

GWL Relaunch 12th May 2016 - Address

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends and Colleagues. Welcome to the relaunch of Guy Williams Layton.

I wanted to say Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your beers but it's probably not a good start to liken you all to a drunken Roman mob.

Anyway, for those of you who don't know me, I'm Jonathan Hogg, Managing Partner of GWL, and I'd like to assure you that I will keep this short and sweet so everyone can carry on with whatever I've just interrupted.

We are delighted that so many of you have joined us tonight to celebrate our relaunch.

We hope that you will be as impressed as we are with this exceptional room in one of the most beautiful buildings from Liverpool's golden age. We like to think that the restoration of this building as part of the renaissance of our wonderful city is a metaphor for the changes that GWL is now happily experiencing.

We just want to let you all know where we've come from, where we are now and where we're going.

The founding firms of GWL were first established in the glory days of Liverpool as a global trade centre. The oldest of these was Layton and Co which started in 1867. Another was JM Quiggin & Co, the eponymous founder of which was from a prominent shipping family. Then there was Guy Williams who gave the firm the name by which it is generally known. As you can see, the firm has an illustrious heritage closely connected with the city's prosperous past.

Like Liverpool itself, GWL has experienced some very difficult and lean years, as have most of us in this room. The decline of the traditional industries which had made us so prosperous hit everyone very hard. However, in the words of a great philosopher:

"we get knocked down but we get up again, you ain't never gonna keep us down"

Our great city has found other ways to develop and excel and we at GWL are doing exactly the same.

Moving on to the present, over the last year or so we have begun a program of steady and sustainable expansion.

- We have converted the firm to a Limited Liability Partnership. Having a more modern and commercial structure will assist the quality and expansion of our services.

- We have invested in a complete upgrade of our IT systems to improve speed of communication and cost effectiveness.
- We have redeveloped our internal structure and compliance procedures which will help us to improve the quality of our service.
- We have finally managed to obtain the *gwl* domain name for our website and emails which will make electronic communication much more intuitive. Gone are the days of having to explain why our email address is *gwq*.
- Those of you who have visited our Liverpool office recently will have noticed that our Landlord has invested over £120,000 in refurbishment of the common parts giving us a bright new look.
- We have been lucky to attract new partners and solicitors from other much larger firms. We strongly believe that our size and culture allow us to really care about our clients and service whilst still being able to offer high quality legal advice and support. It is exactly those values that are attracting such high quality clients and colleagues to us.

We are committed to continuing our expansion whilst retaining our core values of trust, integrity and excellent service.

Tonight is not only the relaunch of GWL as an LLP but also of our new branding which you will see on the banners (and on the cupcakes which have been made by our very own Mary Berry). The new livery will soon be the face of all our stationery.

GWL is in the very fortunate position of working with longstanding and loyal clients, staff and other professionals. We consider all of you to be our friends who have helped us to remain stable throughout the difficult times. You are essential to our success and we the Partners wish to thank the greater GWL team - that's all of you - for your continuing support without which we would not be where we are today, looking towards a very bright future.

All that remains is to thank you all once again for joining us tonight and as a small token of our appreciation we have a branded mobile phone power pack available for collection when you leave. For those of you who are iPhone users, there is a lightning connector cunningly concealed within which we can show you how to access if necessary.

So please eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow is Friday 13th!!