

Time out with Sandie Lyne

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Sandie Lyne's promotion to Partner at Ogier marks the latest step in an already impressive legal career.

As a Guernsey Advocate, Ms Lyne has extensive experience in commercial and financial dispute resolution, especially contentious trusts, restructuring, insolvency, and regulatory matters.

Working with a broad range of clients, including trust companies, insolvency practitioners and financial institutions, Sandie regularly advises in connection with complex and high-value international matters with multi-jurisdictional elements. While on secondment to Ogier's Cayman office, she acted on the restructuring of Ocean Rig, one of the highest value restructurings on record.

However, while her home and working life have taken her around the world, it's here in Guernsey that she feels she has found her base.

The daughter of diplomats who travelled the world by virtue of their official postings, Ms Lyne saw plenty of the globe in her early years. Born in Hertfordshire, she spent her early childhood in India and Stockholm, her teenage years in Trinidad and Tobago, and her early 20s in the Solomon Islands.

"That's where I have my love of the sea and islands from. I need that smell of sea air," she said.

"I walk to work and then home later along the front, which marks the beginning and the end of my working day. With the wind blowing in my face, it gives me time to digest and to think about what I've done during the day."

She also enjoys open-water swimming in the island's bays.

"I get a good sense of perspective from being in the water. My ambition is to complete the 30 Bays in 30 Days challenge."

Having returned to the UK to complete a degree in economics at Nottingham University, and then a conversion course at Nottingham Law School, Ms Lyne trained with Dawsons LLP in Lincoln's Inn and was admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales in 2009. She moved to Guernsey seven years ago from London and became a Guernsey Advocate in 2018.

It is fair to say that the island now flows through her veins.

"My secondment to Ogier in the Cayman Islands was a really great and seamless experience. I really like the Cayman Islands and I love offshore work. I enjoy breaking down complex matters, getting to the point, and working with clients to find the right strategy for their business," she said.

"That experience made me realise that offshore work was really something for me, and I wanted to be in Guernsey for the long term.

"Being away makes you realise that you have a sense of belonging. I've now been here seven years - it's the place I've lived the longest in my life."

Ms Lyne says she appreciates the lifestyle that the island can offer her.

"Guernsey has a safety aspect that is important; I can walk home at the end of the day - that's something I value very highly. It's also a base for travel elsewhere: my background has influenced my love of seeing the world. You can have stability in Guernsey but still be able to go away to many places and come back refreshed."

Her family now lives in the UK, both her parents enjoying retirement. Her brother has a similar love of travelling - she says the family is very close-knit. Therefore, lockdown has been hard for someone with such wanderlust.

"I went home for Christmas - it was very important that I managed to do that. I don't think we realise how lucky we have been over here. For a while, I think we lost the fear of coronavirus," she said.

It was during lockdown that Ms Lyne was promoted to Partner at Ogier.

"It's been great that I've had something to focus on. At Ogier there is a real sense of career progression. I'm doing great international work with great clients, as well as having a much better work/life balance.

"This is my third promotion. It is important to progress with a firm that values people and Ogier encourages people to keep learning. The important thing about being a Partner is that it is not just about being a good lawyer - our development programme is about developing all-round, it's about working in a team, knowing your place in that team, and being a mentor to others who are coming up. Everyone is always learning - even those who might have been with the firm for 20 years."

During her free time, she enjoys walking around the island, particularly the cliff paths. Her favourite stretch is in the far south-west, between Observation Tower MP3 on the Pleinmont headland and Fort Pezeries. She says she's always been attracted by Moulin Huet - though not with the same artistic leanings as another who favoured that south-coast gem, Pierre-Auguste Renoir.

"I'm not very artistic, although I do think creativity is important. Whether it's our career development programmes at Ogier or how we do business development, everyone is encouraged to be creative in the way we approach things."

Encouragement is a watchword that is strongly emphasised in Ogier's ethos. Ms Lyne is in the minority as a female Partner in a law firm, something the company wants to address. On International Women's Day 2021, Ogier announced a public commitment to reach 30% female leadership by 2025 and 40:40:20 (40% female, 40% male and 20% either female, male or non-binary) by 2030.

"In the legal profession, it's been the case for quite a while that with people at the earlier levels there is a more diverse intake. But that's not necessarily the case at the top. People do drop out along the way.

"At Ogier we have acknowledged that - and it's important to do so - so we have a diversity and inclusion programme, of which I am one of the joint leaders in Guernsey. It's about making sure there are opportunities available for people from all sectors. And it's important that everyone feels that they have the opportunity to contribute."

Ms Lyne's push for greater female representation within the profession extends to her participation within the Guernsey International Legal Association.

"I was president; I'm now vice-president. In terms of working and living in Guernsey, it's great to have that supportive network. As well as being a fun and informative forum for networking - which also offers a bursary scheme - we bring prominent legal guest speakers to the island.

"In 2019 we arranged to bring Baroness Hale to Guernsey. She had so many female lawyers queueing up to speak with her. That underlines the importance of having female role models. I've been lucky enough to train with some talented female partners and having women in leadership allows you to learn from, and be inspired by, someone who was once in your position. That's why diversity matters."

This article first appeared in Connect Guernsey.

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