

LEADING INTERNATIONAL MEDIA LAWYER TO HEAD CORPORATE TEAM



The former legal director of one of the world's leading media sector companies has joined Harvey Ingram Owston as head of the Corporate Law department.

John Stobart joins the firm after nine years with London-based Taylor Nelson Sofres - a FTSE 250 plc ranked as the fourth largest company in the market information sector worldwide.

John, 47, established the legal function at TNS, which he joined in 1993.

He played a key role as a member of that company's management team in growing the business throughout the 1990s, making acquisitions and forming joint ventures in the UK, US, Europe and Asia.

Heading a team of four other lawyers he has been responsible for more than 20 high value transactions in the past three years in countries as diverse as the United States, South Africa, Argentina and Turkey as well as the UK.

The firm's strategy is to use John's experience in and expertise in international business to strengthen further and grow the range and depth of Harvey Ingram Owston's corporate business.

John said: "Harvey Ingram Owston is the pre-

eminent legal firm in the East Midlands with a strong client base and great potential for further growth.

"I have been looking for some time for the right UK law firm for my next challenge and HIO provides the ideal opportunity."

"Lawyers are sometimes regarded as being detached from business matters but that has certainly never been true in my own case.

"In my view there really is no hard and fast line separating business and legal matters.

"They should be seen as two dimensions working together cohesively."

"When I was working in industry I needed to be very business orientated and that is a discipline that I am bringing to my new role in private practice."

"Every corporate legal decision has a financial consequence and as lawyers we need to be aware of the financial implications for business of all the legal advice we give."

John also has first hand experience of the Midlands business scene, having worked as a legal adviser in the Birmingham office of venture capitalist 3i in the 1980s.

He said: "There are a number of sectors which are particularly strong in Leicestershire, such as publishing and printing and the high-tech industries."

John will also be using his specialist media sector expertise in the areas of intellectual property, trademarks and brands to help East

Midlands companies gain maximum benefit from branding.

He added: "There is already much awareness of the value and importance of brands in the consumer market but for industrial companies too their brand image is quite often their most significant asset."

Harvey Ingram Owston managing partner Chris Finlay said John's appointment represented a significant development for the firm.

He added: "John's knowledge of international business combined with his specialist expertise in the media sector will be highly beneficial both to the firm and our corporate clients."

John, who has a law degree from Hull University, qualified as a solicitor in 1978.

He currently lives in Cambridgeshire but is relieved to have given up the daily commute to London and is looking forward to moving to Leicestershire in the near future as soon as the farmhouse his wife has found is fully renovated.

He and his wife both enjoy horse riding and own several dogs.

John also describes himself as 'a keen soccer spectator' and plans to become a regular follower of Leicester City.

He added: "Many of my new colleagues are big supporters of Leicester Tigers, so I am also going to have to brush up my knowledge of rugby union."

Taking an active role in the wider local community is something we at Harvey Ingram Owston take extremely seriously.

In recent years we have sought to strengthen further our external links in the area in which we operate in a variety of different ways.

For example, we recently sponsored the Coach of the Year award in the Leicestershire Sports Awards and for the past several years we have been a category sponsor and judge of the Leicestershire Business Awards.

Our senior partner Stephen Woolfe is heavily involved in the local and regional business community, serving on the boards of both Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce and the East Midlands' CBI board.

Similarly, corporate partner Roy Botterill is a board member of Leicestershire Business Voice, while I act as a director of Leicester Promotions. The firm's involvement in the wider community, however, extends beyond partner level to include all employees.

Every year, for example, many female members of staff take part in Race for Life - a charity event that raises money for cancer research.

Playing a part in the life of the local community not only benefits the groups, associations and organisations we support and assist, it is good for workplace morale.

It serves to heighten awareness of our firm and it helps improve public understanding of the legal profession.



Chris Finlay Managing Partner

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Lucy Bawden

Wider parental rights bring big changes for local employers

New laws that will give working parents more time off work are expected to have a major impact on Leicestershire businesses. Employment specialist Lucy Bawden looks at the implications.

Following its re-election, the Government announced several changes aimed at helping both fathers and mothers balance their work responsibilities with family life.

These proposed changes will enable women to take a year's maternity leave and allow men to take two weeks' paid paternity leave when their child is born.

They will also see existing parental leave legislation extended to include parents of children aged under five as at December 15 1999.

These changes are likely to have a substantial effect on companies in Leicestershire, especially smaller owned managed businesses.

