

# Geordie's cut class accent

## CITY DIARY

edited by Adam Jay

COMMUNICATIONS group Incepta produces an annual corporate video, fronted by chief executive Richard Nichols. Every year, he repeats what he describes as the company's vision statement – “best in class”. Nichols is a Geordie, “born and bred”, and while his accent has faded over the years, his class has always rhymed with gas. Until this year, that is. His class, I'm saddened to report, is now more of a farce than a gas – the last remnants of his home town brogue apparently having deserted him.

“It's true,” he confesses. “I've been living in the south for too long [13 years]. I need to get back up north more. *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet's* back and maybe I should be.

“I should have a chat with Bobby Robson or Kieron Dyer,” he adds. Kieron Dyer? He may play for the Toon, and be class on the grass, but he's no Geordie. “Oh alright then, how about Alan Shearer?” asks Nichols.

Fair enough, but just try getting him to pass – or is it pass?

### Gators hot to croc

I'VE heard of bookies refusing to pay out winnings but never the other way round. Yesterday, however, in a move reminiscent of Rudolph Giuliani declining Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal's \$10m gift, WWF (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) turned down a donation from Blue Square.

The online bookmaker, which is running a series of 20ft alligator races (that's 20ft races, not 20ft alligators) this week, had planned to give its profits to the charity, but was turned down on grounds of taste. “Blue Square hadn't actually asked us prior to the event



whether we would be happy to have our name associated with it,” said a spokesman.

“It was possibly naive of us not to ask them first,” admits Blue Square's Ed Pownall, “but I didn't think that's how donations worked. Anyway, they love it. They're absolutely fine. The studio's at 92° which is what they like, as they're cold-blooded. And if they don't like it, they don't move. Today only two of the six ran – the others were quite happy chilling at the start.” At 92°?

### Eur not debating any more

IN early March Gerard Lyons, the Standard Chartered chief economist, and Ruth Lea, head of policy at the Institute of Directors, agreed to oppose the motion “Is joining the euro good for business in the UK?” in a debate at the House of Commons. Now Lyons has been informed that the event's been postponed “due to an inability to confirm leading pro-euro speakers”. Will Hutton, Lord Marshall, Adair Turner, Lord Jenkins, Peter Mandelson, Peter Sutherland and Lord Tugendhat were all approached but none could make it.

“Despite the attraction of the location and the importance of the debate, it

BRIAN Winterflood always said he'd find it difficult to retire. The chairman of Winterflood Securities – who stepped down as Wins chief exec on his 65th birthday in January – has become a non-executive director of futures and options broker Monument Derivatives. The company is run by Martin Burton, Winterflood's partner at stockjobbers Bisgood Bishop & Co in the 70s and 80s. Oh, and a certain Guy Winterflood also works there.

Winterflood (snr) says: “The only possible conflict here is between a mother and her two sons.” You what? “Oh, I think I got that wrong. Between my wife, her son and her husband.” Not that Guy seems overly concerned. “At last, Dad, you'll be working for me,” is what he's been telling his old man.

seems that the pros have gone to ground,” Lyons points out.

“Or it could be because the last time Ruth and I debated at the House of Commons a few years ago, we won the argument and the vote hands down, against two pro-Europe MPs.”

### I drink, therefore I claw back my NI

THREE WEEKS after the Budget and someone's discovered a legit way to offset the 1pc rise in national insurance. “If you earn £30,000 per year,” reads an e-mail doing the rounds, “you'll pay an extra £252 in NI this year”.

It continues: “Fortunately, there's a legal way to claw back this cash by exploiting the fact that the duty on a pint of real ale from a small brewery will fall by 14p a pint.

“Roughly speaking, for every seven pints you drink, you 'earn' £1. So you can neutralise the effect of the £252 NI increase by drinking an extra 1,764 pints this year. This is about five pints a night.

“Obviously, people who earn more than this will have to drink more. For instance, if you earned £60,000 you'd have to find room for 10 pints a night.”

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