

# Backchat

## Insider's Market matrix

TAXI!



### ● Duck!

The recent Hendersons Insurance Brokers' conference was held at the Lancashire County Cricket club, the old stomping ground of ex-England captain Freddie Flintoff. The conference hall overlooking the grounds has specially thickened windows to protect the guests from errant cricket balls. Apparently Flintoff liked to regularly test the glass by deliberately smashing balls at it. Fortunately for the assembled brokers and insurers watching the later Roses cricket match between Lancashire CC and Yorkshire, the windows held strong.



### ● What Katie said!

Andy Homer has ruffled a few feathers in the City in his time, but what on earth has he done to annoy Jordan? Andy lives near to the glamour model in leafy Surrey, but it seems the relationship is far from cordial. Jordan recently celebrated her 33rd birthday party with a huge bash, where she reportedly turned the air blue by grabbing the mic for a foul-mouthed tirade that left no one in any doubt about how much she hates all her neighbours. Her final word on the matter? "I won't miss none of you when I'm gone." Oh dear ...



## ONE STEP FORWARD

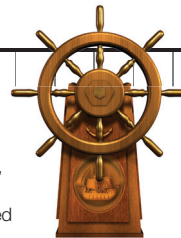
### ● Forking out

How much would you pay to have lunch with your favourite insurance personality? I'd pay cold, hard cash to share tapas with Chris Giles (does anyone know where he is, by the way?) But not as much as one man has paid to eat steak with Warren Buffett at Smith & Wollensky in Manhattan. An anonymous bidder has paid \$2.6m (£1.59m) in an eBay auction to eat with the Berkshire Hathaway chief, dubbed the 'Oracle of Omaha'. And if anyone's wondering, I'm free most Thursdays between 1pm and 3pm ...



### ● Three sheets to the wind

There's no substitute for class, as seafaring Lockton chief executive Julian James showed on his return home from the Airmic conference in Bournemouth by hopping onboard the Lloyd's yacht *Lutine*. But, as he sailed away, I hear he left the real party on land with RSA and co, who led the way in evening entertainment.



### ● Direct hit

Direct Line is teaming up with film body Raindance to launch a competition asking would-be directors to submit films on making difficult situations more straightforward. The judging panel will include comedian Chris Addison and presenter/DJ Alex Zane. The organisers say the work will help people understand that insurance can be simple. Hopefully this message will reach the jokers currently in charge of insuring my Bentleys.



CHEERS!

### ● Sweet deal gone sour

Ex-Labour City minister Kitty Ussher revealed at a Lansons Communications seminar last week that she got more than she bargained for when she took the job. When phoning to offer her the portfolio back in July 2007, then prime minister Gordon Brown said it would be light on policy but important for keeping key Square Mile stakeholders sweet. A few months later, with the financial system going into meltdown, City policy was suddenly rather more important.



### ● All off to sunny Spain

Willis Commercial Network members enjoyed a weekend of sun and sangria at its three-day forum in Alicante. Insurer top brass like Amanda Blanc, Janice Deakin and Chris Sime led workshops focusing on "enhancing and developing the unique relationships members share with these insurers". The event attracted over 100 network representatives. I wonder how many would have turned up if the event was held in Blighty?



## TWO STEPS BACK