ATT Welcome: Ten thousand strong

Welcomes



23 September 2024

Back in 1969, the Woodstock Festival took place in New York State. If you donot know what this was, ask your granny – although, as everyone knows, ‘Ifyou can remember the sixties, you weren’t there man!’ Google it. Shortly afterwards, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young recorded a hit song which included the line ‘By the time we got to Woodstock we were half a million strong’.

ATT may not be quite half a million strong yet, but we are getting there – so a big welcome to Molly Eldridge, our ten thousandth member. Molly works for Kendall Wadley in the West Midlands, and you can read an interview with her elsewhere in this issue of *Tax Adviser*.

Molly can look forward to an interesting, varied and challenging career in tax. I have certainly found it so. Interesting, in the variety of problems that clients come to me with and the wonderful array of people I have met. Varied, in the number of different areas that have led me to gain a deep insight, including the need to treat OMBs and their owners as the same, and the issues around profit-related pay. My career has included technical writing, lecturing and presenting – and, of course, charities.

Tax has been a challenging area to work in as it changes all the time, not just because of the annual Budget (30 October is coming, could Halloween be a day early this year?) but also due to case law. I find it fascinating talking to tax lawyers, whether solicitors or counsel, as they approach things in a different way to someone like me whose initial training was as an accountant. If Molly ever gets the chance to help draft instructions to tax counsel or go to a conference with them, she should grab it with both hands.

With the way that tax constantly changes, our chosen career means that we have all committed to a life of constant learning and study. Almost none of us can maintain the up-to-date breadth of knowledge that Molly and our other new members who have just passed their exams currently have. That is why it is so important to keep up to date with your CPD. The branch network provides a large number of affordable CPD courses both in person and online, live and recorded, many of which are free. Another effective way is the annual AAT/ATT Sharpen your tax skills events. The 2024 running will take place on 20 November and6December. Barry Jefferd, ATT Vice President and Chair of the Examinations Steering Group, will be the main speaker, while our brilliant ATT Technical Officers will provide support. Booking is now open.

Molly has made a good decision to get her ATT qualification and follow a career in tax. Unfortunately, talking to employers highlights that not enough people are following her lead, meaning there are a lot of opportunities out there. The ATT are trying to encourage more people into tax. Look out for our marketing campaign promoting tax as a career to school leavers, students, employers, finance people and people looking for a career change or return to work. This is currently running on LinkedIn, X, Instagram, You Tube and TikTok. Please like it and forward a link to your friends and contacts.

I mentioned last month that we are at the start of a consultation process on the future regulation of the tax profession. We are yet to have a full response to our initial consultation response (which you can find on the website) or whether the new government has the appetite to proceed, given all their other priorities. However, we need to be prepared. The most favourable option seems to be requiring all agents who interact with HMRC to be members of and regulated by an approved professional body.

This is not, of course, a problem for ATT members but many very experienced agents running their own longstanding business are not members of ATT or another similar body. This is where you can help.

Our charitable objectives include enforcing standards of professional conduct amongst those providing tax services, and there is clearly a case for ATT to provide a home for these practitioners who are qualified by experience. They can, of course, take the ATT exams and qualify for membership in the traditional way. However, while we would not just simply let them in, there is a case, for a very limited period, for allowing some of them to become ATT members and subject to our supervision, provided they can prove their good character and technical competence in the area in which they work.

Please look out for and complete the 2024members survey which includes some questions on this. You can also let us have your comments via the welcome page email address. Remember, the ATT is your association.

Until next month.