



April 2015 Newsletter

Budget special. No, you didn't miss anything, cause nothing (useful) changed. All fur coat and no knickers, as the current Mrs Duckett would say.

All change-yet again

On top of Tamsin leaving, to be replaced by Maria (keen with great IT skills: distinctive accent), Alex has now handed in her notice. She has been with us for 7 years, so we're really going to miss her (Kate was gutted). She's going to be FD of a manufacturing business in Leominster, so we all wish her well. Good career move.

This rather brings home the view that the world keeps moving on and we have to embrace change of all sorts (team and technology) to stay ahead. No resting on laurels, and marginal gains are endless, as Dave Brailsford demonstrates:

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/mar/06/team-sky-dave-brailsford-cycling-new-technology>

It's unlikely that I shall be going to Silicon Valley any time soon, but if the Boyscout can go to Vegas, who knows?



Return of the Native(s)

Yes, The Boyscout and The Ref survived their trip to Las Vegas, although the psychological scars make take years to heal. As expected, The Boyscout was targeted by US Customs on the way in (whilst The Ref sailed through). The Boyscout's only comment was to ask why the Customs official left her rings on when she did the search. [My favourite "prostate" joke.] The convention itself was held in the equivalent of the NEC and was nowhere near the downtown area (and they are still looking for an attractive US citizen of under 15 stone). The Strip was something of a culture shock: Disney for adults, as the Boyscout described it. Never again?



We're all equal (But some are more equal than others) The Times 10.03.15

Research at UCL has identified an "equality bias" whereby people give the same weight to opinions of others, no matter how competent they may (or may not) be, even when the level of comparative competence is clearly shown. It's not clear why this is the case, but it may be that individuals are reluctant to take responsibility for group decisions. Not a problem for the average autocracy: bring on the sycophants.

Paying the right Tax

The forthcoming election has prompted lots of articles in the technical press about “fair” levels of tax. I’m not old enough to remember a 98% marginal rate on investment income, but Dad certainly is. Part of the problem is that the rules are just too complex. Ludicrously so. And the tax planning world has traditionally run things around HMRC, a situation that has been remedied by sweeping changes – the introduction of a General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR) and the requirement to pay tax upfront. Its one thing for the politicians to determine tax rates and reliefs, but quite another to deal...



Disclaimer

Empire Magazine ran an item on the 23 greatest put-downs in movie history. Unfortunately, none of them are suitable for a family newsletter. So I’ve dug out the comment made by the current Mrs Duckett at the end of our first date:

“I’ve had a nice time, but this wasn’t it”





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