



Gilead Cooper QC

Call: 1983

QC: 2006

gcooper@wilberforce.co.uk

Clerks' Details

+44 (0)20 7306 0102

practicemanagers@wilberforce.co.uk

Qualifications and Appointments

- BA in English, Christ Church, Oxford
- Dip. Law, The City University
- He is an CEDR Accredited Mediator and has been called to the Bar of the BVI.

'has an incredibly quick mind, great intellectual powers, and at the same time a wonderful capacity for creative, strategic thinking. He writes beautifully, judges clearly respect him, and he is an excellent courtroom advocate.'

The Legal 500 2021

Memberships

- Chancery Bar Association
- Professional Negligence Bar Association
- PAIAM (Professional Advisers to the International Art Market)
- ACTAPS
- LCIA
- [CAfA Arbitrator](#)
- [CAfA Mediator](#)
- [Fellow, The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel \(ACTEC\)](#)
- [The International Academy of Estate and Trust law \(TIAETL\)](#)

Publications

- [Virtual property: trusts of cryptocurrencies and other digital assets](#), Trusts & Trustees (2021)
- [The British Museums: book review](#), Trusts & Trustees (2021)

Practice Overview

Described in Chambers & Partners as *"an unsurpassed advocate at the Chancery Bar"*, Gilead has appeared in many high-profile cases in recent years, both in the UK and abroad. He receives praise for *"his ability 'to pull rabbits out of hats' in fiendishly difficult cases"* (HNW Guide), and is consistently recommended in the major legal directories. The recent Chambers & Partners 2021 edition ranks him in Band 1 for both Traditional Chancery and Trusts and in Band 2 for Offshore and Art and Cultural Property. The guide describes him as *"an experienced and hard-hitting trial lawyer"*. *"He clearly relishes getting his teeth into cases."* He has *"an incredible mind"*, *"he knows his stuff inside and out, and gets it right first time around"*. Further, *"he is excellent with clients"* and *"can handle very complicated cases involving a lot of different jurisdictions with real ease"*. In The Legal 500 2021 edition he is ranked Tier 1 for Offshore work and is described as having *"an incredibly quick mind, great intellectual powers, and at the same time a wonderful capacity for creative, strategic thinking"*. *"An excellent courtroom advocate"* and *"a powerful intellect"*. He is also featured in Legal Week's Private Client Global Elite and the CityWealth LeadersList *"Top 10 Trust Litigation Barristers"* list. He has been described in Who's Who Legal as *"one of the top silks in our research this year"*, and is one of five silks in the *"Most Highly Regarded"* category. Gilead was the winner of the Antiquities Law Barrister of the Year Award in the Lawyer Monthly Legal Awards 2016.

Gilead's practice has a strong international element. He has appeared in the courts of Hong Kong, the BVI, Bermuda, Cayman and Nevis, and has been involved in litigation in Jersey, Guernsey and Gibraltar. Last year he provided expert advice in relation to the Panama Papers in Imran Khan's action against Nawaz Sharif in the Pakistan Supreme Court which led to Sharif being removed as prime minister.

Gilead specialises in complex, high-value disputes, often involving allegations of fraud, breaches of trust and fiduciary duties, and professional negligence. He also has "a notable specialism in matters involving art and antiquities" (Chambers & Partners). He has been involved in a number of restitution claims before the Spoliation Panel, and often advises and represents major national museums and galleries. He acted for the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in a dispute over some human remains that formed part of the collection of the Natural History Museum.

