CIOT President's page: With a little help from my friends

Welcomes



24 November 2022

Reflecting on 2022, I think we can all agree that it has been an eventful year. From the Russian invasion of Ukraine, through market turmoil from a fiscal statement and the sad death of the Queen, so much has happened that has impacted on all of us in various ways.

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But as it draws to a close what has struck me, more than ever, is how we interact as a tax family and the friendships we make along the way. I have talked before about how I got involved with the CIOT via the branch network. At the time, this was primarily to maintain my CPD and to meet and talk with like-minded people. But it also led back in 2005/6 to me seeing that a tax forum had been set up by Paul Tucker to enable discussion of employment tax matters by those in professional firms and also those working in-house – before the current CIOT committee had been set up. I got in touch and joined, and it’s still going strong.

Our meetings have been held in the north and south of the country, and I have made some ‘phone a friend’s and, over time, several personal friends. It helped that we all tried not only to attend the meetings but, where possible, to fit in dinner. In fact, recently Justine Riccomini and I jointly presented a CIOT webinar on employment tax. Justine and I first met as part of the forum.

As we spend such a large part of our lives at work, it sometimes feels as if all we do is wake up, go to work, go home, eat, sleep and then repeat. So it is perhaps not a great surprise that we make some good friends along the way or even meet future partners!

Last month, I was lucky enough to go on my first trip to Belfast for the Northern Ireland branch dinner. After a whistle stop tour, courtesy of some local RSM colleagues, I found myself at the dinner, meeting up with Caroline Keenan who I worked with at my last firm. Needless to say, we reminisced on past times and on attending tax conferences internationally.

Whilst attending the 23rd Cross Atlantic & European Tax Symposium in London in November, I watched people meeting for the first time and others reconnecting, all sharing a common interest and enjoying discussion on tax. Then, at the ADIT

awards ceremony I had the pleasure of welcoming those who had completed the full exams to join a tax family of 1,692 ADIT graduates in 86 countries and territories around the world. They were from every continent, every major economy and every business sector. It’s a small world in tax but it’s getting ever bigger.

This seems like a good time to mention one of our most exciting educational initiatives ever, launched on 21 November, the Diploma in Tax Technology. We believe it is the first time that tax professionals can undertake training in the UK to help them identify and use the technologies that are directly applicable to their working lives. Speaking as someone who started when computers were not widely used, this is a fantastic step forward as increasingly much of what we do – and indeed what HMRC does – is digital. Though I do wonder why so many tax returns are filed on Christmas Day and whether this happened when they were all on paper?!

We’re almost done now but it would be remiss of me not refer to the Autumn Statement, the impact of which we will continue to experience for many years to come. I think many are going to need a little help from their friends and family in the years ahead. And on the imminent closure of the Office of Tax Simplification, let’s hope that the government takes on board their report in July identifying ways to better embed the principle of simplification in the general tax policy making process, including a framework of questions for officials and ministers to consider when developing policy.

That just leaves me to offer seasons greetings to you and your families from me and from the CIOT family. We are all looking forward to seeing you in 2023!