional business model that sustained them in times gone by. "Today's client is a more discerning customer and law firms must adapt or face the consequences," says Gill.

**Orpen Franks**

[www.orpenfranks.ie](http://www.orpenfranks.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 12**

**Managing Partner: Peter Walsh**

The firm's activities centre on the litigation, commercial and insolvency arenas. It operates on a full-service basis and has expanded its services in the area of insolvency and recovery, and security enforcement. Managing Partner Peter Walsh says the firm's key attributes are capacity, responsiveness, accessibility, results and value.

**O'Connor Solicitors**

[www.oclegal.ie](http://www.oclegal.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 11**

**Managing Partner: John C.**

**O'Connor**

O'Connor Solicitors advises numerous professional bodies and also has a broad range of commercial clients. The firm has a Regulatory Law department and increased staff numbers to deal with rising demand in the regulatory and employment law practice areas.

**Kilroys**

[www.kilroys.ie](http://www.kilroys.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 10**

**Managing Partner: Joanne**

**Griffin**

Kilroys is the Irish member firm of the International Alliance of Law Firms, an international association of medium-sized commercial law

firms. "It has continued to be advantageous to our clients doing business outside Ireland in that we are able to refer them quickly to colleagues in the Alliance," says the firm's new Managing Partner, Joanne Griffin. "It has also been beneficial for inward referrals from Alliance clients wishing to do business in Ireland."

**McEvoy Partners**

[www.mcevoypartners.ie](http://www.mcevoypartners.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 10**

**Managing Partners: Orlaith**

**O'Brien, June Hynes**

Niche commercial practice with expertise in M&A, capital markets, insolvency, corporate restructuring and commercial litigation, particularly in banking and property-related matters.

**Kane Tuohy**

[www.kanetuohy.ie](http://www.kanetuohy.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 9**

**Managing Partner: Cómhnall**

**Tuohy**

The firm says it is benefiting from a general appetite from the business sector to resolve or deal with individual issues, which is providing some momentum in the market and more business positivity. According to Managing Partner Cómhnall Tuohy: "We have joined an international legal network which has led to an expansion in commercial enquiries and activity. We have increased turnover on a year-on-year basis while staff size has also increased."

**Leman**

[www.leman.ie](http://www.leman.ie)

**Partners/Solicitors: 9**

**Managing Partner: Larry**

**Fenelon**

Leman was established in 2007. The firm has corporate and commercial, commercial property, dispute resolution and employment teams. It focuses on ICT, data, sport, retail, education, professional services, land development and inward investment. The firm has added one partner, three solicitors and one trainee in the last 12



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months. It received the 'Q' Mark in 2012 and received the ILO 'International Client Choice' award in 2013.

**LKG Ballagh**

[www.lkgballagh.ie](http://www.lkgballagh.ie)

Partners/Solicitors: 8

**Managing Partner: James Flynn**

LKG Ballagh was created in 2012 by the merger of LKG Solicitors with partners in KMB Solicitors. The firm has acted on complex, high-value corporate transactions and in 2012 advised Mainstream Renewable Power on various corporate transactions, including a €60m fundraise from Macquarie Capital. "The firm punches above its weight in the calibre of its clients and the transactions which it has handled," says corporate partner Neil Keenan.

**Hughes & Associates**

[www.hughessolicitors.ie](http://www.hughessolicitors.ie)

Partners/Solicitors: 3

**Managing Partner: Daniel Hughes**

Principal Daniel Hughes is a litigation expert, particularly in the insolvency arena. The practice recently relocated to new offices close to the Four Courts and has upgraded its IT system. Hughes has been shortlisted for the 'Sole Practitioner of the Year' award at the forthcoming Danske Bank Irish Law Awards 2013.

**Clerkin Lynch**

[www.clerkinlynch.com](http://www.clerkinlynch.com)

Partners: 2

**Partners: Niall Clerkin, Kevin Lynch**

The firm is now in its fifth year and reports another year of growth. The firm has been involved in a number of Supreme Court Appeals this year in addition to its continued growth in the commercial law aspect of the practice, which focuses on owner-led and family-owned businesses.

**Other Law Firms With Commercial Focus**

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