

Arbitrators

AT 24 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS



John Robb

John is a versatile senior junior, specialising in the fields of banking and finance, civil fraud, shipping and commodities. Directories describe him as “*extraordinarily industrious and a star of the future*”.

John has a particular specialism in disputes involving guarantees and indemnities, as a co-author of the forthcoming (8th) edition of Andrews & Millett on Guarantees, and of the Guarantee and Indemnity title of Atkin’s Court Forms (2023).

John is particularly familiar with disputes under the LMAA and LCIA rules, but has acted (as advocate) under many other procedural rules, including ICC, SIAC and SCMA. John is a Supporting Member of the LMAA, and a member of the LCIA Users’ Council.

John wins praise in the legal directories for responsiveness and for the clarity of his writing. One respondent commented on his “*intense ability, backed by a phenomenal intellect, to focus on the issues in a case and to draft powerfully coherent submissions at speed*”; another commented that “*his advice is always to the point and easily digestible*”.

What Others Say

John is recommended by *The Legal 500 UK* for Banking & Finance, Civil Fraud, Commercial Dispute Resolution, Commodities and Shipping; and by Chambers & Partners for Banking & Finance.

Comments include:

- “*John is extraordinarily industrious and a star of the future.*” (Banking & Finance, 2025 – Chambers & Partners)

- *“Intense ability, backed by a phenomenal intellect, to focus on the issues in a case and to draft powerfully coherent submissions at speed.”* (Commercial litigation, 2025 – Legal500)
- *“Possessing encyclopaedic knowledge of contract law – he is excellent in conference, effective in mediation, strong with clients, and highly capable in court.”* (Shipping, 2025 – Legal500)
- *“John Robb is really charming, bright, academic and responsive. He’s someone we look to work with because he’s fantastic.”* (Banking & Finance, 2024 – Chambers & Partners)
- *“His intellect, ability to focus on the essential and to draft submissions with clarity. John is also a pleasure to work with.”* (Banking & Finance, 2024 – Legal500)
- *“His advice is always to the point and easily digestible.”* (Civil Fraud, 2024)
- *“John is excellent. He is extremely thorough and always willing to go the extra mile.”* (Shipping, 2024)
- *“John is incredibly hard working and always available. He is fiercely intelligent and is able to deliver perfectly reasoned and strategic advice quickly. His commerciality and understanding of what is important to his clients is excellent”* (Banking & Finance, 2023 – Chambers & Partners)
- *“A powerhouse of an advocate”* (Shipping, 2023 – Legal500)
- *“Incredibly hardworking and very bright, with an unparalleled ability to deal with difficult clients in highly-pressured situations”* (Banking & Finance, 2022 – Legal500)
- *“A very thoughtful, calm junior with excellent communication and technical skills. He is an excellent team player”* (Shipping, 2022 – Legal500)
- *“Clever, tenacious, and hardworking”* (Shipping, 2021 – Legal500)
- *“Incredibly bright, hardworking, and able to produce top quality work whilst under a lot of pressure and maintaining his good humour throughout”* (Banking & Finance, 2021 – Legal500)
- *“Has an ability to quickly grasp technical issues”* (Shipping, 2020 – Legal500)
- *“a force to reckon with”* (Shipping, 2019 – Legal500)
- *“Fought our client’s corner ferociously, getting an excellent result”* (Commercial Litigation, 2019 – Legal500).
- *“Very client-focused”* (Shipping, 2018 – Legal500)
- *“Fantastic”* (Shipping, 2017 – Legal500)

Arbitration (including arbitration-related court applications)

John is regularly instructed in LMAA arbitrations, and also acts in ICC, LCIA, SIAC and SCMA arbitrations. He has acted in challenges to arbitration awards under s.67, s.68 and s.69 of the Arbitration Act 1996, and in applications for anti-suit injunctions in favour of arbitration.

His experience in this field includes:

Tecnimont SpA v LLC EuroChem North-West-2 [2025] EWHC 3151 (Comm) & [2026] EWCA Civ 5: acted for the respondent in a case which raised for the first time the question whether an anti-suit injunction could be obtained under s.42 of the Arbitration Act 1996, i.e. by way of enforcement of a tribunal's peremptory order. (Led by Richard Millett KC at first instance and by Graham Dunning KC on appeal.)

Korek Telecom Company LLC v. Alcazar Capital Partners Company: co-counsel at the 1-week evidentiary hearing of a Dubai-seated arbitration (February 2025), opposing a claim for an injunction to restrain enforcement of a Kuwaiti court judgment.

