ATT Welcome: The Branch Network

Welcomes



24 March 2025

In common with several ATT Council members and Past Presidents, I first got involved as a volunteer with the Branch Network. In my case, it was when I joined the Sheffield Branch committee (then chaired by the late Keith Daniels, who went on to be CIOT President) as a newly qualified ATII almost 40 years ago. Following a change of job and moving to Leeds, I soon found myself on the Leeds Branch committee, along with future ATT Presidents Jean Jesty and Richard Geldard, currently Master of The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers. Over time, I was dinner secretary, treasurer and branch secretary before eventually becoming chairman.

Shortly after another career move, this time to Birmingham, I found myself on a train back to the Midlands from a Branch Forum meeting in the company of Yvette Nunn, then Birmingham Branch chair (and another ATT Past President). Before the train had left Euston, she had persuaded me to join the Birmingham Branch committee where, again, I eventually became chairman.

You can probably imagine that if I were cut in half – along with the White Rose of Yorkshire – you would find the words ‘ATT and CIOT volunteer’ running through me

like a stick of rock!

It was therefore an enormous pleasure to attend the annual Branches Conference a few weeks ago on the theme of succession planning, held at University of Warwick's Radcliffe House conference centre. This is a standing fixture for the Deputy Presidents of both the ATT and CIOT, where we introduce ourselves to representatives from the various branch committees. We also have a chance later to meet many of them over dinner and a few drinks.

In keeping with how much both Councils value the work done by the branches, it was great to be joined by Senga Prior and Charlotte Barbour (ATT and CIOT Presidents) and Simon Groom (ATT immediate Past President). It was a great conference, expertly chaired by Lynne Poyser, Branch Network Chair, and organised by the Member Services Team led by Emma Barklamb.

The Branch Network and its volunteers are at the core of what the ATT is about. As I hope you already know, the branches put on a wide variety of CPD events – many of which are free and open to members, students and the public. This directly contributes to the delivery of our core charitable purpose as an educational charity. The branches are also the only way in which we can regularly connect face to face with our more than 10,000 ATT and 20,000 CIOT members.

As I know from my involvement as a serial Branch committee member, none of this happens by magic. A lot of hard work is carried out by the more than 200 branch volunteers to organise the speakers, venues and publicity needed to put together more than 30 varied branch programmes, each tailored to the needs and interests of their local members. Our branch volunteers really are the rock on which the ATT and CIOT are built.

I am looking forward to visiting as many branches as I can during my forthcoming year as ATT President. But much as I enjoy lecturing, I have been away from the coal face for too long so I am not planning to give technical talks. However, given the chance, I will be giving an update on what is happening at the ATT and the issues facing us as tax professionals. Think qualifications, the regulation of the tax profession and the impact of AI.

But what about you? If you have not done so in the past, why not give branch events a try? They are a very cost-effective way to keep up with your CPD obligations, particularly if you work in industry, are a sole practitioner or do not work for a firm

with an in-house training function. They are also a great networking opportunity – and many branches provide refreshments at meetings, so a sandwich and glass of wine or mug of coffee is always a possibility.

Finally, if like me you really get the bug, then think about volunteering on your local branch committee. I promise you will find it immensely rewarding.

Until next month.