

A member's view: Edward Emblem

Briefings

November 2026



23 October 2026

This month's CIOT member spotlight is on Edward Emblem, S&W, Private Client Tax Partner

How did you find out about a career in tax?

My first exposure to tax was spending school summer holidays working at HM Inspector of Taxes in Farnham. The work was mostly filing P14s and making rounds of tea, but it gave me an insight into what went on behind the scenes at the Revenue and somehow sparked a lifelong interest. I studied Literature at university and considered a career in writing. In the end, I found myself drawn back to tax, which offered exactly the combination of intellectual challenge and human interaction I was looking for.

Why is the CIOT qualification important?

The CTA qualification gave me a strong technical foundation, but also the confidence to tackle unfamiliar problems. It taught me how to apply sound professional judgement when the answer is not always straightforward.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

I've always been interested in situations where complex rules need to be applied to real-life scenarios, especially given that no two clients are the same. The technical answer is often only one part of the equation; understanding what people are trying to achieve and helping them navigate significant decisions is every bit as important.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Practical, approachable, driven.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

I have been fortunate to work with dozens of exceptional people whose approach and professionalism have influenced me throughout my career. One absolute stand-out was the partner who first took me on as a trainee at Menzies, Ian MacLucas. He was hugely knowledgeable and pretty formidable but approached every situation with genuine grace and integrity. When a professional quandary arises, I still occasionally find myself arriving at the right answer by asking what he would have done.

What advice would you give to someone thinking of doing the CIOT qualification?

Be prepared to invest the time, ask questions and learn from those around you. The effort is well worth it.

What are your predictions for tax advisers and the tax industry in the future?

Technology and AI are already changing the way tax advisers work. Information will be easier to access than ever before, both for us and those seeking advice. The challenge will be distinguishing the right answer from the noise and understanding whether the question being asked is the right one in the first place. As the tax

landscape becomes increasingly complex, I believe professional judgement, clear communication and long-lasting trusted relationships will become even more important.

What advice would you give to your future self?

Keep making time to think. It is easy to become caught up in what's urgent at the expense of what's important, but some of the best decisions come from stepping back and taking a longer-term view.

Tell me something about yourself that others may not know about you.

My surname is relatively unusual, although tax practitioners might be forgiven for thinking otherwise, as there seem to be a disproportionate number of Emblems in the tax profession. Setting the bar ridiculously high was my great-grandfather, Bernard Emblem, who was knighted by the Pope for his services to taxation. This apparently gave him the honour of being allowed to ride a horse into St Peter's Basilica in Rome, although sadly I don't think he ever took advantage of the opportunity!