

Did we really hoodwink them? - Isle of Man Today

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From today's editorial:

Once again the tax black hole is dominating the news. Lord Bach, the government minister who's responsible for the Crown Dependencies, has been in the Island.

Our reporter, John Turner, interviewed him.

Lord Bach was very complimentary about the way the Manx negotiated the VAT agreement two years ago. In fact, you might be tempted to draw the conclusion that he thinks we outflanked the UK and got a much better deal than we deserved.

That conclusion would, I am sure, be hotly disputed by our political leaders.

But it does seem to be what Lord Bach is saying. It's only now, after Alistair Darling's buddies (and perhaps Richard Murphy, the blogger who has been so angry about the Isle of Man), looked at the books again that they decided that we were being subsidised by the UK.

I wonder if heads will roll at the UK Treasury if they really believe their negotiators were hoodwinked by the Manx in 2007?

Two comments. First, if the Treasury did make a mess of this they should say so. Second, how many times do I have to say I have not been angry with the Isle of Man? It has much to commend it. The fact it was a subsidised secrecy jurisdiction was most definitely not one of them. It is that aspect of its affairs which I have sought to address - perhaps more effectively than any other campaign I have so far been engaged in. But it does, probably, mean I won't be that welcome for a while. Which is a shame - because I do know it is a rather attractive place, based on past visits.