

ACT

# A CRITICAL TIME OF YEAR

**A**lthough this is my first time around, so to speak, I have the impression that the first calendar quarter of the year is a fairly critical time in the Association's annual cycle. We are completing the 2003 *Treasurer's Handbook*, have just launched the programme for our annual UK Treasurer's conference and are starting the budget cycle internally; and all of this is happening, at least this year, against an external background of considerable economic and geo-political uncertainty.

The Handbook should be reaching members not long after this edition of *The Treasurer*. A considerable initiative has been made this year to strengthen the international content and focus of the publication. We have done this in the belief that the *Handbook* will be even more valuable to its users, not the least because any view of treasury management that is too UK-focused is unlikely to be taken terribly seriously: this is a global profession and its practice must be seen accordingly.

Readers will therefore find that the treasury practice and country sections of the *Handbook* reflect the more international perspective. We are distributing a substantial number of copies to other European treasury associations who will in turn be making these available to their members. By tackling content and distribution we reinforce the value of the *Handbook* and ensure it is most attractive to the partners and advertisers that support the product financially.

Members will already have received the flyer for this year's annual conference, run in association with EuroFinance Conferences. The programme brings together case studies, presentations and keynote speeches around core issues of governance, funding, ratings, risk and cash management/payments. These issues reflect feedback from the research that was undertaken and I very much hope that you will find the programme well worth taking the time to join us in Brighton from 29 April to 1 May. Book before 21 February to take advantage of the early bird discount, details of which are on the dedicated website [www.uktreasurers.com](http://www.uktreasurers.com). Those who were in Birmingham last year and heard Mary Keegan, the Chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, will know how pleased we were when Mary agreed to do a keynote presentation again for us this year.

Preparation of the budget is going to be an interesting exercise. If you have been following what has been said about the current financial year you will know that as a result of a variety of factors we expect to report a fairly significant deficit to the end of April 2003. The big issue is of course going to be the extent to which we can see a more robust prospect for the next financial year.

A number of things are going well for us, particularly in the area of education. However, we continue to expect a very difficult external environment, which has a direct effect on us through things like advertising in *The Treasurer* and the ease with which we can win sponsorship for activities that have traditionally relied on this for their viability.

We also have ambitious plans for investment in the area of education and the budget process will be the first opportunity for the management team in the Association to test these plans more formally through the budget exercise. Whether or not we can afford to spend in the way that we would like to do must depend on the balance of return and risk that we see across the organisation.

We are currently involving a number of members in working groups to help develop the plans and as soon as possible we will share our ideas with the wider membership. In the meantime, do contact me or David Westby, our Director of Education, if you have views on where the priorities lie for spending on education.

**RICHARD RAEBURN**

## ON THE MOVE

- **Russell Gurnhill MCT**, formerly Assistant Treasurer at Enterprise Oil plc has moved to Telereal as Group Treasurer.
- **Michael Green MCT**, previously Financial Director Group at Sussman Ltd, has been appointed Principal at Beacon Financial Management.
- **Colin Stokes AMCT**, formerly Assistant Financial Controller at British Airways London Eye, has moved to Tussauds Group as Capital Projects Accountant.
- **Keith Muncie MCT**, has joined Lane4 Management Group Ltd as their new Finance Director. Previously he was Account Director, ICL Knowledgepool.
- **Tom Milligan AMCT**, previously Group Treasury Manager at Stagecoach Group plc has been appointed Group Treasurer at Menzies Group plc.

Please send items for inclusion (including daytime telephone number) to Gabrielle Koonin, [gkoonin@treasurers.co.uk](mailto:gkoonin@treasurers.co.uk).

# IGTA UPDATE

**I**GTA's annual meetings are an opportunity to review progress and develop new initiatives. The meeting in South Africa last July covered several issues of central concern to treasurers worldwide. Details of these can be seen on [www.igta.org](http://www.igta.org) in the meeting minutes.

**ACCOUNTING STANDARDS.** Francois Masquelier and Pierre Poncet of the Luxembourg and French Associations respectively are developing the work done by the European Association of Corporate Treasurers (representing those Associations which use the euro as their functional currency) on the impact of new accounting standards for financial instruments. Whilst recognising the inexorable pressure to move to market value accounting, IGTA members are concerned over the potential impact that such an approach could have on the measurement of performance. It is hoped that a global consensus arising from current IGTA deliberations will enable a considered position to be put to the IASB later this year on how treasurers view the developing new accounting standards.

**EDUCATION OBJECTIVES.** The main work in progress is a review of IGTA's education objectives. The IGTA education program has three aims: maintaining and raising educational standards for the treasury profession, facilitating the education of treasurers who aim at an international career and promoting the treasury profession in general. The approach being taken is for IGTA to stimulate educational institutions and other education providers to develop their own programs. IGTA will not develop its own courses, because that could result in monopoly and competition problems that could hamper new initiatives. An accreditation function has been set up within IGTA which will review the leading treasury education

products from around the world, with the objective of identifying those that meet specified standards. The first such accreditation process is the IGTA Certified Treasurer accreditation scheme intended for qualifications aimed at the most senior managers in a large domestic or multi-national treasury where the managers become involved with the strategic development of the company through acquisitions, mergers, disposals and major capital projects. The qualifications seeking accreditation should be pitched at the level of a professional financial qualification.

This work is being led by Theo van der Nat, from the Dutch Association, who is Chairman of the IGTA education accreditation committee, supported by treasurers from six other associations including the ACT. Progress was made at a meeting of the committee held during the AFP annual conference in New Orleans last November attended by representatives from the Netherlands, India, South Africa and the UK. It is expected that the accreditation guidelines will be published within the next few months and that the first education programs will receive accreditation later this year.

The ACT will seek accreditation for its qualifications at the earliest opportunity to ensure that they appeal to treasurers worldwide.

**NEW FACES.** The position of Honorary Secretary to IGTA has passed to me from Lily Mitchell of ACTSA, with Olivier Brissaud of the Belgian Association appointed as the next following Hon Sec in 2004. IGTA's membership is growing, with Japan, Singapore and the Czech Republic being confirmed as new members at the 2002 meeting and Cote D'Ivoire and Benin present as observers. This brings the number of full members up to 25, with Hong Kong still to ratify its membership. **DAVID CREED, HONORARY SECRETARY, IGTA.**

## INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF TREASURY ASSOCIATIONS

**HON. SECRETARY:** David Creed

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In recognising the globalisation of the treasury profession, IGTA was formed to utilise synergy and enhance the activities of the treasury associations across nations. Its objectives are to:

- encourage the highest standards of professional ethics and best practice among treasury professionals worldwide;
- raise the profile of the treasury profession;
- explore the development of reciprocal membership benefits; and
- encourage the exchange of information, business practices, and details of various local regulations.

Latest contact details for all members of IGTA can be found at [www.igta.org](http://www.igta.org)