

Priorities

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A new year, and for this blog one that cannot, I suspect, repeat the level of traffic of 2017. The final data for the year was 2,512,000 individual page reads, up from 2,004,000 the previous year. Unique visits increased from 1,286,000 to 1,754,000 in the year. Assuming there is no election and no referendum, which between them have boosted traffic in each of the last three years, those are figures that are not going to be repeated in 2018, I suspect.

So what to do with the blog instead? Indeed, what to do with the year? The first objective is to shake off the lurgy that has blighted my last few days, and which was the almost inevitable consequence of slowing down after a frenetic autumn.

I have to be candid and say that academic work will be dominating my agenda. I am in the second year of a three year grant when the shape of the planned deliverables has to be determined.

New research on the tax gap, and ways to both define and calculate it, is already well under way and in draft.

Work is proceeding rapidly on research on the Big Four firms of accountants and their impact on corporate behaviour.

That's also true of work on new methodologies for assessing tax spillover effects.

I also have research underway on country-by-country reporting and its relationship to mainstream accounting.

An old theme, which is the role of company registrars in tackling tax abuse, is also receiving new attention.

And at City our work on the changing nature of the modern corporation is yielding surprising results that may begin to be published this year.

That is a pretty big agenda and leaves little time over, especially given teaching and

other obligations.

I am not planning a new book, although I am being asked to consider it. I will only do so when I am happy I have a tightly defined topic worth the agony book writing involves: suggestions are welcome.

So where does the blog fit in? This is the place where I find out what I think on current issues by rehearsing them, often several times a day. I foresee some of the above themes appearing here, of course. I am also well aware that it is not tax that drives most of the traffic to this site; it is instead the politics and economics that surrounds the issue that do that.

Much of that writing is reactive. I am sure that will continue to be the case. But I would also love to spend time developing issues in a bit more depth and in the process pursue the wiki idea that has rather fallen by the wayside simply due to lack of time and the fact that I have a life beyond blogging. Again, suggestions are welcome, without promises being offered that I will meet requests made.

However, it being new year I might appraise a few fundamentals over the next week or so. There's no harm in that. It might also fit with lecture writing, and that is my first work task of the year.

Have a good one.