Although some of the payments made to employees can be recouped and parental leave remains unpaid, employers will still bear the costs involved in covering absences and implementing systems to deal with the new legislation.

The Government has put the cost of extending the employment of someone providing temporary maternity cover at around three to five per cent of an employer's weekly wages bill.

It is nevertheless hoped the new legislation will actually save companies money in the longer term.

The Government expects these changes to lead to a fall in the number of women who drop out of the labour market or return to jobs below their skill level.

This should help reduce the costs of recruitment and training and sickness absence.

The Government estimate that if only 10 per cent of women who are currently not returning to work decide to go back to work, it would save UK employers up to £42 million a year in recruitment and training costs alone.



Who Killed the Entrepreneur?

Corporate partner Roy Botterill was asked to play a rather different role recently when Harvey Ingram Owston co-hosted 'Who Killed the Entrepreneur?' - a unique interactive workshop and business dinner.

The event focused on imaginary firm of local fabricators IM Fiction & Sons Ltd that has folded with huge debts, owing money to 300 creditors and placing several other county businesses at risk of collapse.

Roy played the part of IM Fiction's boffin John Smith at a mock creditors' meeting at which attendees took on the role of the creditors.

To provide additional authenticity delegates were encouraged to give evidence, ask awkward

questions and even heckle the company directors and their insolvency adviser.

This unique event gave business people greater insight into the facts about business rescue - and revealed how they could maximise the recovery of their debts should they ever be confronted with this situation in reality.

Mike Siddall of the Royal Bank of Scotland played 'dodgy' director Ian Fiction, while Brian Hamblin of PKF in Leicester took on the role of insolvency practitioner.

The event - which also gave delegates the chance to network - took place Leicester at City Football Club.



Highlighting the needs of trainee solicitors

Two young lawyers from Harvey Ingram Owston have been instrumental in furthering the aims of The National Trainee Solicitors' Group (TSG).

Newly qualified solicitor Verity Chase and solicitor Michelle Holloway are two of only eight elected directors of the group, which has around 45,000 members and represents more than 22 per cent of the Law Society's total membership.

The TSG counts among its membership all student members of the Law Society, trainees and newly qualified solicitors.

Verity, the TSG's chair and Michelle, the group's education officer, have been heavily involved in

the running of the Group and in its recent high profile achievements.

A major milestone has been the group's successful lobbying for student and trainee representation on the Law Society Council.

Verity has been actively involved in highlighting the serious problem of debt that increasingly faces many new entrants to the legal profession.

While in office they have assisted in the development of the TSG free phone help line service, which takes an average of 41 calls a month.

The help line provides advice on everything from

coping with debt to difficulties at work, as well as helping trainees find training contracts. Michelle added: "Our work with the TSG has been gruelling but rewarding."

"We have had to attend a lot of meetings and weekends away, as well as keep on top of our normal work, but thankfully our firm has generously supported and encouraged us in all that we have done."

"Our involvement in the TSG help line has also made us appreciate the standard of training and support, that we, as trainees, have received at Harvey Ingram Owston."

Enterprising businesses receive ongoing support

Harvey Ingram Owston has pledged its continued commitment to the Leicestershire Business Awards by again sponsoring the Enterprise category.

The firm has been a major sponsor of the annual awards since the event was first launched nine years ago.

As awards judges, senior partner Stephen Woolfe and company commercial partner Roy Botterill have both had an input in helping to select the 2002 finalists who are Unipepe of Lutterworth, Loughborough Surface Analysis Ltd and Leicester-based Metafacture.

Stephen Woolfe said Harvey Ingram Owston had specifically chosen to sponsor the Enterprise category because it reflected the firm's role in assisting enterprising county businesses to grow and prosper.

He added: "The Leicestershire Business Awards are a major highlight in the county's annual business calendar.

"It is important that as Leicestershire's largest firm of solicitors we support this event and help further the county's deserved reputation for entrepreneurial flair.

"Enterprise is vital to the general health of our local economy, bringing rewards not only for

individual companies but also helping create new jobs and business opportunities for Leicestershire."

The awards again comprise the seven categories of enterprise, sales and marketing, export, inward investment, success through people, innovation and contribution to the community - with the finalists automatically considered for the Leicestershire Business of the Year 2002.

The winners will be announced at the awards presentation and dinner at De Montfort Hall, Leicester on Friday March 8.

Voluntary sector benefits from Leicestershire ProHelp

Harvey Ingram Owston is taking a lead role in Leicestershire ProHelp - a venture that will provide free professional support to charities and community groups across the county.

