

Backchat

Insider's Market matrix

ONE STEP FORWARD



Pity the fools

Hands up if you were taken in by *Insurance Times's* April Fool that former PM Tony Blair was to take the chair at Aviva. (Thanks to the insurer's press office for playing along with the joke.)



On the way out

Sources tell me Peter Cullum will stand down as Towergate chairman any day now, and has already limited his responsibilities to Powerplace and CCV. No fear, though – he'll still be on the scene, perhaps as vice-chair?



Top Billing

Lloyd's finance director Luke Savage remains tight-lipped about the identity of the market's new chairman. But he's adamant it won't be Bill Clinton, as the *Telegraph* suggested last week.

The kids are alright

I believe the children are our future, and so does AXA. Here's to the celeb-studded launch event for its AXA Ambition youth initiative at the Speaker's House last week – a good time had by all.



On yer bike

Members of the Lloyd's Cycling Club – sporting blue lycra outfits complete with images of the Lloyd's building across their backs – are setting off on a bike ride to Monte Carlo. Tally-ho chaps!

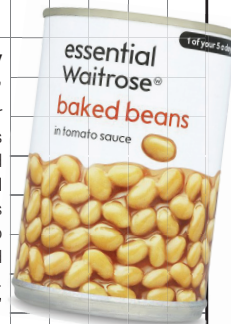
West End boy

This market has some hidden stars – among them David Croom-Johnson, Aegis active underwriter at Lloyd's. He used to own the record label that managed 80s pop band A-Ha. And later he worked as Andrew Lloyd Webber's stage manager, working on 500 performances of hit musical *Cats*.



Retail therapy

NIG's 'guaranteed to beat' deal has come in for some flak, but the insurer is standing firm. "What would people do if supermarkets all said they had to raise prices and criticised anyone who offered customers a good deal?" said one worker. "There'd be a national outcry."



TAXI!

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Mail chauvinism

The tale of Sebastian Marsh provides a salutary lesson for us all. The Miller employee is off work while the broker looks into a sexist email exchange between him and a friend that went very, very public last week.

CHEERS!

TWO STEPS BACK