LCIA arbitration: employment-related dispute in the field of cryptocurrency and high frequency trading. 2-week final hearing in May 2024 (with Simon Devonshire KC and Andrew Smith of 11KBW).

Premier Cruises Ltd v DLA Piper Rus Ltd & DLA Piper UK Ltd. Opposed defendants' application under s.9 of the Arbitration Act 1996 to stay the claims in favour of arbitration: [2021] EWHCC 151 (Comm), [2021] 1 Lloyd's Rep 511. (Led by Philippa Hopkins KC.)

Southern Route Maritime SA v Jiangsu BDH Oil Industrial Co Ltd [2020] EWHC 1040 (Comm). Obtained anti-suit injunction to restrain proceedings in China brought in breach of an arbitration clause in a bill of lading. (Sole counsel.)

Times Trading Corp v National Bank of Fujairah [2020] 2 Lloyd's Rep. 211, [2020] 2 Lloyd's Rep 317. Resisted anti-suit injunction application and obtained extension of time for commencing arbitration proceedings under s.12 of the Arbitration Act 1996. (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

Union Marine Classification Services LLC v The Government of the Union of Comoros [2017] EWHC 2364 (Comm), [2018] 2 All E.R. (Comm) 174; [2017] 2 Lloyd's Rep. 608. Acted (as sole counsel) for the respondent government, successfully opposing a challenge to the arbitrator's award under s.68 of the Arbitration Act 1996 and a related application under s.24 of the Arbitration Act 1996 to remove the arbitrator.

Union Marine Classification Society LLC v Government of the Union of Comoros [2015] 2 Lloyd's Rep. 49 (Eder J), [2016] 2 Lloyd's Rep. 193 (Court of Appeal). Led by Richard Jacobs QC, successfully resisting a challenge under s.67 of the Arbitration Act 1996 to an arbitrator's correction of an award. Leading case on the scope of arbitrators' powers to correct an award, and on the relationship between s.67 and s.68 of the Arbitration Act where a tribunal is alleged to have exceeded its powers.

Banking & Financial Services

John is listed as a leading junior for Banking & Financial Services by Chambers and Partners and by The Legal 500 UK. Many of his recent instructions have been on behalf of or against banks and other financial entities (including financial brokers and private equity funds). He has been described as “*extraordinarily industrious and a star of the future*”; “*incredibly hard working and always available*”; “*able to deliver perfectly reasoned and strategic advice quickly*”; and “*incredibly bright, hardworking, and able to produce top quality work whilst under a lot of pressure and maintaining his good humour throughout*”. Chambers & Partners (2024) commented: “*John Robb is really charming, bright, academic and responsive. He’s someone we look to work with because he’s fantastic.*”

John enjoys and has experience of working with experts in connection with valuation disputes. His cases frequently involve an insolvency element, and he has experience of claims brought by and against insolvency office-holders.

John has a particular specialism in the law of guarantees (as co-editor of two textbooks in this field), and frequently acts or advises in cases involving guarantees, indemnities and performance bonds. He has also written on finance-related topics for Practical Law Company and for the Butterworths Journal of International Banking and Financial Law. John also has expertise in trade finance, thanks to his complementary specialism in shipping law and experience acting in several claims on behalf of banks in misdelivery claims against shipowners under bills of lading. Alongside his litigation experience as described below, John is frequently instructed to advise banks and others on sanctions and trusts-related issues.

Current and recent cases include:

TREO NOAL GP v Kowski. Acting for a private equity fund in a fraud claim against the fund’s founders and former investment advisers, concerning the fund’s acquisition of a controlling stake in the manufacturer of the notorious Pegasus spyware product. (Led by Paul McGrath KC.)

Delivery Hero v Mastercard. Acted (with Richard Millett KC) for Mastercard in a dispute over a terminated contract. Case settled shortly before a 2.5-week Commercial Court in October 2025.

Suppipat v Narongdej [2023] EWHC 1988 (Comm). Acted for the 11th and 13th defendants (respectively CEO of a substantial Thai bank and Senior Partner in a leading Thai law firm), in a US\$1-2 billion conspiracy claim brought predominantly under Thai law, which culminated in a 20-week trial between October 2022 and March 2023. Listed by The Lawyer as one of the top 20 cases of 2022. (Led by Ruth den Besten KC.)

E D & F Man Capital Markets Limited v Come Harvest Holdings Ltd [2022] EWHC 229 (Comm). Acted for the claimant financial brokerage firm, in a \$284m claim arising out of the use of forged warehouse receipts in repo financing transactions. (Led by Huw Davies KC.)

