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WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE MY TELEGRAPH COMMUNITY

PEOPLE READ WHAT I HAVE TO SAY

One of the unexpected pleasures of blogging is discovering whether or not your musings find a sympathetic audience. Here's a comment from Simone_W after she had posted on My Telegraph.

'It really is amazing how polite the people are on My Telegraph. On some blogging sites and message boards (and I've been on a few)

people just seem to offend people without thinking, say anything without considering the consequences: they just don't care. But not on here! People read what I have to say and comment sensibly and considerately. They are pleasant, kind, and welcoming ... It's nice to know people I can have a sensible discussion with, it really is.'

MY TELEGRAPH
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IN A BLOGGING
PHENOMENON

NUMBER
OF MEMBERS

2034

NUMBER
OF BLOGS

1781

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BLOG OF THE DAY

DOING THE BIN MEN'S JOB POSTED BY CEBES

We have recycled for years - garden waste, bottles and papers - so the emergence of new wheelee bins in different colours hasn't changed anything. All that *has* changed is that once a fortnight I drive normal, household waste to Bracknell's tip, queue for 20 minutes and dump the bags

that the local council used to collect - and for that joyful experience our council tax has gone up.

Perhaps instead of running wood-burning stoves some bright spark ought to invent a rubbish-burning stove that heats the water and generates electricity more effectively than an over-sold solar panel

or a sad little windmill on the roof. The carbon 'footprint' in the resulting smoke would be more than off-set by the savings in other energy sources - and the soot could go on the garden.

● **Do you agree with Cebes? You can post a comment on any My Telegraph blog.**

11th hour challenge to home seller packs

By George Jones
Political Editor

A GROUNDBREAKING legal challenge to delay the planned introduction of Home Information Packs (HIPs) in little over two weeks' time was launched yesterday.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors began judicial review proceedings over the "failure" by ministers to carry out proper consultation in relation to HIPs legislation.

It is the first time in its 136-year history that the RICS has launched a legal challenge against the government.

From the beginning of next month it will be illegal to put a property up for sale either through an estate agent, privately, in a newspaper advertisement or on the internet, without first having a HIP, expected to cost around £600.

The packs must include information about the sale including title deeds and planning searches, plus an Energy Performance certificate which will involve a home assessment by an inspector. *The Daily Tele-*

graph disclosed yesterday that the property market was being flooded as sellers were putting their homes up for sale in an attempt to beat the June 1 deadline - with estate agents fearing chaos in the market.

The Conservative Party has tabled a motion - due to be debated after Prime Minister's Questions this afternoon - calling for HIPs regulations to be annulled.

Although the Government will vote down the motion, it risks defeat when a similar demand for a rethink is made in the Lords next week.

Critics claim that the packs will deliver few benefits to consumers, add to the cost of selling a home and adversely affect the market.

The High Court is expected to hear the institute's initial challenge next week. If it decides there is a case to answer, the implementation of HIPs will be put on hold pending a hearing in the summer.

Teresa Graham, chairman of RICS, said the industry body had been left with "no other option" if it was to "protect the public's property interests".



JOHN ROBERTSON

New generation of the Sound of Music

Great great grandchildren of Captain Georg von Trapp, Melanie, 17, Amanda, 16, Justin, 12, and Sofia, 18, before they performed the *Sound of Music* in Northampton last night. Von Trapp's escape from the Nazis with his wife, Maria, and children, in 1938 inspired the musical. The siblings have embarked on a 10-day UK tour

Doctors take legal action over jobs chaos

Continued from Page 1
police and Miss Hewitt admitted that "criminal offences may have been committed".

She said interviews arranged under the first round of applications would finish in the next few weeks with offers of jobs being made next month.

Junior doctors would revert to the traditional system of applying directly to hospitals for the second round of applications from those who have still not found a post.

Miss Hewitt's comments came as Remedy UK, which represents grassroots doctors,

confirmed it will launch a judicial review of the recruitment process at the Royal Courts of Justice in London today.

Dr Andrew Rowland, vice-chairman of the British Medical Association's junior doctors committee, welcomed

Miss Hewitt's climbdown but said the BMA did not support legal moves by Remedy UK to ensure that interviews that have already taken place should be written off. "This would be disastrous for doctors, for patients, and for the NHS," he argued.