Pro-Help, inspired by Business in the Community, is a national network of professionals such as solicitors, accountants, marketing consultants, architects and surveyors, each of whom agrees to commit a certain number of hours each year to helping the voluntary sector,

Leicestershire ProHelp, which is chaired by HIO senior partner Stephen Woolfe, was recently launched in the city and already has a small core of members representing a cross-section of professional services.

The current value of commitment given by the Leicestershire members currently amounts to £60,000 a year, but this figure is expected to grow to around £100,000 a year as membership increases.

So far the Leicestershire ProHelp has advised on around 30 projects ranging from the simple to the complex,

These have included giving advice on the state of buildings, valuations, preparing business plans, marketing and public relations, charity registration and the funding of proposed community centres.

Groups seeking ProHelp's assistance have included those caring for the very young and teenagers, all sections of the adult community and the elderly.

They encompass all cultures, with work being undertaken on behalf of some of the city and county's most deprived areas.

Speaking at the launch at the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, Stephen Woolfe said it was vital ProHelp involved the whole community in its work.

He added: "We want our community to develop and to prosper - particularly those elements caring for the weak, the poor and the underprivileged." "It is the responsibility of us all to ensure that we are comfortable with the society in which we live and work and it is vitally important that we all

make every effort to achieve that."



Pictured (from left to right) at the ProHelp launch are Christopher Jonas, National Chairman, ProHelp; Kevan Liles, Director, Voluntary Action Leicester; David Wilson, Chairman, David Wilson Homes (sponsor of the launch event); Amanda Burgess, Business in the Community, Leicestershire ProHelp; Stephen Woolfe, Chairman, Leicestershire ProHelp; and Nicholas Corah, Chairman, Leicestershire Cares.

COMPANY/COMMERCIAL PARTNER ROY BOTTERILL LOOKS AT HOW THE DUE DILIGENCE PROCESS CAN AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF A DEAL



What is due diligence?

Due diligence is the information gathering process which enables a prospective buyer to find out as much as possible about a target business or company and decide whether the acquisition represents a plausible investment.

This process helps the purchaser to build a clear picture of the target's strengths and weaknesses and identify any areas where problems might arise.

Done properly and in conjunction with appropriate warranty cover, due diligence should mean that following completion the buyer is not caught unaware by any undisclosed liabilities.

Due diligence is usually carried out in three different areas - commercial, legal and financial.

Commercial

This is normally undertaken by the buyer, although advisers, usually financial, may be asked to assist.

Commercial due diligence enables the buyer to test the basis of the assumptions it has made in making an offer for the target and the accuracy of the buyer's existing business plan.

This procedure involves a review of a broad range of business issues such as the industry in which the target operates.

It also looks at the target's main customers, suppliers and competitors as well as its marketing, advertising and research and development strategies.

This is an essential part of the due diligence process - allowing the buyer to plan for the long-term management of the target and its integration into the buyer's existing structure.

The effectiveness of commercial due diligence can be improved if there are continuing managers of the target who are keen to work with the buyer.

They will be more willing to disclose issues relating to the running of the business than a seller who will have no interest in the target following completion.

If the continuing managers can be brought on board early, the buyer has a better chance of discovering any major problems early on and finding out how the business is really run on a day-to-day basis.

It should also assist the buyer in evaluating whether it has the right people to run the business going forward and where cost savings can be made.

Legal

Legal due diligence usually takes the form of the buyer's solicitors sending a long list of questions to the seller.

It is standard practice in legal due diligence to cover areas such as contracts, employees, information technology, intellectual property, trading, pensions, litigation, insurance and major assets.

Before this is done, however, the solicitor should sit down with his client and find out what information the buyer already has and if there are any particular areas of concern relating to the target and to the industry sector in which the target operates.

The questionnaire should focus on the particular areas of the business that are most important to the buyer. Sellers are often overwhelmed and annoyed by long lists of irrelevant yet time consuming enquiries. If the questionnaire is not tailored correctly, then the seller might not spend sufficient time and effort providing responses.

For example if the target is a retailer, particular attention should be given to supplier contracts and property matters.

If particular contracts are key to the business, it may be important during the due diligence process to assess the attitude of the other parties to those contracts to the proposed

acquisition. If they do not wish to continue their relationship with the target following completion, the purchase may not be worth pursuing.