LMAA & SCMA arbitrations (2021 & 2022). Acted for a financing bank and bill of lading holder in two 1-week trials of claims against shipowners for misdelivery of cargoes. The defences raised issues about the nature of the bank’s security interest and about the bank’s internal processes (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

Al Farouqi v Ikon Finance Ltd [2020] EWHC 1730 (QB). Acted as sole counsel for the second defendant, a foreign currency broker, on a successful summary judgment application against a £53m claim for fraud and breach of contract.

Rubicon Vantage International Pte Ltd v KrisEnergy Ltd [2019] EWHC 2012 (Comm). 2-day Commercial Court trial in July 2019, defending a claim brought under a parent company guarantee. (Led by Nigel Eaton KC.)

Edgeworth Capital (Luxembourg) S.A.R.L v Aabar Investments PJS [2018] EWHC 1627. 3-week trial of a claim against a sovereign wealth fund for a final injunction to restrain the exercise of security rights, based on an alleged oral agreement. (Led by Alain Choo Choy KC.)

Investec Trust (Guernsey) Limited v Glenalla Properties Limited [2018] UKPC 7, [2019] AC 271. Acted on behalf of former trustees in 7 conjoined appeals to the Privy Council from proceedings in Guernsey. The case arose out of claims brought against trustees under intercompany loans by the liquidators of insolvent companies formerly owned by the trustees. The appeals raised issues of unjust enrichment, conflict of laws and trusts. (Led by Lord Goldsmith KC and Kathryn Purkis.)

Robert Tchenguiz v Grant Thornton UK LLP (2015-2018). Acted during the interlocutory stages of a Commercial Court claim against liquidators, concerning the liquidators' involvement in the Serious Fraud Office's investigation of Robert Tchenguiz during 2009-2012. Listed by The Lawyer as one of the top 20 cases of 2018. (Led by Alain Choo Choy KC.)

Article, "Of loans and limitations: limitation and the enforcement of syndicated credit agreements", published in 2017 32(2) Butterworths Journal of International Banking and Financial Law, pp.75-79.

Commercial Chancery Disputes

Much of John's work has a Chancery element. That includes advisory work and litigation in the field of trusts law (*Investec*); claims concerning equitable causes of action such as rescission and knowing receipt (*ED&F Man*); claims raising issues of company and insolvency law (*BTI v Sequana*); and claims with an IP element. John is a member of the Chancery Bar Association, acts as a CLIPs volunteer, and has experience of trials and applications in the Chancery Division.

Kiko UK Ltd v Jamino Ltd (in liq) & Pianoforte Holding S.p.A [2025] EWHC 1510 (Comm) [2025] L&TR 18. Acted for the claimant (at first instance and on appeal to the Court of Appeal) in a claim for an indemnity in respect of liabilities incurred by the former tenant of a lease under an authorised guarantee agreement. (Sole counsel.)

ED & F Man Capital Markets Limited v Come Harvest Holdings Ltd [2022] EWHC 229 (Comm). Significant judgment on issues concerning rescission, knowing receipt and tracing. John conducted the oral advocacy in closing submissions on the tracing issues. (Led by Huw Davies KC.)

Investec Trust (Guernsey) Limited v Glenalla Properties Limited [2018] UKPC 7, [2019] AC 271. Led by Lord Goldsmith KC and Kathryn Purkis in 7 appeals to the Privy Council from proceedings in Guernsey concerning the respective rights of trustees, beneficiaries and creditors of the Tchenguiz Discretionary Trust ('TDT'), after claims

in the total sum of approx. £180m were brought against the former trustees under intercompany loans by the liquidators of insolvent companies formerly owned by the TDT trustees. Leading case on trustees' rights to indemnity, creditors' subrogated rights against trust assets and choice of law treatment of statutory limitations of trustees' liability.

John's subsequent article on the conflict-of-laws issues arising in *Investec v Glenalla*, entitled "Personhood and status of legal persons in private international law", was published in (2019) 15:2 *Journal of Private International Law*, pp.288-314, and is cited in the 16th edition of Dicey.

BTI 2014 LLC v Sequana SA [2016] EWHC 1686 (Ch). Assisted a team of counsel led by Joe Smouha KC and Andrew Thompson KC at the 31-day trial of claims against the directors and parent company of an English company exposed to US environmental law liabilities. Held (by Rose J) that a €135m dividend paid by the company had been a transaction at an undervalue contrary to s.423 of the Insolvency Act 1986; but that the defendants were not liable for breach of fiduciary duty or for non-compliance with Companies Act rules for payment of dividends.

