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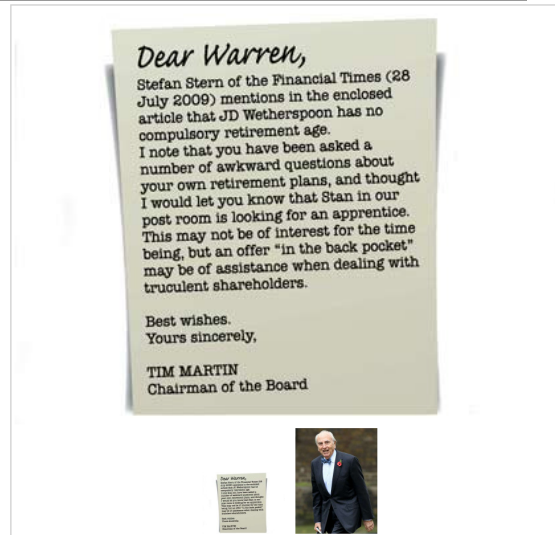
02.12.10

Here's Wetherspoon chairman Tim Martin's job offer to Warren Buffett, mentioned in this space only yesterday.

It's good to see that the pub chain is ready to come to the aid of frail pensioners and City Spy suspects a dollop of Buffett worship from the normally terminally unimpressed Martin.

Has he had a reply yet? "No," says a mouthpiece. "He's hoping he'll get one. Buffett is one of his all-time heroes."

Buffett has always said that he will stay in charge of [Berkshire Hathaway](#) for as long as his marbles are in tact. Once they fail, a job at 'Spoons would clearly be ideal.



Lord Young's set for a merry one

Lord Young has never had it so good since declaring how marvellously well off we all are.

It might have cost him his job as enterprise tsar but plenty of business folks ([Theo Paphitis](#), [Lord Digby Jones](#) and the like) have been backslapping him warmly ever since.

Now it seems that the gigs on the after-dinner circuit are rolling in. Today he was announced as guest of honour at the annual Jewish Business Awards lunch.

Plenty more bookings are likely, we hear.

Thiam and selective amnesia

"Our strategy is sound, and we continue to pursue it with the operating discipline that has delivered excellent results on all measures over a sustained period."

That heart-warming message is Prudential chief executive [Tidjane Thiam](#) talking about a plan to grow profits in [Asia](#) yesterday.

No mention of the strategic, disciplined way the company recently tossed £377 million down the drain in costs for the failed bid to buy AIA. Probably slipped his mind.

Is Goldman a bird of ill-omen?

It is still not possible to short [Betfair](#) shares on the company's nascent financial punting website LMAX.

This is something of a pity, because since City Spy first made this gag several weeks ago the stock has dived.

Yesterday it lost another 77p to 1223p, now well below the £13 float price achieved just a few weeks ago. You will hardly need reminding that the float was overseen by [Goldman Sachs](#), which will doubtless argue it did a good job for its client.

The thing is, for investors Goldman's recent history is so bad that its mere presence on a float advisory list is a Sell signal all of its own.

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Spanish eyes are smiling

Spanish finance minister Elena Salgado says she is "certain that we can control" speculation in the financial markets that [Madrid](#) will need a humiliating Irish-style bail-out. Sell everything.

Twits at KLM airline

Airline [KLM](#) recently opened its website to [Twitter](#) users, showing all tweets that included the words "#klmsurprise" on the front page of its website.

The inevitable stream of abuse followed including: "Seating so cramped you get off your flight without your feet #klmsurprise" and, "The best #klmsurprise is to discover that train travel is the sanest way to get around Europe."

Sick as a Norwegian parrot

If you're foreign and young-looking don't try to buy booze at Waitrose. A 30-year-old Norwegian woman was asked for ID when buying a bottle and flashed her Norwegian driver's licence. Staff refused to accept it and she left empty-handed.

Bailiffs bang on the door...

Most Ebenezer Scrooge-style headline on a seasonal press release so far: "As the UK gears up for [Christmas](#) shopping, outsourcer IMFS Teleperformance encourages businesses to think about their debt-collection strategies." Merry Christmas.

Valued employees at [Thomas Cook](#)

Ping. That's an angry-sounding email from Thomas Cook's PR outfit (Finsbury, Never heard of them) on the subject of job losses. "For your background, kindly note," it reads, "500 roles have left the business since end of Sept 2010. None of these were shop employees or customer-facing roles..." So that's all right then.

Google shuffles its pack

Has Google taken pre-emptive action after rival search engines said it deliberately lowered their rankings and the [European Commission](#) this week launched a formal investigation?

City Spy finds it curious that when one looks up "search engine" on Google the results are — in order — a site called Dog Pile, a [Wikipedia](#) page on search engines, [Microsoft's Bing](#), then two listings for Alta Vista, then, there at number six, Google itself.

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