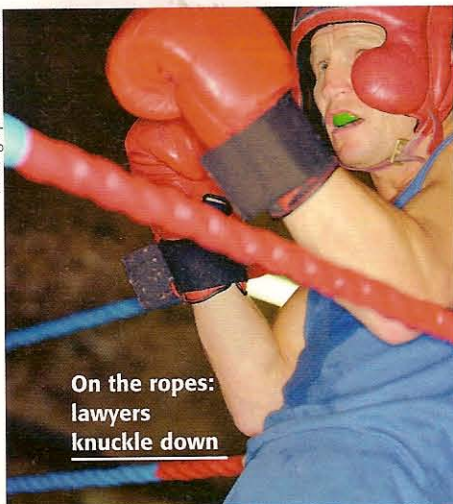


Lawyers in punch-up

A fight broke out last week at the swish St Katharine's Dock venue for the annual *Times* newspaper night lawyers' bash. Well, not really, but for a moment it looked like the real thing. As the mixture of media specialist solicitors and barristers tucked into the high-quality selection of canapés and free-flowing booze, attention focused on a stocky chap and a feisty blonde as they appeared to be trading blows. Far from rushing to intervene, many of the guests formed an impromptu ring and *Obiter* was tempted to open a book on the result. Rather disappointingly, it turned out that the male participant was solicitor-turned-writer Alex Wade and that the female lawyer was... ever the gentleman, *Obiter* will protect her identity and dignity – apart from saying that she stated she had recently been taking lessons and Mr Wade seemed impressed with her style. He should know. Mr Wade is a keen supporter of the pugilistic arts, having last year published *Wrecking Machine*, a book all about white-collar chaps who yearn to box. Look out for the paperback version this spring, he informs us.

Photograph: Rex Features



**On the ropes:
lawyers
knuckle down**

Baptism of fire

Obiter has yet another candidate for the 'Hold the front page' competition for trivia in press releases about appointments. Previous winners include the solicitor who kept tropical fish and had to miss her start date because of appendicitis. Her colleague also told us that he was pleased to get the job because he cycles and the secure cycle shed was 'a big plus'. Then there was a lawyer who went to the same Essex school as World Cup winner Geoff Hurst, but decades later. We'll spare the blushes of the latest entrant by keeping her identity a secret but it again demonstrates people's obsession with education. We are told that she 'was one of the first girls to attend Austin Friars school'. Even though she's now 36, who are we to say that the instructions won't flood in as a result?

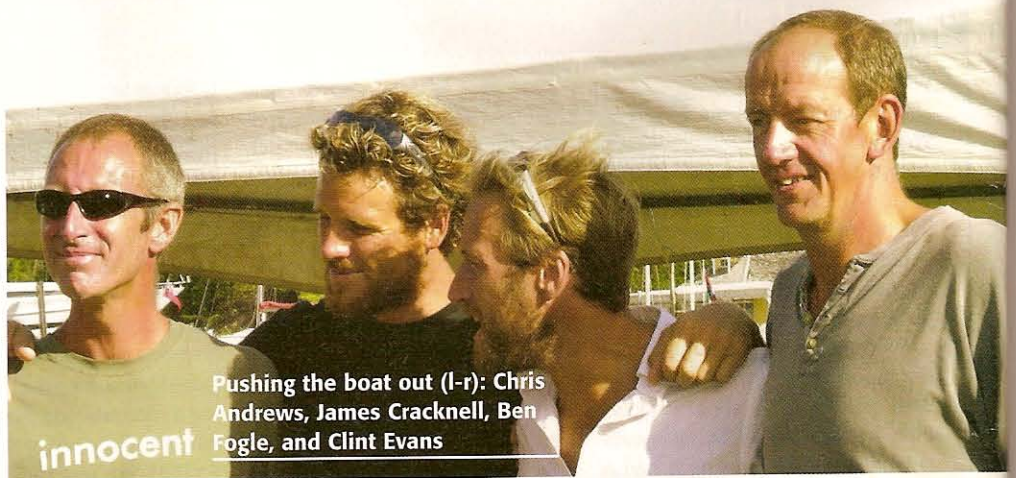


**Risk-takers: Chris
Andrews and
Clint Evans**

At the double in epic voyage

You would guess that Chris Andrews, as global director of risk management at Clifford Chance, would be the one person to have worked out what he was letting himself in for when he signed up to a 2,935 mile rowing race across the Atlantic Ocean from east to west. Contestants had to be self-sufficient for food and water, and were not allowed any outside assistance on the journey from La Gomera in the Canaries to Antigua. Whereas most people might think that making the crossing in a 23-foot plywood boat was, er, too risky, Mr Andrews and rowing partner Clint Evans completed the course in 51 days by rowing in

two-hour shifts. To add to the extreme sleep deprivation and unpredictable weather, they even had a run-in with a shark. But then presumably Mr Andrews was well-prepared thanks to the day job. Their time was good enough to take second place in the doubles category, with only Olympian rower James Cracknell and TV presenter Ben Fogle outpacing them. It would appear from the picture that Messrs Andrews and Evans wasted time shaving while their rivals ploughed on. Mr Andrews raised funds through the trip for the Parkinson's Disease Society, his mother having been diagnosed with the disease six years ago.



**Pushing the boat out (l-r): Chris
Andrews, James Cracknell, Ben
Fogle, and Clint Evans**

Showing initiative: Sir Digby Jones, the ebullient director general of the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) and solicitor, has written 'a celebrity letter to the editor' in which he tells us that he is going to spend a day working in the CBI's postroom. Sir Digby, who is taking part in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care's new Back to the Shop Floor initiative, calls on senior staff to do the same. Arguably staff should make donations to ensure

the senior or managing partners at their firms do not become the tea lady or the postman for the day – otherwise, they might learn what is really happening in their firms when sifting through the letters and faxes or having a gossip on their tour of the office. Joking apart, to learn more, go to www.mariecurie.org.uk/backtoshopfloor or telephone 0800 716 146. Sponsorship money will go to the charity's annual Great Daffodil Appeal.