

INTRODUCTION BY DR ALEKA SHEPPARD, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
CENTRE

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to this magnificent Gibson Hall and what a fantastic gathering; Every sector of the industry is represented, and we owe it to you, our members and supporters, for inviting so many distinguished guests.

We are also honoured to have members of the judiciary here tonight. English judges have always shown an interest in matters concerning the industry, and this is very important for the development of the law in tandem with commercial developments. And may I say it is this factor, and your unbiased focus on serving the interests of justice, that attract foreign litigants to this jurisdiction, and also add to the strengths of London as a major maritime and commercial centre.

Thank you all for supporting this event so fully.

I am not just standing here to tell you why we have come together this evening. It is obviously, to enjoy ourselves with excellent food and wines.

But that would not be enough for the Cadwallader tradition. The Cad tradition is about tackling major issues affecting international maritime law and regulation.

This year, the symposium/dinner format is an innovation and a worthy successor to our 11 previous events held since 1998. But without our sponsors we would not be here tonight.

Holmans, are again our principal sponsors and we thank you for the lavish Champagne Reception; Spyros Karnesis of Elka Shipping, and Tsavlis Brothers, who were students of Cad, have supported this event from the beginning. Informa Law is a loyal supporter. Quadrant Chambers, Stone Chambers, 7 Kings bench Walk, Clyde & Co., Hill Dickinson, Braemar

Shipping, Linklaters and Cheeswrights are also our sponsors this year. We are grateful.

Cad would have appreciated the recognition given to him. This event, in his memory, has become a legend. We continue this legend because he was a talented teacher of maritime law, the first in the UK. Thousands of students, some of us here today, studied under him, enjoyed his Socratic way of teaching, and his Welsh jokes. But most of all, Professor Cadwallader is remembered for challenging unworkable law and for the development of maritime law.

Following that tradition, and being mindful of the centenary of the Titanic accident, our subject tackles an area which is never far from the headlines and popular concern when an accident happens at sea. With our title: 'From Titanic to Concordia' we aim to unravel the vulnerabilities of passenger ships.

So the concept of the Achilles Heel is, I think, appropriate to discuss. You may think, as Michael Grey did, who said to me: Aleka I can think of many 'Achilles Heels' of passenger ships. That may be so, and is a good observation, but I would ask you to ponder what the most vulnerable point might be for our discussion later.

Since the Titanic, there have been considerable changes in regulations. The Concordia gives us another opportunity to consider safety aspects of modern cruise ships.

You will hear it all from our speakers, Dr Stephen Payne and Rear Admiral John Lang, who will be introduced by Lord Clarke of Stone-cum-Ebony, the Chairman of the Symposium.