In order to deal effectively with the industry specific areas, it may also be necessary to have a specialist report prepared. If the target were a waste management company, for instance, an environmental report would be crucial in assessing the level of risk the buyer will be assuming.

It is often left to the solicitor simply to get on with legal due diligence as merely a paper collecting exercise. However it is vital that the buyer gets involved in analysing the information obtained, as it is only the buyer who can make a commercial judgement on the issues raised.

A considerable amount of time needs to be spent in sifting through the replies to enquiries to build up an accurate picture of the target's operation.

If legal due diligence is not carried out properly the buyer cannot effectively assess the level of risk being assumed.

This is especially so in the case of a share acquisition where the company is acquired by the buyer in its entirety with all the positives and negatives that it contains.

Financial

Due diligence relating to the financial aspects of the target should enable the buyer to assess the risks and opportunities connected with the acquisition - and whether the perceived benefits of buying the business are likely to materialise.

It should be carried out as early as possible as its results are often a determining factor in how a deal is financed and structured.

It is essential that a thorough review of the target is undertaken as the buyer cannot rely on the audited accounts of the target.

Financial due diligence is probably perceived by the buyer to be the most important element of

the due diligence process as if the figures do not add up the target may not be worth acquiring. To ensure the due diligence process is properly managed between the various advisers, clear demarcations of responsibility should be drawn up so that work is not replicated or vital information missed.

Due diligence as a bargaining tool

The information acquired by the buyer during the due diligence process is important in assisting the drafting of the sale documentation.

Due diligence should highlight the areas where specific indemnity protection is required by the buyer and where the warranties should be focused.

While the warranties are negotiated to provide the buyer with contractual protection, in reality they may be of little practical use if a significant problem is discovered post-completion. The buyer would rather know of any major problems or areas of concern before the purchase and use them as a bargaining tool.

In extreme cases they may make the deal too risky and cause the buyer to pull out of the deal.

If specific liabilities are identified, the buyer may want to change the structure of the deal to avoid those liabilities.

For example in one transaction, due diligence revealed that the target company had been paying kick backs to contractors with potential taxation and criminal consequences. That deal went from a share to an asset sale so that those liabilities could be left behind with the seller.

More usually however, the buyer may be looking for a price reduction to reflect the additional risks it will be taking on.

In one deal, US investors were put off completing an acquisition as due diligence showed that the director/shareholder of the seller company had been a director/shareholder of a company that had gone into receivership. This was unacceptable to the US buyer and the deal fell through.

Due diligence should also indicate if any ancillary documentation such as assignments or consents are required. On the acquisition of a company that relied heavily on its intellectual property, it was discovered that the intellectual property was in fact owned by one of the directors, not by the company. Therefore assignments had to be executed before the transaction could proceed.

Seller's tactics

The amount of information revealed to the buyer and the timing of the flow of information can be an important tactic for the seller.

By keeping back the most important information, such as details of major contracts, the seller can keep the upper hand in the bargaining process.

If problems are not disclosed until well down the completion route, the buyer will have already invested time and money on professional advice and might feel morally obliged to complete having progressed so far.

For the same reasons, the seller may wish to limit the buyer's access to the continuing management in case they impart any information that the seller would rather delay revealing.

Conclusion

Due diligence if carried out effectively, can affect the outcome of a deal in the following ways:

- Better integration of the target into the buyer's existing structure.
- Increased ability of the buyer to plan the target's future following completion.
- It can uncover issues to be used by the buyer when negotiating the price and structure of a deal.
- It can assist in the drafting of appropriate protection for the buyer in warranties and indemnities.
- Ultimately it can determine whether the buyer proceeds with the deal at all.



The English Planning System - Chaos out of Order

Associate Paul Hunt, planning law specialist in Harvey Ingram Owston's Commercial Property department, looks at how changes to Government planning policy are creating a serious dilemma for residential developers and landowners.

It has long been a fundamental part of the planning system in England and Wales that when considering planning applications regard should be paid to any development plans relating to the site in question.

Local Authorities produce development plans that contain policies aimed at guiding development in their areas.

This means that in Local Plans, produced by district councils, and in Unitary Development Plans, drawn up by unitary authorities, land can be allocated for specific purposes such as housing, employment and retail.

This process enables Local Authorities to create a blue-print for major development in their areas and thus control the pattern of growth.

The public has a right to participate in the formulation of such plans - and it was expected that their coverage nationally would bring greater certainty as people would know what development would be allowed and where.