International Trade, Transport & Commodities

John is ranked in *The Legal 500 UK* for commodities disputes.

Recent matters include:

FinCo International AG v Integra Petrochemicals Europe AG [2026] EWHC 563 (Comm). Acted for the defendant seller of a part-cargo of methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE), in a case raising issues about the interpretation of the BP GTCs. (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

RSA Arbitration. Acted for the claimant seller of two cargoes of sugar, in a dispute as to whether a contract of sale had been concluded.

LMAA & SCMA arbitrations (2021 & 2022). Acted for a financing bank and bill of lading holder in two 1-week trials of claims against shipowners for misdelivery of cargoes of coal and grain. (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

ED & F Man Capital Markets Limited v Come Harvest Holdings Ltd [2022] EWHC 229 (Comm). Substantial Commercial Court fraud proceedings involving fraudulent warehouse receipts, including market practice expert evidence about the use and authentication of warehouse receipts. (Led by Huw Davies KC.)

Shipping & Admiralty

John is listed as a leading junior for Shipping by *The Legal 500 UK*, which describes him as "*excellent... extremely thorough and always willing to go the extra mile*". He has acted in well over one hundred shipping cases, frequently unled. That experience (principally in 'dry' shipping) is complemented by his writing work (Westlaw Insight articles on charterparties and bills of lading) and by speaking on shipping law topics. John is a member of the Education sub-committee of the London Shipping Law Centre.

Clients value John's ability to get across technical issues, his responsiveness, and his communication skills. Directory commentary for shipping has referred to him as "excellent in conference, effective in mediation, strong with clients, and highly capable in court" (2025); "extremely thorough and always willing to go the extra mile" (2024); "a powerhouse of an advocate" (2023); "a very thoughtful, calm junior with excellent communication and technical skills ... an excellent team player" (2022); "clever, tenacious and hardworking" (2021); "has an ability to quickly grasp technical issues" (2020); "a force to reckon with" (2019); "very client-focused" (2018); and "fantastic" (2017).

John's shipping experience includes:

Pleon Ltd v Leonis Ltd, The "Maltese Falcon" [2025] EWHC 3144 (Comm). Acted for the buyer of a celebrated superyacht, at a 5-day LMAA arbitration hearing concerning a post-sale charter-back arrangement, and in opposition to the seller's subsequent s.69 appeal. (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

LMAA arbitrations (2024). Acted for several ship-owning companies seeking reimbursement from their charterers of freight tax paid in Nigeria.

LMAA arbitration (2022). Acted at a 5-day hearing for the prospective buyer of a €32m superyacht, in a claim to have terminated the purchase agreement on grounds of COVID-related force majeure and defective repair works. (Led by James Collins KC.)

LMAA & SCMA arbitrations (2021 & 2022). Acted for a financing bank and bill of lading holder in two 1-week trials of claims against shipowners for misdelivery of cargoes, involving market practice evidence about discharge and delivery practices in Egypt and India. (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

LMAA arbitration (July 2021). Acted, leading Lorraine Aboagye, at a 1-week trial of claims and counterclaims between a ship builder and a ship designer.

Premier Cruises Ltd v DLA Piper Rus Ltd & DLA Piper UK Ltd. Acted for a cruise ship operator in a negligence claim against former solicitors, resulting from the handling of a shipbuilding contract and arbitration. Dispute settled after rejection of defendants' application to stay the claims in favour of arbitration: [2021] 1 Lloyd's Rep 511. (Led by Philippa Hopkins KC.)

Southern Route Maritime SA v Jiangsu BDH Oil Industrial Co Ltd [2020] EWHC 1040 (Comm). Obtained anti-suit injunction to restrain proceedings in China brought in breach of an arbitration clause in a bill of lading. (Sole counsel.)

Times Trading Corp v National Bank of Fujairah [2020] EWHC 1078 (Comm), [2020] EWHC 1983 (Comm), [2020] 2 Lloyd's Rep. 211. Successful application by defendant bank (and bill of lading holder) for an extension of time under s.12 of the Arbitration Act 1996, in order to bring a claim for misdelivery against a bareboat charterer. (Led by Steven Berry KC.)

LMAA arbitration. Acted as sole counsel for a defendant shipbuilder, at a 2-day hearing in May 2020 of a claim for rectification of a provision in a shipbuilding contract.

