

Season's Greetings from TBC

Nothing formal from us at this time of the year. Just our best wishes and a personal update and message from each of us!

Lynne

I think throughout my many years as a solicitor I've sub-consciously known that the way lawyers generally operate isn't structured in a manner that best suits most business and social enterprise clients. This thought became a conscious one almost 20 years ago and since then I've been lawyering away whilst thinking and plotting about ways to set up an operation that does provide what these clients most need.

I formed The Brooke Consultancy 10 years ago as part of the plan to achieve my vision of providing Business Advice in the Round. And I've worked hard to build an extensive personal network of collaborators in all the key areas that SMEs like yours need help and advice with.

But it is only recently that my thinking and planning and networking have coalesced and this year, despite all the difficulties and challenges, has seen my vision for TBC come to fruition as we have developed into a truly multi-disciplinary organisation.



As we look forward to a brighter 2021 with the hope of a vaccine becoming a reality, businesses like yours and other SMEs will need to be agile and dynamic to come through the hard times, take advantage of opportunities and prosper. And so, not only do I offer you my and TBC's wishes for a joyous 'festive' season and a happy, prosperous new year, I am also delighted to be able to offer you a truly diverse and extensive business advice service in 2021 and beyond.

Pat

What a year it has been! Could anyone have foreseen what was coming when we sat down to Christmas 2019 dinner.

For me, it has been even more of a change because a week before the first lockdown I managed at last to complete on my house sale and joined finances with my sister and her husband and moved into a large house in Berkshire. Leaking pipes, drainage issues and a rat infestation ensued. Something to keep us busy during lockdown!



On the work front I have been used to remote working with TBC since its inception but I wasn't prepared for the total reliance on IT and communication which has taken place in 2020. TBC has grabbed the bull by the horns and embraced new and seamless technology to continue and improve the service our clients enjoy.

We have expanded this year and now have the benefit of two new non legal management team members Chris and Eva who, with their innovative thinking, are bringing fresh ideas to enable us to maintain our place in the market in these strange times. On the legal side we have been happy to welcome Pankaj, a very experienced and successful property lawyer.

So, all in all we have a very optimistic view for 2021 and, as I write this, the Covid 19 vaccine is being rolled out. Let us all hope this is the long-awaited light at the end of the tunnel.

Chris

So, this is number 5 and it still feels a little odd. 28 years of the Christmas season being in summer reverted to winter 5 years ago when we returned to UK from Australia. It's all so different and so much colder!

My yearly ritual of going to Melbourne's Victoria Market on 23 December to buy prawns, crayfish, steak, tomatoes and salad is now the ritual of ordering a turkey and shopping for parsnips, sprouts and potatoes and trying to figure out where to source a proper Christmas pudding from - proper being one with actual suet in it as opposed to something bizarrely referred to as 'vegetable suet'.



The last-minute rush to get the aircon man round to do a service has morphed into a similar panic with the boiler man and the oil delivery man, and the unanswerable question 'Chris, will we have enough gas in the cylinder for the BBQ?' has been replaced with the equally unanswerable 'Chris, do we have enough kindling and logs for the fire?'.

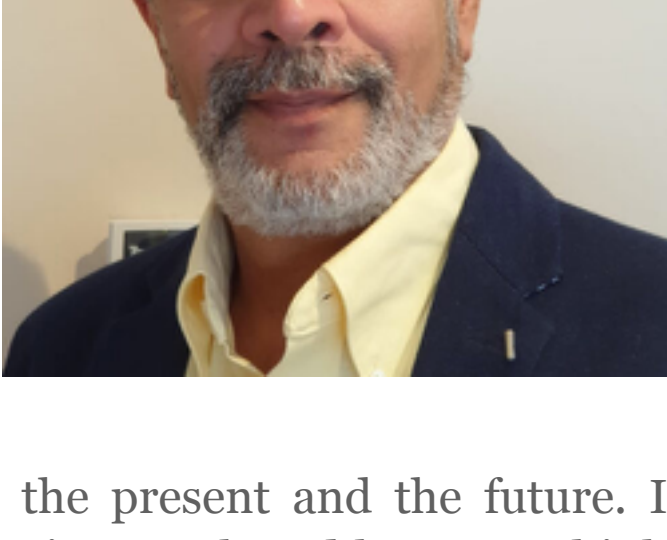
The ridiculous sight of windows sprayed with fake snow, gardens filled with inflatable reindeer and houses covered in ludicrous amounts of kitsch lighting has been replaced with, well, with exactly the same thing. And, now that I think about it, the chocolate and cake consumption, the cheesy Christmas music, the rising feeling of goodwill and camaraderie...they're all the same. Maybe it's not so different after all! Except the colder bit. That's definitely true!