Publications continued

- Contributor to *Trusts, Artistic Estates and Collections* (2019), ed. Marta Cenini, ([reviewed](#) in *Trusts & Trustees*, Volume 26, Issue 4, May 2020, Pages 377-379)
- [The adoption issue: the illegitimate logic of *Hand v George*](#), *Trusts & Trustees* (2020)
- [Open \(in\)justice: privacy, open justice and human rights](#), *Trusts & Trustees* (2019)
- [Trusts and Modern Wealth Management book review](#), *Trusts & Trustees* (2019)
- "Cultural Divisions: the rivalry between family and chancery", *Trusts & Trustees* (2014) Vol 20, Issue 8, 815
- "Lost in translation: community property and the common law trust", *Trusts & Trustees* (2013)
- Case Note: *Re The St Andrew's (Cheam) Lawn Tennis Club Trust*, *Trusts & Trustees* (2012) Vol 18, Issue 8, 816.
- Contributor to *Palmer on Bailment*
- Contributor to *Tolley's Pensions Law*
- "How (not) to get rich on the Internet"; (1999) *NLJ*
- "Negligent Valuation: Damages"; (1995) *Int. I.L.R.*
- "Negligence – the Surveyor and the Mortgagee"; (1991) *E.G.*

Practice Overview continued

Gilead recently represented the trustees in *In the Estate of the Eighth Earl of Bathurst*, in which the Dowager Countess, as life tenant of a trust of family heirlooms, unsuccessfully claimed the right to enjoy the chattels in specie. He also acted for the Earl of Cardigan in his dispute with the trustees of the Savernake Estate: in one action, which went to the Court of Appeal, the trustees sought the court's sanction for a sale of the trust's prize asset, Tottenham House; in a separate action, the Earl of Cardigan succeeded in removing one of the trustees, and obtained repayment of unauthorised remuneration as well as compensation for breach of trust.

In *Slutsker v Haron*, Gilead successfully resisted the claim by Vladimir Slutsker, a former Russian Senator, to go behind the terms of a Cayman trust that had been set up by his former wife to hold (via an English company) their matrimonial home, a valuable house in The Boltons. The case involved a conflict between Russian matrimonial law and UK domestic law. Another of Gilead's cases, *Sharp v Adam*, is one of the leading modern authorities on testamentary capacity. Gilead's experience also includes appearances in the Court of Protection.

Before coming to the Bar, Gilead enjoyed a brief career in publishing, editing books on photography, popular science and astronomy. He also spent a couple of years teaching in pre-revolutionary Iran. After completing his pupillage, he worked in the Litigation Department of Freshfields before taking up a tenancy at 7 New Square. He joined Wilberforce Chambers in December 2015.

Commercial

A highly experienced litigator, Gilead has appeared in a number of high-value, high-profile cases in recent years, involving claims against trustees, executors, company directors and partners for breaches of fiduciary duty and civil fraud. His practice has a strong international element, and has appeared in the courts of Hong Kong, the BVI, Bermuda, Cayman and Nevis. He has also advised in litigation in Jersey, Guernsey and Gibraltar.

Gilead appeared for the defendants in *Khouj v ACP*, leading James Walmsley. The case concerned a claim on behalf of the estate of a former Saudi Foreign Minister, in which the executor was seeking extensive disclosure of information relating to substantial investments by the deceased during his lifetime, raising issues of agency and fiduciary duty. The defendants had decided to bring in a new legal team at the eleventh hour, and Gilead and James were instructed over the weekend with the trial listed to commence the following Monday – in the event, the judge granted an adjournment until the Thursday.

In *Jones v Firkin-Flood*, Gilead acted for the beneficiaries of a will trust in removing trustees and blocking their resolution to distribute the fund in unequal shares between the family members. The trust had been set up by the beneficiaries' father, "Dougie", who was reputed to have been a member of Manchester's notorious "Quality Street Gang". Money (the source of which was obscure) had been used to set up accounts in Liechtenstein, and large sums had been invested in a hotel and country club. It was alleged that funds had been diverted to set up a casino business, from which two of the three children were excluded. The case raised issues of dishonesty as well as breaches of fiduciary duties under both company law and trust law.

In *Khan v Gany Holdings*, the settlor had been a successful businessman who had made his fortune in Pakistan, Malaysia and Hong Kong. He had been highly secretive, and had established a number of opaque corporate and trust structures around the world to hold and manage the family wealth. After his death, his younger son had taken control of the family businesses, to the exclusion of his sister and her family. There were allegations that one of the trustees (a BVI company controlled by the son) had acted dishonestly and had misappropriated assets that rightfully belonged to the estate. Gilead represented the sister and her family at the trial before the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court in the BVI.

