

Backchat Insider's Market matrix



Speed freaks

Insurance and cars are slightly less than comfortable bedfellows when the car in question is being driven at 130mph. So were the folks at Markerstudy and Insurance Factory brave or just silly to take on the sponsorship of debut driver Tony Gilham at the recent British Touring Car Championship? And any guesses on the cost of that insurance policy?

Singing from the same hymn sheet

Team-building got musical at AXA's annual senior management conference in Istanbul last week. After a two-hour practice, the executives formed a choir to perform highlights from 'The Marriage of Figaro' and 'Land of Hope and Glory'. I expect a reprise at Biba this week. Encore!



TAXI!

Drowned out

Somalian piracy is a growing problem for insurers, partly because the pirates keep adapting to stay ahead. I hear from friends in the London market that when ships started using state-of-the-art sound cannons to drive away incoming pirates, the canny buccaniers simply started using earplugs or sticking their fingers in their ears.



ONE STEP FORWARD



Cell shock!

Keep your eyes peeled around the exhibition hall at Biba in Manchester this week for a familiar face. Michael Bright was recently released from prison and rumour has it the former Independent Insurance boss could be making a surprise appearance.



Ten years? Piece of cake ...

Cheers to Kevin Spencer and the Markerstudy boys for 10 years of trading and the birthday party to end all birthday parties at the Savoy. Chris Tarrant and Tony Hadley were highlights – altogether now: you are GOLD!!



What a catch

High fives for Phillip Hodson, who has been appointed to the presidency of the MCC. The Oval Group chief executive was a handy all-rounder, representing Cambridge University and the Yorkshire second XI, before turning his hand to insurance. Howzat!



Charity begins at Home

A team from Home & Legacy are tackling the Three Peaks Challenge in June to raise money for the Help the Hospices. Not to be outdone by their colleagues, two more from the broker are doing a Guildford to Cardiff bike ride this month. Donate at www.justgiving.com/Home-and-Legacy-Three-Peaks-Challenge.

CHEERS!



Day tripper

Lloyd's dusted off a rather unusual policy for their booth at the Risk and Insurance Management Society convention: John Lennon's accident insurance form. Listing Lennon's occupation as 'entertainer, (member of the Beatles)', the policy cost a cool £200,000.

Pipped to the post

Many of you miserable lot probably avoided the royal wedding, so it's nice to hear someone enjoyed it. "It was a great show," Novae chief executive Matthew Fosh said. But one gets the impression that the bride's sister was the big draw. "We love Pippa. Who doesn't?" he said. "Kate's gone, sadly ..."



TWO STEPS BACK