Cheers to all!

Pankaj

It's been a strange year but it has got people thinking about what is really important to them. For me it crystallised what I have been thinking for some time and led to me merging my practice with TBC.

It was Christmas 2018 and my wife and I travelled to Myanmar (formerly Burma). It was a wonderful trip which included a balloon flight over Bagan the place of 1,000 pagodas and a 2.00 am boat ride from Bagan to Mandalay. Contrary to what some say the road to Mandalay is in fact a river and at any one time there would only be another boat or two. During this long journey sitting on deck alone and watching a stunning sun rise, I began to think about the past, the present and the future. I realised that there was more to life than just work and began to think of the importance of ensuring a work/life balance. The beauty around me gave me the impetus to see more of the world and appreciate its beauties and wonderful cultures.



And so, in 2019 I visited Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. A beautiful but also emotional experience especially when coming face to face with the history of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, it made me more resolved to search out that working "utopia".

I'd planned to travel to Japan in Spring this year but in the early stages of COVID and on the advice of a wise friend I cancelled and battened down the hatches for the bumpy ride ahead. And that meant I could focus on the work side of the work/life balance challenge. I decided to join Lynne at TBC where, with the help of some amazing technology and working from home, I'm achieving a sensible balance and work is getting done in an atmosphere of reduced worry and increased fun!

Oh, and I have become a grandfather!

To all a very merry Christmas and a covid free new year.

Kerem

Many adjectives can describe 2020: unprecedented, gloomy, apocalyptic, uncertain, annoying, upsetting. I am also informed that the world will end before Christmas according to the Mayan Calendar (thank you to the Internet for bringing that to my attention). Despite all the negativity, there were many positive experiences in 2020 and for me two emerging main themes, "education" and "adaptation".

I haven't used hand sanitiser in the 2020 ways and amounts before. I didn't think of germs and viruses on surfaces or in air particles the same way as I do now. I think I have suffered less from colds and other viruses this year than in previous years and I suspect these new habits are likely to remain with me.



At work there has been a plethora of new legislation to cope with pandemic issues as well as the changes brought about by Brexit.

Our Court system was in serious difficulty in March-May 2020. Many hearings were adjourned and it was frustrating to see our Court system caught out especially given that the Ministry of Justice had the benefit of seeing developments in other countries before matters rapidly escalated here. From May though, the hardworking Court staff and members of the Judiciary have done fantastically to ensure that the wheels of justice continue to turn.

The concept of remote hearings and trials is not new however they were not popular. Between 2013 to March 2020 I attended around a dozen remote hearings. The challenges of the pandemic have meant the greater use of remote hearings by video and telephone and I have lost count the amount of remote hearings I have attended since March.

I believe this change has been really beneficial to the court system. It means valuable time and expense can be saved for everyone and a greater use of electronic documents will have reduced printing and paper waste as well as saving valuable floor space used for storage.

The traditionalist and stubborn views have been forced to change to everyone's benefit. It is a shame that it took a pandemic to achieve it.

For TBC this 'change' is more straightforward. We have been used to working remotely and relying on digital documents and working methods so providing services to clients during the period was "business as usual".

This year I've also signed myself up to undertake the California Bar, and additionally a Masters in Data Science, having completed an earlier Masters in Information Technology. Any free time I have now in the early morning, night or weekends are taken up by learning!

