

Taking Stock

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Don't get left on the shelf

Bad news. You know those surveys that say accountants are boring, well TS has found another one. CCB fast.MAP asked 1,287 people what adjectives they associate with accountants.

Many of the respondents (489) said accountants were 'boring'. Personally, TS thinks they're boring, since that's a boring response. Some 239 thought accountants were 'wealthy', 140 thought 'trustworthy', and 136 thought 'I'd be proud to have my son/daughter doing this'. Another 110 thought that the phrase 'contributes to society' went with accountants. Those were the more uplifting findings.

Perhaps more distressing was that 92 people said accountants were 'untrustworthy'. But it gets worse. Only four opted for the word 'sexy' in relation to the profession. And only one person used the word 'fun'.

Only six people opted for the phrase 'I would like to marry' in relation to accountants, perhaps the saddest reflection of all. Looks like TS will have to start a dating service.

Ken Frost, Croydon's celebrity accountant, is hoping for a gong. He has been nominated in the *New Statesman's* New Media Awards 2008. The awards work by people nominating the websites they like most, and Ken's was endorsed by one reader. Five other fans subsequently backed Ken. The site in question (there's not just one 'Ken Frost' site) is his page on HMRC, erm, not being very good at its job, hmrconline.co.uk. It is also known by the less polite hmrccish*te.com – the missing letter is an i. If Ken wins, TS looks forward to a presenter having fun reading that out, but it's also known as hmrconline.com so it depends how much dutch courage the MC has had.

Howzat for service?

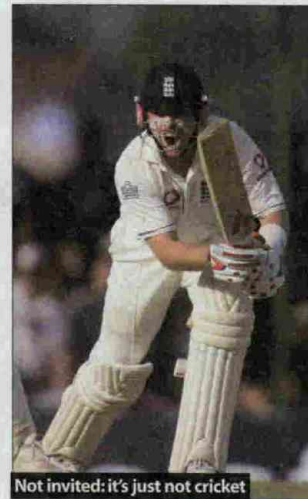
If your business was in crisis on Thursday of last week, you would have been hard pushed to find a turnaround specialist to come in and perform the necessary rescue.

Why? TS discovered, much to its chagrin, that said experts were all otherwise engaged at the first day of the England vs New Zealand test match at Lord's cricket ground.

We finally managed to get in touch with one of the kings of collapse recovery, Nick Hood of Begbies Traynor. He seemed, given the background noise, to be enjoying the hospitality provided at the ground.

'The whole profession's down here,' he announced.

Well bully for you. Not that TS was put out at not being invited for some well timed corporate glad-handing. Apart from the drinking and the all-day eating, cricket's a



Not invited: it's just not cricket

boring game anyway. It seems quite apt that accountants love a game involving an English sporting team that hasn't been averse to a collapse or two itself in the past.



Feast for the eyes and waist

Troughing season has truly begun in earnest and TS is glad to see the good folks of Ernst & Young back on form.

The moolah counters of More London had a private viewing of artist Alice Instone's *Twenty one twenty first century women* collection and laid on a banquet fit for a king.

One of the titans of E&Y made a point of making sure that TS was always within close reach of a fresh plate of upmarket nibbles after your favourite well-fed muckraker gave them a bad report card for a breakfast briefing spread, which left much to be desired. Now that is true journalistic influence.

In these times of economic belt-



Food for culture vultures

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tightening TS had no choice but to indulge in a spot of belt-loosening after staggering up the stairs on a very full stomach.

On departing, TS noticed that the accounting culture vultures even had a wine tasting event next door. But after that gastronomic experience, TS thinks that E&Y truly has earned its 'Big Four' tag - at least in terms of its waistline.

TS is becoming something of an expert in airline accounting: landing slots adding an asset to the balance sheet, frequent flyer programmes adding a liability - you know the drill. But there are difficulties in talking to airline experts. Last week it proved impossible as the expert in question was unavoidably out of the office - because his plane was late. Does this always happen to people in the airline industry, or is it just more noticeable? Are train company auditors' trains always late? TS supposes there must be some compensation if you're signing off their books. If your plane is always tardy, the audit opinion gives you a chance to say what you really think of the company. Of course, none of you would ever be that irresponsible.