Local Authorities have spent many years and considerable sums of money putting in place comprehensive development plans as required by law under Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

However, the planning system has recently been plunged into chaos as a result of the Government's new policy on housing development contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3).

To reduce pressure on the countryside, PPG3 states that previously developed land rather than greenfield sites should be used for housing - a laudable objective but one that has left developers and planners with a terrible dilemma.

Local Authorities are faced with planning applications for residential developments on greenfield sites that have already been earmarked for housing in their plans.

Although such applications have planning policy support under Section 54A, Local Authorities are now obliged to also consider the advice laid down by PPG3.

Many authorities, including several in Leicestershire, are being required by Government to review their plans as soon as they are adopted, which may result in a reversal of original housing allocations.

For developers and landowners who have invested a substantial amount of money in promoting allocated sites, the consequences of this could be financially devastating.

Many will have proceeded on the basis that once included in an adopted plan the granting of planning permission for housing would be a formality.

Although the Government's objectives are laudable, the consequences of this policy are grossly unfair.

To avoid this chaotic situation, the Government's advice in PPG3 should have been made applicable to plans in the early stages of preparation where site options were still being considered.



Personal Data - Are You Processing It Legally?

Legislation regulating the use of information about individuals has been with us for some time.

In March 2000, though, the Data Protection Act 1998 came into force and its provisions show that the Government really means business.

A breach of the Act is a criminal offence, an enforcement notice could prevent you from processing personal data and individuals could bring a civil action for damages.

Transitional provisions mean that businesses have some respite in some instances in respect of personal data they were processing before October 1998.

However, the transitional provisions are complex and it is advisable to establish whether

your business needs to notify its particulars to the Information Commissioner at the Data Protection Registry.

It is also important to have procedures and documentation in place to ensure compliance with the Act.

This will include:

- **Appointing a Data Protection Compliance Officer.**
- **Drawing up a data protection policy for your business.**
- **Ensuring that your security procedures are adequate.**
- **Entering into a written agreement with other**

businesses - including companies within your own group which process personal data for you.

- **Ensuring that you are ready to respond to request from individuals about the information you hold which relates to them.**



For further information on the provisions of the Act and the steps you should be taking, please contact:
Margaret Davies.

Harvey Ingram Owston appoints new corporate partner

Well-known Leicester lawyer Simon Astill has been appointed a Corporate Partner with Harvey Ingram Owston.

He joins the firm having qualified in 1992 and gained experience in banking and deals work with City law firm Turner Kenneth Brown.

Simon has practised locally and at partner level since 1995.

He said: "Harvey Ingram Owston is the leading firm in Leicestershire for corporate legal work and this move gives me greater scope to specialise."

Welcoming him to the firm, senior partner

Stephen Woolfe said Simon's appointment would further strengthen the Corporate Department.

He added: "Simon is well known and respected in Leicestershire's business community and I am sure his knowledge and experience will be a great asset to the firm."

Simon lives in South Leicestershire with his wife Virginia, who is also a solicitor, and their three young children.

A sports fan, he supports Leicester Tigers and is a member of Leicestershire Golf Club.





Employers warned of Cyber-liability

Workers who send 'inappropriate' e-mails are exposing their employers to the threat of Cyber-liability, says Harvey Ingram Owston employment law specialist **Oliver Bennett**.

An e-mail regarded as amusing by one employee may offend another - and could leave employers open to harassment claims.

To prevent misuse of new technology, our employment law department is urging all businesses to have clear policies on computer use by staff.

As ever, America has led the way, but UK courts and tribunals are beginning to catch up with Cyber-liability, a new source of litigation.

Employers can be held vicariously liable for offensive e-mails sent to staff by other employees, even if they are unauthorised.

The 'forward' e-mail function increases the risk of large numbers of employees seeing communications that they could find offensive.

E-mail harassment may even give rise to personal injury claims where e-mails cause severe stress and injury to mental health.

However, employers will have a defence if they can show that they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent such harassment, and in the case of personal injury, only 'authorised' e-mails will give rise to vicarious liability of the employer.

It should also be remembered that it is easy for

employees accidentally to bind their employers to contracts formed by e-mails and internet sites.

And firms could be held liable for negligent virus transmission by their staff.

Communications networks do not respect moral, geographical or cultural boundaries. This can increase the legal risks.

Employers need to minimise the legal risks and practical hazards of workplace computer use - such as loss of productivity due to personal use of networks during working hours - while maximising the advantages of new technology.

