



Robert Lawson KC

Arbitrator

Called: 1989

Silk: 2009

Email: robert.lawson@quadrantchambers.com

Phone: +44(0)20 7583 4444

Rob is an internationally renowned aviation lawyer. He has focussed upon the world of, and law relating to, aviation throughout his legal career. This has consisted of practice at leading aviation sets at the London Bar from 1990 until 2017 - 5 Bell Yard and latterly Quadrant Chambers, followed by 9 years as a partner at the world's foremost aviation law firm, Clyde & Co LLP, including 3 years as chair of its Aviation Global Practice Group, and then his return to Quadrant as from February 2026.

Rob has broad experience in the aviation sector with regard to: air carrier liability (including attritional and major loss); regulatory and licensing issues (including ownership & control); carrier-original equipment manufacturer, product liability, ground handling, finance & leasing (wet and dry), slots and general intra-industry commercial disputes; inquests; insurance coverage; and contractual, treaty & statutory interpretation. In addition to advocacy and advisory work, from time to time he also acts as an arbitrator and as a mediator (for which he holds CI Arb accreditation).

Rob has acted and advised in many of the most notable aviation related disputes with an English or English law nexus that have arisen over the last three decades. Whilst at Clyde & Co he also acted in and managed aviation related disputes, including litigation, in many other jurisdictions around the world (both common and civil law). He has been named:

- Hall of Fame – Aviation, Legal 500 United Kingdom, 2026
- a 'Global Elite Thought Leader' by Lexology in both contentious aviation and aviation regulatory for 2025 & 2026 (and previously by Who's Who Legal - Transport in the same categories for 2024 & 2023 and in contentious aviation for 2022)
- a 'Thomson Reuters Stand-out Lawyer' for 2025
- Aviation Law – London Lawyer of the Year 2023 by Best Lawyers
- Transport: Individual (London) of the Year 2020 by Legal 500
- Aviation – Regulatory Lawyer of the Year 2020 by Who's Who Legal
- one of the 10 most highly regarded individuals in the world for contentious aviation by Who's Who Legal, 2014

He has also been acknowledged as a leading aviation lawyer by Chambers & Partner's Guide to the UK Legal Profession, The Legal 500, Expert Guides to the World's Leading Aviation Lawyers, Legal Experts, Best Lawyers in United Kingdom, International Who's Who of Aviation Lawyers, Lexology Index: Transport, Who's Who Legal: Transport, The Lawyer and Airline International's Aviation Counsel. In his first stint at the Bar he was also recognised in independent directories as a leading practitioner in Travel, International Arbitration, Product Liability and Professional Discipline.

Rob has published several works on air law and speaks regularly on the international air law conference circuit on a wide variety of aspects of aviation law, to date including at events organised by the International Civil Aviation Organization, International Air Transport Association, European Air Law Association, International Chamber of Commerce, UK Civil Aviation Authority, UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch, Leiden University, Luiss University and McGill University, amongst others.

He is Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and was Chairman of its Air Law Group from 2010 to 2016. He is also a fellow of the International Academy of Trial lawyers, and a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, the Executive Committee of the European Air Law Association and the Expert Committee of the Shanghai International Aviation Court of Arbitration.

Academic

MA (Oxon) - Politics, Philosophy & Economics
Dip. Law, City University

Publications

- Lexology In Depth, Aviation, chapter 'United Kingdom' 12th edition (2024) & 13th edition (2025), formerly The Aviation Law Review, (ed. Gates; Law Business Research Ltd), chapter 'The United Kingdom', 4th Edition (2016) - 11th Edition (2023)
- 'The Montreal Convention 1999: A Silver Jubilee Critique', Air & Space Law, Vol 49, No.4&5 (2024), p. 389
- The Montreal Convention 1999, A Commentary, (eds. Leloudas, Dempsey & Chassot; Edward Elgar, 2023), chapter 'Article 17 – Death and Injury to Passengers – Damage to Baggage'
- Elgar Concise Encyclopedia of Aviation Law (eds. Masutti & Mendes de Leon; Edward Elgar, 2023), entry 'Brexit (Aviation)'
- 'Unusual but Perhaps Not Unexpected: The Lonely Furrow Ploughed by the CJEU in Respect of an Article 17 'Accident'', Air & Space Law, Vol 48, No. 1 (2023), p.1
- 'Air Passenger Rights in the UK Post-Brexit: The Position so Far' Air & Space Law, Vol 46, Special Issue (2021), p. 45
- 'Brexit – will the flying public notice any meaningful difference?' (2021)
- 'The Potential for Exposure of Air Carriers to Passenger Liability in Respect of COVID-19' Air & Space Law, Vol 45, Special Issue (2020), p. 143
- 'The Montreal Convention 1999 at 21: has it come of age or passed its sell-by date?' Air & Space Law, Vol 45, No. 3 (2020), p.265; also published in Mandarin in the Aviation Law Review, pp.250-268 (2022) 《航空法评论(第10辑)》 with translation by Dongyuan Zhao
- 'COVID-19: état des lieux au 1er mai 2020 de la réponse du Royaume-Uni.' Revue Française de Droit Aérien et Spatial, 2020, Vol 293, p.14
- 'Will COVID-19 prove to be a great disruptor to progress of the EU State Aid policy?' (2020)
- Behind and Beyond the Chicago convention: The Evolution of Aerial Sovereignty (eds. Mendes de Leon & Buissing; Wolters Kluwer, 2019), chapter 'Does an Immovable Object Meet an Irresistible Force? An EU Perspective on the Apparent Tension Between the Protection of Airspace Sovereignty and the Notion of Private Sector Transnational Carriers'
- 'The Montreal Convention 1999 and the decisions of the ECJ in the case of IATA and Sturgeon - in harmony or discord?', Air & Space Law, Vol 36, No.2 (2011), p.99
- 'UK Air Passenger Duty held to be consistent with the Chicago convention', Air & Space Law, Vol 33, No.1 (2008), p.3
- Halsbury's Laws of England - title 'Aviation', Volume 2(3), 4th Edition Reissue (2003), also published with adaptation as The Laws of Scotland: Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia - title 'Aviation', Reissue (2003)