C v D concerned a Bermuda Trust set up using funds from a Swiss foundation. One branch of the family alleged that the entire trust (which had been in existence for several decades) had been created fraudulently, in violation of Swiss law, and was void ab initio.

Gilead also acted for the successful Defendants in *Slutsker v Haron*, a claim by high profile Russian former politician, Vladimir Slutsker. Mr Slutsker had challenged the transfer of a valuable London property into UK company, whose shares were held by a Cayman



Commercial continued

settlement. Mr Slutsker and asserted that under Russian joint property rules he was the beneficial owner of a 50% share. A separate action by Mr Slutsker in Cayman was struck out on Gilead's application.

Gilead appeared for the Earl of Cardigan in his claims against the trustees of his estate, obtaining an order for the removal of one of the two trustees, together with compensation and the repayment of unauthorised remuneration. Other notable cases include acting for Robin Birley in his claim against the estate of the late Mark Birley, the proprietor of Annabel's and other well-known London clubs.

Gilead is ranked as a leading silk in Chambers & Partners, where he is described as "*intellectually brilliant and very easy to work with.*" He is "*methodical and diligent in his approach, and able to argue clearly and concisely.*"

Professional Liability

Gilead has appeared in a number of professional liability cases, often representing solicitors or barristers in defending negligence claims.

Gilead's key cases include:

- **Stuart v Goldberg Linde** [2008] WLR 823. Court of Appeal guidelines on the rule in *Henderson v Henderson*. Neither the merits of the second action, nor delay in starting it, are relevant factors in deciding whether it is an abuse of process to bring separate proceedings.
- **Gloyne v Richardson** [2001] 2 BCLC 669, [2001] EWCA Civ 716 (Court of Appeal). Construction of share option agreement.
- **Gloyne v Richardson** [2002] All ER (D) 447, [2002] EWCA Civ 1980. Strike-out of claim against solicitor who had failed to serve proper notice under share option agreement.
- **Ebert v Venuil** [2000] Ch. 484 (Court of Appeal). Jurisdiction of the High Court to make an order prohibiting a litigant from issuing vexatious proceedings.
- **Bristol & West v Baden, Barnes and Groves** [2000] Lloyd's Rep PN 788. Solicitor under no obligation to disclose confidential information obtained under previous retainer.
- **Summit Property v Pitmans** [2000] All ER (D) 1226. Solicitors' duty to two clients when a conflict of interest arises; one client wishing to exploit confidential information belonging to the other.
- **Summit Property v Pitmans** [2001] Lloyd's Rep PN 16 (Court of Appeal). Defendant successfully defending claim but ordered to contribute to loser's costs.
- **Raybould v Jameson** [2000] All ER (D) 1679. Solicitor failing to advise client of risk of committing blackmail.
- **Turner v Plasplugs Ltd** [1996] 2 All ER 939 (Court of Appeal). Liability of legally aided party to order for costs.
- **Wapshott v Davies Donovan** (1996) 72 P & CR 244 (Court of Appeal). Measure of damages in claim against negligent solicitors.
- **Hemmens v Wilson Browne** [1995] Ch 223. Liability of solicitor to non-client third party in inter vivos transaction.
- **Re Moonbeam Cards Ltd** [1993] BCLC 1099. Directors' disqualification.
- **Moore v Khan-Ghuri** [1991] 2 EGLR 9 (Court of Appeal). Contract for sale of land by auction.

Property

According to Chambers & Partners, Gilead *"Offers masterful guidance on trust and property litigation, and has an excellent track record in high-profile disputes."* He has wide experience in dealing with real property issues, including title disputes, easements, restrictive covenants, land options and pre-emption rights, mortgages, joint property and professional negligence relating to conveyancing. He is frequently instructed on matters concerning large landed estates, and recently acted for the Earl of Cardigan in relation to the trustees' alleged mismanagement of the Savernake Estate.

He has appeared in numerous property cases, including *Jones v Cameron Management Ltd*, a claim for rectification of Land Register; *Padgham v Rochelle*, concerning an agricultural tenancy; and *Winsper v Perrett*, in which the issue was whether property was held on beneficial joint tenancy or tenancy in common.

