

ATT Welcome, January 2016

Welcomes

01 January 2016

Looking back on 2015

Wow, am I getting old, or did that year just fly by quicker than most?

I thought I would do a quick review of 2015 from an ATT volunteer's perspective.

I started the year as Vice President of the ATT and I was also involved in the Finance Steering Group until I become Deputy President. I passed the FSG baton to Katherine Lindley, a member of ATT Council who also works in the financial services world, so she could replace me and bring similar experience to the group. Thank you, Katherine, for stepping in as a volunteer.

I also became a committee member of the Manchester branch to try to help the committee build on some fantastic foundations and shape the future of activities to meet members' needs.

Natalie Miller stood down in April as ATT President and Michael Steed took over. I have to say the hours and commitment that Nat put into running and shaping the future of the ATT has to be acknowledged. Her commitment and the voluntary hours, which ran into months, left me awestruck at times. She has a lovely manner in the way she deals with the challenges she faced and she has been an enormous asset to every ATT member.

Michael has a different style, but brings with him his incredible technical knowledge of the tax world. His challenge is to help steer the ATT through the challenging waters of the tax avoidance issue and make clear what is acceptable and sensible tax planning.

Graham Batty has taken my place as Vice President. Graham will be a huge asset and brings with him great knowledge and understanding of the charitable sector

which is now, and will be in the future, a huge asset to us all.

Being on Council does have some perks. Natalie invited me to her presidential evening at the James Bond museum, which was absolutely fantastic. It was also great to meet some of the tax stars of the year, such as exam prize-winners and some of the ATT members who have come through the Higher Apprenticeship programme.

Michael had his presidential welcome aboard *HMS Belfast*. This was another great venue and evening to meet our stakeholders and say a big thank-you to so many who help the ATT continue to be successful.

In an effort to keep engaged with our ATT members across the borders, we do try to go out and meet our committee members and members in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. I attended events in all three regions in 2015.

In March I attended the Joint Presidents' Dinner at the Signet Library in Edinburgh, a beautiful city bettered only by the stunning architecture of the building itself. There was so much interest in this event with the recent Scottish referendum vote and the raft of new taxes that Scotland will be collecting.

Our Welsh branch hosted a similar event at Cardiff Castle. Again it was a great event with the Welsh Finance Minister speaking. It was interesting to hear how the ATT and CIOT have helped them so much over the year.

Finally, in November I attended the Northern Ireland Annual Dinner. However, due to editorial demands and the Christmas break, I had to write this article before I attended, but thank you so much for the invitation, Northern Ireland.

Our Executive Director announced that, after more than 25 years' service, he was planning to retire in 2016. Andy Pickering has been the backbone of the Association for so long and will be a hard act to follow.

The project started early in the year to draft a new job description to fit the changing tax world and launch the recruitment process.

So many volunteers have given up their time to find a suitable replacement and, by the time you read this, we hope to have received Charity Commission clearance on our chosen candidate and Michael Steed will be able to announce our new Executive Director to replace Andy.

The ATT is a charity and relies heavily on volunteers, so don't just expect someone else to roll up their sleeves and get involved. Please try to find time to help make this fantastic charity even better and play a part in our own succession plans. Email me if you want to know a little more about being a volunteer and putting something back into the tax profession.