

Backchat

Insider's Market matrix

Staddon speaks

Mystery surrounds the exit of Biba's Peter Staddon and, as the gossip intensifies, the whole saga is turning into one that would even give Sherlock Holmes a few sleepless nights. So much so that I



hear he is even thinking about revealing all on his blog. The blog hasn't been updated since April, but expect a clicking frenzy when 'Discrete Pete' finally reveals all.

Just call me Alan ...

After years in the industry I've become used to lengthy job titles, but Aviva's Alan Drury might have the longest yet. Alan's full job title is 'Aviva head of trading

TAXI!



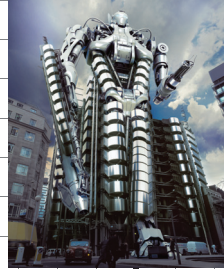
North West, Nottingham and Northern Ireland (national brokers, north of England)'. When he gets a promotion, I imagine Aviva will need to start using A4 business cards.

Spitting feathers

The insurance tradition of long and boozy lunches has just been broken. I recently met with a member of a London market insurance broker that has told their staff not to drink during office hours. Apparently banning drinking was seen as a better idea than setting a drinking limit. "I'm a cheap date," one employee said ruefully, as he sipped his mineral water.



ONE STEP FORWARD



Stretch to fit

Lloyd's insiders are relaxed about the prospect of their iconic headquarters being given listed building status. Listing usually makes any alterations a bureaucratic nightmare, if not impossible. But Lloyd's won't have any such problems because the original plans by Lord Rogers state the point that flexibility is core to the building's concept. Now that's forward thinking.

A building to fry for

There's something fishy going on at PricewaterhouseCooper's offices near London Bridge. I hear the state-of-the-art building is powered by – wait for it – used cooking oil. A local company collects cooking oil used by the neighbouring fish and chip shops and restaurants. It then processes it into a clean energy source used by PwC. A mole at PwC proudly tells me it means the building is one of the most environmentally friendly in the world.



A tall order

Equity Direct Broking managing director Charles Offord can multitask like no other. Charles recently tackled the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge for charity, but was still able to deal with recruitment plans while clinging to the exposed cliff face of the 2,277 foot Pen-y-Ghent mountain. At the summit of Yorkshire's highest mountain, Offord also found time to sort out buying a new house.

CHEERS!



Don't leave us Eric

Will Eric Galbraith hand over Biba if the mooted merger with the Institute of Insurance Brokers goes through? The Biba chief executive is approaching retirement age and has children in Australia, which must dull the attractions of the City. Healing the broker world's longstanding wound by reconciling the trade bodies would be a fitting note to sign off on.

Under pressure

Equity Red Star is living in interesting times. An annoyed Name is trying to form a pressure group against the Lloyd's insurer, which has been losing money hand over fist due to personal injury claims. I always thought Names were old school types, who shunned technology, but this clever chap has set up a website at www.218equity.co.uk, asking the question: "Had a motor loss that wasn't your fault?"



TWO STEPS BACK