"He is a very persuasive advocate and a brilliant speaker."

"He is very measured and very impressive. Very good at looking at the overall strategy, he is insightful and very impressive on his feet."

Trusts, Tax, Probate and Estates

Trusts and estates litigation, both in the UK and offshore, has formed the mainstay of Gilead's practice since he took Silk in 2006. He specialises in contentious trial work.

Gilead has also been involved in numerous Cultural Property cases, including disputes falling within the jurisdiction of the Spoliation Panel.

"Class Act' Gilead Cooper QC is always in demand for his prowess at bringing trust and succession disputes to a swift and satisfying resolution for his clients. A regular fixture in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, he is appreciated for the quality of his 'straightforward, commercial advice' and the forcefulness with which he puts his case."

"Charming and a free thinker who is not afraid of putting forward controversial perspectives."

Cases include:

- *Qatar Investment Projects Holding Co v Phoenix Ancient Arts S.A.* [2021] EWHC 2243 (QB). Dispute over the authenticity of an ancient sculpture. The Claimants obtained leave ex parte to serve out of the jurisdiction after the expiry of the limitation period, but the order was set aside at the inter partes. They appealed unsuccessfully, trying to blame their delay on COVID-19.
- *Zhao Long et al v Endushantum Investments Co Ltd et al* [2021] BVIHC (COM) 2017/0151. Acting for the trustees in a dispute over the beneficial ownership of a major shareholding in a Chinese pharmaceuticals company.
- *Kea v Watson* [2021] JRC 009. The latest round in the long-running litigation against Eric Watson. The UK judgment creditor unsuccessfully sought to freeze assets held in a discretionary Jersey trust, of which Mr Watson was a potential object.
- *In the Matter of the CI and CII Trusts* [2021] (Bermuda). The court granted the trustees' application to extend the perpetuity period of two Bermuda trusts.
- *In the Estate of the Eighth Earl of Bathurst* [2018] EWHC 21 (Ch). The Dowager Countess (as life tenant of a trust of heirlooms) unsuccessfully claimed the right to enjoy the chattels in specie. Construction of a statutory codicil, involving the admissibility of extrinsic evidence of intention.
- *In the Matter of the C Trust* [2016] SC [Bda] 53 Civ. The first case to extend the perpetuity period under the new section 4 of the Bermuda Perpetuities and Accumulations Act. Concerned a US\$2 billion trust.
- *Cotton v Earl of Cardigan* [2015] W.T.L.R. 39. Appeal against trustees' application under Public Trustee v Cooper for approval of the sale of Tottenham House.
- *Brudenell-Bruce v Moore* [2014] EWHC 3679 (Ch). Removal of trustees and claims for breaches of trust and repayment of unauthorised remuneration.



Trusts, Tax, Probate and Estates continued

- *Khan v Gany Holdings* BVIHC (Com) No. 10 of 2012. Claim for an account against trustee of a BVI trust.
- *Al-Sadi v Al-Sadi* [2013] EWHC 2379 (Ch). Costs on the claimants' discontinuance of their action.
- *Slutsker v Haron* [2013] EWCA Civ 430 (CA). Challenge to a Cayman trust of real property in London by the husband of the settlor claiming rights under Russian family law.
- *In the Estate of Mong Man Wai William* [2012] CACV 34/2012. Hong Kong Court of Appeal decision in Beddoe proceedings directing executors not to use estate funds to oppose the interests of the beneficiaries of the estate.
- *Scarfe v Matthews* [2012] W.T.L.R. 1579. Will construction; the application of the doctrine of election where rights of forced heirship are asserted under French law.
- *Cripps Trust Corp Ltd v Sands* [2013] W.T.L.R. 579. Beneficiaries successfully oppose a Beddoe application where the trustees sought permission to use trust funds for arguably unnecessary litigation.
- *Al-Sadi v Al-Sadi* [2011] EWHC 976 (Comm). Whether claimant can rely on amended pleading when defendant applies to set aside service out of the jurisdiction.
- *Howell v Lees-Millais* [2011] EWCA Civ 786. Court of Appeal decision on CPR Part 36 offers.
- *Re Servoz-Gavin, Deceased* [2011] Ch 162; [2010] 1 All ER 410. Nuncupative Wills: Validity of an oral will made by a merchant seaman in service with a foreign vessel.
- *Jones v Firkin-Flood* [2008] EWHC 2417 (Ch). Removal of trustees for breaches of duty including failure to supervise business assets controlled by the trust.
- *Sharp v Adam* [2006] WTLR 1059 (Court of Appeal). Testamentary capacity of testator with advanced multiple sclerosis.
- *Abacus Trust (Isle of Man) Co v Barr* [2003] Ch 409. Application of the Rule in Hastings-Bass. The origin of the principle that the court would only intervene where there had been a breach of fiduciary duty, which was subsequently upheld in *Futter v Futter* in the Supreme Court.
- *Schindler v Brie* [2003] WTLR 1361, [2003] EWCH 1804 (Ch). Power of attorney granted to pursue claim in Germany for War reparations; whether power was revocable; whether claimant should continue as personal representative.