New sponsorship deal signed with Leicester Tigers

Harvey Ingram Owston is sponsoring Austin Healey, the versatile Leicester Tigers and British Lions rugby star.

The sponsorship deal is part of a corporate sponsorship package agreed by the law firm and Leicester Tigers.

Austin Healey, who plays at scrum half, fly half or on the wing, was voted both Leicester Tigers and Allied Dunbar player of the season in 1999/2000 and is renowned for his pace and unpredictability.

Commenting on the deal, senior partner Stephen Woolfe - himself a Tigers supporter

- said the firm was delighted to further its involvement with the rugby club.

He added: "This deal further strengthens Harvey Ingram Owston's professional sporting links within the county.

"I am very pleased with the sponsorship package that we have agreed and am looking forward to further Tigers' successes."



Austin Healey

Corporate team steps up footwear sector deal activity - and advises on a 'cool' acquisition.

The firm's corporate team was responsible for hammering out a multi-million pound deal involving the purchase of Jones Bootmaker from the group headed by Italian fashion house Prada.

HIO was chosen to act for the consortium buying the national shoe shop chain because of its wide experience in both the footwear retailing and manufacturing sectors.

The Jones deal followed hard on the heels of the £6 million acquisition by way of stock exchange listed footwear retailer Oliver by Shoezone - another deal on which both our corporate finance and retail property teams advised.



That is believed to be the largest public offer undertaken by an East Midlands law firm during the past few years.

Other corporate deals in the sector during the past 18 months on which we have also advised include the \$17 million acquisition of US shoe component manufacturer Foss of New Hampshire by Leicester-based Texon, and Texon's purchase of leading computer aided footwear design software company Crispin Dynamics.

Our retail and corporate teams are providing ongoing advice to several companies in the footwear sector and major retail clients include Coral Leisure, Midlands Co-op and Vision Express.

Outside the retail sector, HIO has also been involved in what the legal press termed 'one of the coolest deals.'

The corporate team advised national refrigeration contracting group WR Group Holdings Ltd on its third major acquisition in almost as many years.

WR, based in Frog Island, Leicester, bought the Gloucester-based UK division of a large German refrigeration company for an undisclosed figure, enabling WR to add supermarkets Sainsbury's and Netto to its long-list of big retail customers.



This acquisition also saw WR enter the Northern Ireland market for the first time.

WR, which expects to increase turnover from £55 million to £64 million in the next 12 months, last year joined the Sunday Times 100 fastest growing non-quoted companies in terms of profit.

Harvey Ingram Owston

welcomes three new trainee solicitors

THREE NEW TRAINEES - TWO OF WHOM STUDIED AT LEICESTER UNIVERSITY - HAVE RECENTLY BEEN WELCOMED TO THE FIRM.

Law graduate Matthew Duckworth, who took his degree at Leicester, is currently working in our commercial property department.

Originally from Blackburn, he is a keen footballer and a supporter of Blackburn Rovers.

Johanne Cosgrove is also from Lancashire and studied Law with French at Leicester University and Strasbourg University.

She is currently working in the personal injury department and lists music and cycling among her interests.

Caroline Sutcliffe, from Leicester, studied English at Birmingham University. She is currently working in the residential property department.

Caroline enjoys dance and sport, supporting both Leicester City and Leicestershire County Cricket Club.



PICTURED: Matthew Duckworth, Caroline Sutcliffe, Johanne Cosgrove.

Harvey Ingram Owston is one of the leading law firms in the East Midlands, specialising in corporate transactions, commercial work, commercial property, commercial litigation and private client work. The firm has 21 partners and a total staff of approximately 200.

If you would like more information about any of the matters dealt with in Briefcase, or wish to discuss them in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact the person named in the relevant article.

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Julian Hobday

It is with the deepest regret that Harvey Ingram Owston announces the death of well-respected Commercial Property partner Julian Hobday.

Julian, who was only 38, died following an operation for a heart condition.

He leaves a widow, Debbie and a young daughter, Rachel.

Julian joined the firm as a partner in the Commercial Property department in 1996 and specialised in retail property and betting licensing.

A graduate of Nottingham Law School, he qualified as a solicitor in 1987.

Senior partner Stephen Woolfe described Julian as a lawyer of the highest calibre with a wealth of experience and excellent client relationships.

He added: "I know that Julian will be very sadly missed by all at Harvey Ingram Owston who were lucky to have worked with him and been close to him.

Equally our thoughts at this time are with Debbie and Rachel."