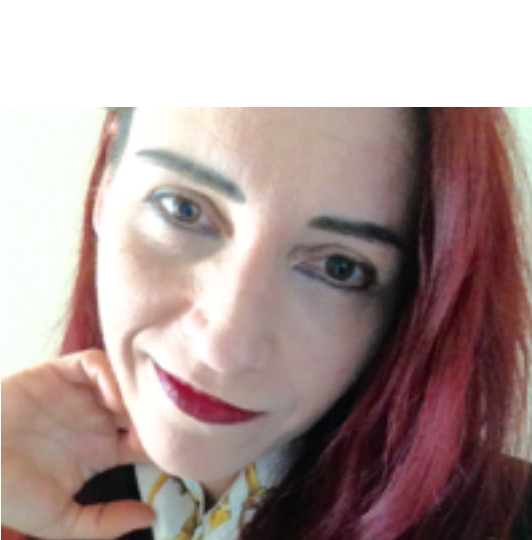
I am looking forward to a safer and healthier 2021.

Eva

Each person copes with change in a different way. Although some of us have many years of experience in dealing with difficult situations, nobody was prepared for what happened in 2020 and continues having a strong impact on our lives.

I think creating a safe environment for me and my loved ones is challenging. Managing fear and anxiety to live a good life around the virus is important for our health and wellbeing.

I have learnt that sometimes when there are so many external events where I have no control, the only thing I can control is my own reactions. My past experience helps me to stay calm and focused, but it is not only the experience that motivates me to move forward.



The best qualities in an environment filled with constant change are learning agility, adaptability, and mental acuity (strength).

I appreciate being part of a supportive team at TBC where we all contribute with our skills and work to minimise the adverse effects that changes have on people. We continue fine-tuning our processes, adding new technology and new ways to communicate.

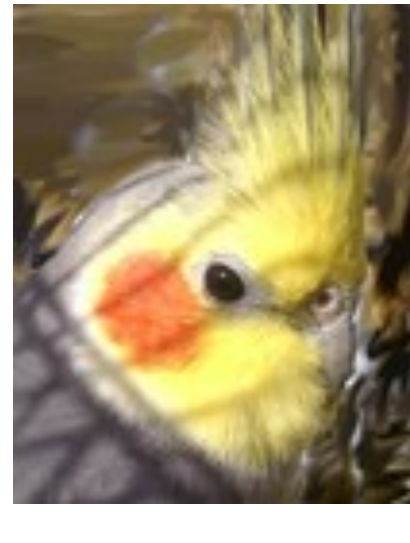
Our team and our network of collaboration partners grows. The future of the legal sector is not clear as there are many trends. Some of us used to sit in flashy offices, wearing business suits, and heels... now the everyday outfits consist of hoodies, sweatpants, and socks. Some even work from home wearing their pyjamas, but nobody would admit that.

I hope that Covid-19 is beaten by 2021 and look forward to a year offering some normality.

I wish you peace, love, and health.

A word from TBC's newest team member

Hello, I'm George Cockatiel and I've just joined TBC as their first parrotlegal.



I was attracted to TBC by the many similarities we share. Sometimes it feels like I'm looking in a mirror. Most of all, cockatiels are not as big as many parrots just as TBC are not as big as many law firms. Oh, and we both have small bills!

I'll be helping in many areas including admin, filing and research as well as specialising in seed capital and strategic advice where my bird's eye view of a situation should be of benefit. Yes, I am indeed something of a polymath.

Most importantly I'll be taking a leading role in TBC's Twitter. Follow me @CockatielGeorge. I promise to tweet regularly once the festive season is over.

A jolly holiday to you all. Like any parrot, I want a cracker. I just hope the hat fits and the joke isn't too stupid.

Supporting people facing complex challenges is at the heart of TBC which is why we support [Coral](#) a charity that empowers people with a learning disability by using dance, creativity and performance. To get an idea of the innovative work they do check out this performance at [Tate Britain](#).

Join us in donating to Coral by clicking [here](#) and help people develop their creative talents, confidence and independence.



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