

Treasure Islands: the best book on tax havens, ever

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A new book on tax havens has been published this week. Written by Nick Shaxson, who has [worked with the Tax Justice Network on the project](#), it is entitled ‘Treasure Islands’.

I’d stress, before offering an endorsement and an interview, a long time ago, I’ve not had anything to do with this book, so I comment as a reasonably objective observer who is, however, delighted that Nick has brought this ambitious project to fruition. I’m also delighted his publishers and agents have secured [serialisation of the book in the Guardian](#), starting today.

Treasure Islands, which has its [own dedicated web site](#), is a very different book from the one on tax havens I was a co-author of a year or so ago. That book sought to track the history and development of tax havens in academic fashion. Nick has done something very different. He’s explored the narrative of these places and sought to explain their social history, impact and consequence as told through the lives of individuals and organisations that have been engaged with them, promoted them and opposed them.

It’s a riveting read. I particularly recommend the chapter on the City of London and why it has to be considered a tax haven in its own right. Maybe I was more familiar with the other material, but what Nick has discovered here is really quite remarkable. I note he interviewed Maurice Glasman — now a Labour peer of course — as the foundation for some of this work. Let’s hope Maurice can his knowledge of what the City really is to effect change in due course.

In my endorsement of the book — which I read in draft last autumn I’ve said this is the best book on tax havens, ever. I stand by that. Strongly recommended and published straight to paperback to make it accessible.

I could summarise with the comment I think [I have on the cover of the book](#):

Treasure Islands is the best book on tax havens, ever. It shines a light in some very dark places. It reads like a thriller. The shocking thing is, it’s all true. The world’s

suppliers of corruption services — the bankers, lawyers and accountants working from tax havens — won't want you to read this book. Which is exactly why you should.