Rubicon Vantage International Pte Ltd v KrisEnergy Ltd [2019] EWHC 2012 (Comm). Led by Nigel Eaton KC, acting for the guarantor of a bareboat charterer of a floating storage and offloading vessel ("FSO"), defending a claim for sums due as a result of engineering work carried out on the FSO prior to mobilisation.

“Amalie Essberger” Tankreederei GmbH & Co. KG v Marubeni Corporation [2019] EWHC 3402 (Comm) [2020] 1 Lloyd’s Rep. 393. Acted for charterers in a case concerning the interpretation of a time-bar provision for demurrage claims.

LMAA arbitration. Led by Philippa Hopkins KC at the 3-day trial (in November 2018) of a claim for lost chartering profits of \$1.5 million, under a contractual indemnity in a ship sale agreement, following the vessel’s arrest in Nigeria.

LMAA Arbitration. Acted (as sole counsel) for owners in a claim against charterers for an indemnity under the BIMCO Ship to Ship Transfer Clause for Time Charter Parties, following injury to the vessel’s Second Officer during ship-to-ship transshipment of iron ore. Claim settled by mediation prior to hearing.

Union Marine Classification Services LLC v The Government of the Union of Comoros [2017] EWHC 2364 (Comm), [2018] 2 All E.R. (Comm) 174; [2017] 2 Lloyd’s Rep. 608. Dispute over termination by the Government of Comoros of a contract for the operation of a ship’s registry. Acted as sole counsel for the Government in a successful claim for an arbitration award finding that the contract had been validly terminated, then defended the award against a challenge under s.68 of the Arbitration Act 1996.

LMAA Arbitration. Led by Sara Cockerill KC in a 2-week shipbuilding dispute over the construction of a superyacht (October 2016).

LMAA Arbitration. Acted (as sole counsel) for Owners in a time charterparty balance-of-hire dispute concerning bunker contamination, engine damage and allegations of tampering with vessel logs. Dispute settled after a mediation in November 2015.

Ad-hoc arbitration (May 2015). Acted (with Sara Cockerill KC) in a dispute over the implementation of a settlement agreement, arising out of a longstanding joint venture chartering agreement.

Union Marine Classification Society LLC v Government of the Union of Comoros (3 day LMAA arbitration, July 2014). As sole counsel, defended a very substantial breach of contract claim for alleged wrongful termination of a concession agreement to operate the Comoros Open Registry.

SCMA Arbitrations. Acted (with James Collins QC) in 2 related shipbuilding arbitrations under the rules of the Singapore Chamber of Maritime Arbitration (2013).

John has been instructed as sole counsel in numerous other disputes under time and voyage charterparties, involving e.g. off-hire, speed and performance claims, liens, demurrage, late redelivery, unsafe ports, alleged bad bunkers, cargo claims, ice and tank-cleaning.

Career

2012 Tenant at Essex Court Chambers, following completion of pupillage with James Collins KC

2011 Called to the Bar (Inner Temple)

2010 Law Clerk at Chang, Pistilli & Simmons (now Clifford Chance) in Sydney

Education

2010-2011 BPTC, City Law School (Outstanding)
2008-2009 BCL, Exeter College Oxford (Distinction)
2006-2008 BA (Hons) Law, King's College Cambridge (First)
2004-2006 Classics 'Part I' (the first two years of a Cambridge BA). Starred First, ranked first in the year.

Awards

2011 Winner of the Blackstone Mooting Competition (City Law School)
2010 Princess Royal Scholarship (Inner Temple)
2009 Joint winner of Holdsworth Society mooting competition (Oxford)
2009 HLA Hart prize for Jurisprudence and Political Theory (BCL)
2009 Arts and Humanities Research Council award to fund BCL studies
2008 Hurst Prize for Law (King's College, Cambridge)
2007 Lovells Prize for Law (King's College, Cambridge)

Publications

Co-author of the forthcoming (8th) edition of Andrews & Millett on Guarantees, with Dame Geraldine Andrews DBE and Richard Millett KC.

Co-author of the Guarantees title of Atkin's Court Forms (2023), with Katherine Ratcliffe.

Practical Law Company, author of practice note on "Co-Guarantors".

Co-author of Westlaw Insight series of articles on Charterparties and Bills of Lading, with Sir Bernard Eder.

"Personhood and status of legal persons in private international law", (2019) 15(2) Journal of Private International Law, pp.288-314. Cited in Dicey, Morris & Collins on the Conflict of Laws (16th ed, 2022).

"Of loans and limitations: limitation and the enforcement of syndicated credit agreements", published in 2017 32(2) Butterworths Journal of International Banking and Financial Law, pp.75-79.