

# Backchat Insider's Market matrix

## ONE STEP FORWARD

### Respect for office

By all accounts Mark Hodges has been champing at the bit to get started with his new employer, Towergate. As befits his role as the new chief executive, Mark has moved into the largest and grandest office in the building, previously occupied by a certain Peter Cullum. Peter has moved into the slightly smaller office next door.



### Torus rocks on

With Broadgate rounding out Torus's offering, chief executive Clive Tobin should be feeling rather optimistic. But if the music-loving executive's insurance ventures go wrong, he has his collection of 1950s jukeboxes to fall back on. "It's my diversification play," he quips. I hope he has a big enough garage to accommodate enough of these bulky beasts.



### Not even shaken

The Liberty Mutual Manchester cocktail party last week had a James Bond theme. The office had been decked out with bars serving vodka martinis and the guests (most dressed in black tie or as characters from Bond films) gathered around roulette and blackjack tables. I asked one attendee how long it had taken to convert the office into a casino that 007 himself would have been proud of. "Not long – this is what it's like normally," he shot back.



TAXI!

### Poll position

Stephen Lathrope, newly appointed managing director of SSP's Insurance Division, has emerged as a businessman with a political conscience. He stood as the Labour candidate for Beaconsfield, a safe Tory seat, in 2001. Although he lost to Dominic Grieve, his campaigning and political cunning boosted Labour by 1.7%.



### Pitch Warded off

The affable Lloyd's chief executive Richard Ward became a little piqued recently when sorting out a private motor claim. He had to repeatedly tell a pushy salesman that he didn't want their credit hire replacement vehicle. If only every customer was like Ward.



CHEERS!

### A game of two halves

Congratulations to my old pal John Radford, Biba motor panellist and owner of One Call Insurance, on proposing to Carolyn Still. Carolyn, a glamorous 29-year-old blonde, was appointed chief executive of Mansfield Town Football Club this month by none other than Radford, who is also the club owner. And to think some people say it's not a good idea to mix business and pleasure.



### Chest height

If I was to mention topless horseriding, you'd never think of AmTrust. However, that is exactly what happened at the recent AmTrust Equine High Jump event at Blenheim Palace. Two riders did the event topless after losing a forfeit from an earlier event. One of them went on to jump a record height. Rumours that AmTrust is rolling out the topless forfeit policy throughout the company are unconfirmed.



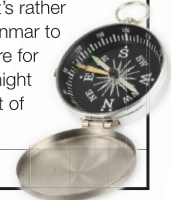
### Upside your head

Jargon has always had a place in risk management, as AIRMIC technical director Paul Hopkin said last week. The phrase 'the upside of risk' has been growing in popularity over the past few years, Paul noted. "This is a turn of phrase that's never quite been defined, but we happily use it," he said, tongue firmly in cheek.



### Way to go

At the Lonmar offices, there is still a sign pointing to the casualty and exceptional risks department, which transferred to rival broker Gallagher International in June. Not being equipped with a compass or GPS, I couldn't tell if the arrow pointed towards Gallagher's offices. If so, it's rather sporting of Lonmar to keep it up there for visitors who might not be abreast of recent events.



## TWO STEPS BACK



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