

**STAMP DUTY LAND TAX BY MICHAEL  
THOMAS**  
**with contributions from KPMG Stamp Taxes Group**  
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**A REVIEW**

**by David Goldberg Q.C.**

This is a good book.

As the author says in his preface, Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) is a very important new tax and, as the author does not say, perhaps because it almost goes without saying, practitioners will need and will welcome a guide to it.

This book is that guide, providing sure signposts through the legislation.

I suppose the first thing one wants in a textbook is that it should be readable. It is, perhaps, too much to hope that it will read like a detective novel (after all every reader knows that it was the Chancellor who did it) but one hopes to be able to read even a tax textbook with ease and with enjoyment.

This is certainly true of this book: the author's style is easy and pleasant to read and so the book, although not lacking in detail, is not difficult to read.

Next, one hopes that a textbook will be sensibly ordered, so that it can, if the reader so wishes, be read as

an entirety rather than just dipped into for the answer to particular questions.

Here, too, this book satisfies the requirement.

The first four chapters introduce the basic charge to the tax and explain how it is to be collected. Chapter 5 details the exemptions and reliefs. Chapter 6 deals with leases. Chapter 7 deals with structuring transactions and planning. Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the more mundane but no less essential matters of administration, compliance and commencement: these Chapters will be of particular relevance to practitioners involved in the detail of every day conveyancing.

I suppose the greatest test of any textbook is whether it provides answers to the questions that practitioners have.

I think this book will pass that test too: at any rate it has, so far, given me answers to the questions I have had, which have related mainly to the issue of what constitutes consideration for the purposes of this new tax. I happened to be in China when I needed to know the answer to this question. Happily I had a copy of this book with me and was able to find the answer. A sure sign, I think, that this book should be a *vade mecum* for all practitioners.