Art and Cultural Property

Gilead has been involved in Art & Cultural Property cases since 2006, when he led Professor Norman Palmer QC in a claim by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre for the return of a collection of human remains held by the Natural History Museum. He is now regularly instructed by museums and auction houses in claims for restitution or disputes over title, and art-related cases have become an important part of his practice. He has represented parties before the Spoliation Panel, and has given expert evidence in art-related cases in the US. Most recently, he was instructed to act as sole arbitrator (under LCIA Rules) in a claim by a wealthy collector to rescind the purchase of two Old Master paintings that had been bought from a major London gallery.

Gilead is recognised as one of three Leading Silks specialising in Art & Cultural Property in the Legal 500 2019 ("**an experienced advocate with real knowledge of the art market and its issues**") and is featured in Band 2 in Chambers HNW 2019 ("**He is steeped in knowledge of trusts and bailments as they relate to art matters**"). He is the author of a chapter on the limitation of actions in *Palmer on Bailment*, and recently contributed a chapter to *Trusts, Artistic Estates and Collections* (2019) entitled "Inherited Guilt and Inherited Grievance: Prescription, Limitation and Ownership of the Past" (Trusts & Trustees review can be read [here](#)).



Art and Cultural Property continued

Cases include:

- *Re Claim for Beaching a Boat* [2014]. Claim before the Spoliation Panel for the restitution of a painting.
- *Schoyen v UCL*. A case concerning disputed antiquities.
- *Trustees of the Natural History Museum v Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre*. A dispute about a collection of human remains in the custody of the Natural History Museum.

Gilead is a member of the LCIA, and has recently been listed as an arbitrator and mediator in Art Law cases by the [Court of Arbitration for Art](#) (CAfA).

Charities

- *Re St Andrew's (Cheam) Lawn Tennis Club Trust* [2012] 3 All ER 746. Gift of land intended to provide tennis club for members of Presbyterian Church; trust deed held void for perpetuity; land held on resulting trust for estate of the settlor.
- *Re Horley Football Club* [2006] WTLR 1817. Validity of gift to unincorporated association. Construction of rules of amateur football club.

Arbitration and ADR

Gilead is a member of the LCIA and an accredited arbitrator and mediator with the Court of Arbitration for Art (CAfA). He is also a CEDR accredited mediator.

As well as having extensive experience as an advocate, Gilead has acted as sole arbitrator and mediator in a variety of international and domestic disputes. He has specialist expertise in the field of Art & Cultural Property, but his practice includes general trust and commercial issues.

Recent experience includes acting as sole arbitrator in a dispute between a gallery and a private collection concerning the provenance of two Old Master paintings sold at auction; acting as mediator in a dispute between the branches of an extended family over the allocation of assets held under a Jersey trust; providing an Expert Determination in a claim against a firm of solicitors for negligent drafting of Instruments of Appointment and Retirement of Trustees of three Isle of Man trusts.