

## Rising Star: Shearman's Simon Burrows

By Tom Zanki

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Handling nine deals worth more than £2.3 billion (\$3.4 billion) in 2014 alone, Simon Burrows' knack for deal-making has played a key role in growing Shearman & Sterling LLP's stand-alone private equity practice, and earned him a spot among Law360's top private equity attorneys under 40.

The 33-year-old Rising Star joined Shearman's London team in 2013, just as the firm, which had been dealing in private equity for years, decided it was time to form a dedicated practice focused on the booming industry.

The timing worked on both ends, with the practice blossoming due in no small part to Burrows, who belonged to a team that won 72 separate mandates from 15 different private equity houses within 12 months of arriving at the firm.

Over the past year, Burrows says, the London team has handled 23 private equity transactions, most of which involved Burrows, who credits the robust climate in 2014 that made more deals ripe for the picking.

"The fundraising environment was a lot better last year," Burrows tells Law360. "When you look at funds, there was a lot of what we call 'dry powder,' so there was a lot of more funding to go around."

Notable among his deals over the past year were advising private equity giant Bridgepoint Capital Ltd. on its \$363 million acquisition of TTT Moneycorp Ltd. from RBS Special Opportunities, and two deals with Vitruvian Partners LLP, including the London firm's \$136 million acquisition of JacTravel Group from Bowmark Capital LLP.

Burrows says landing London-based Bridgepoint as a client, a European leader in the midmarket segment with about £11.4 billion in assets under management, enhanced the stature of the firm's young private equity group. He says Shearman has long had a deep pool of talent doing private equity deals, but that gaining business from Bridgepoint was seen as a vindication of the stand-alone department's development.



Simon Burrows

“Shearman has done private equity for years and years. We just haven’t shouted from the rooftop about it,” Burrows says.

Burrows, one of four Shearman private equity specialists in London among 80 partners firmwide, says the recent past has also stood out for its diversity of deals across wide-ranging industries. He represented Morgan Stanley Global Private Equity on the sale of Zenith Vehicle Contracts Group Ltd. to HgCapital last year, coming full circle four years after representing Morgan Stanley as a Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP attorney when the investment firm first bought a majority stake in Zenith.

The University of Cambridge law school graduate also represented senior management of Hastings Insurance Group Holdings PLC on the \$1.1 billion enterprise value sale of a 50 percent stake to Goldman Sachs’ merchant banking division; investment holding company Kuwait Projects Co., known as Kipco, on its \$3.7 billion disposal of a controlling interest in Wataniya Telecom; RBS on its \$1.25 billion listing of Samsonite International SA on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange; and Houghton Mifflin Riverdeep Group PLC on its \$4 billion acquisition of Harcourt from Reed Elsevier, among other multibillion-dollar deals.

Having practiced for more than 10 years, Burrows says the ability to gain clients' trust through personal connection counts as much as mastery of legal details.

Simple as it has sounds, Burrows says, demonstrating a willingness to roll up your sleeves and win the hearts and minds of management is what brings clients back. Most private equity ownerships of assets only last three to five years anyway, so attorneys know they need to form solid relationships because they will soon work with the same firms again, he adds.

“Enjoying their wins and feeling the pains,” Burrows says. “That is the key. If your client doesn’t feel you are worried about them, you are not going to be able to get a lot of deals done.”

--Editing by Edrienne Su.