HOW WE BROKE THE STORY



The Telegraph, on March 3, reports on the growing crisis

MARCH 2: The *Daily Telegraph* reveals that thousands of junior doctors have been left without jobs because the new online recruitment system has gone "disastrously wrong"

MARCH 3: Many junior doctors and their parents contact *The Daily Telegraph* with details of the chaos that has engulfed the Medical Training Application Service (MTAS)

MARCH 5: Patricia Hewitt, the Health Secretary, meets the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. In the West Midlands, senior surgeons put their jobs on the line by suspending interviews

MARCH 6: Miss Hewitt announces an immediate review of MTAS

MARCH 9: The Department of Health agrees to give hundreds of doctors who failed to get an interview in the first round of applications a second chance

MARCH 17: Junior doctors stage mass demonstrations to vent their anger about the difficulties crippling the recruitment process

MARCH 19: Miss Hewitt tells MPs the problems with MTAS have created a "high degree of insecurity" for doctors but refuses to apologise

MARCH 23: Around 11,000 junior doctors are offered at

least one interview and a guarantee that their CVs will be taken into account

MARCH 30: Prof Alan Crookard, the eminent neurosurgeon who presided over the new system, announces his resignation

APRIL 3: Miss Hewitt finally apologises to junior doctors during a BBC interview for the "terrible anxiety" the problems with MTAS have caused

APRIL 17: She apologises in the Commons for the chaos in the MTAS system

APRIL 25: Channel Four News reveals that security breaches in the MTAS website allow people to access information about junior doctors, including their addresses and sexuality

APRIL 26: A second security breach is exposed which means people can look through applications submitted by junior doctors. The Department of Health announces that MTAS has been suspended

MAY 4: Miss Hewitt looks rattled as she faces the fury of junior doctors during an appearance on BBC 1's *Newsnight* programme

MAY 15: Miss Hewitt announces that MTAS has been abandoned. Junior doctors in the second round of recruitment will be asked to write directly to hospitals

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3-year term	6.15%	10.25%	7.69%

These figures assume current rates of tax and that the Certificate is held for the full term. RPI as at March 2007 and may go up or down. *AER (Annual Equivalent Rate) shows what the notional annual rate would be if interest was compounded each time it was credited or paid out. The interest is compounded annually so the rate quoted and the AER are the same.

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News bulletin

Cameron: I'll stop Scots MPs from voting on English laws

Scottish MPs will be barred from voting on "England-only" legislation if David Cameron takes the Conservatives into power, it emerged yesterday.

The Tory leader's move appears designed to embarrass Gordon Brown, who is next month expected to become Prime Minister and is himself a Scottish MP.

Aides to the Tory leader confirmed that he would unveil the far-reaching constitutional reform in the run-up to the next election.

Although no final decision had been taken, they said Mr Cameron was thinking of creating an "English grand committee" at Westminster to

decide legislation only affecting England. The proposal comes amid mounting concern over the seemingly unfair power wielded by Scottish MPs at Westminster now that Scotland has a parliament.

There have even been calls - not endorsed by Mr Cameron - for the creation of a separate English parliament.

Of the 59 MPs elected in Scotland, 39 are Labour while the Tories have only one.

Tony Blair has relied on his Scots MPs to force through legislation on foundation hospitals and university tuition fees - a system that does not apply in Scotland.

'No mercury link with autism'

A link between exposure to mercury in vaccines before birth and autism is ruled out by a study published today.

The study of more than 200 children found that exposure to thimerosal, which contains mercury, was no higher for children with autism. The study, led by Judith Miles, at the University of Missouri-Columbia, will be published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A*. "This study adds to the evidence that there is no causal association," the authors state.

Bank wins case over 'unfair' fees

Lloyds TSB yesterday became the first bank to defeat a court challenge by a current-account customer over "unfair" overdraft penalty fees.

A district judge at Birmingham County Court dismissed a claim for about £2,000 in fees and interest, ruling that the charges were a legitimate part of the service. Campaigners said it was a blow to thousands of people still hoping to reclaim "unfair" charges from their banks. But they argued that the ruling would not be as binding as one from a High Court judge.

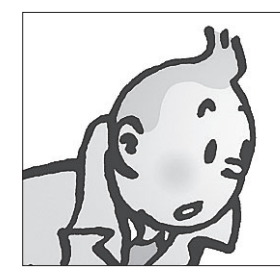
Tintin gets the Spielberg treatment

Three films based on Hergé's comic strip boy reporter Tintin are to be made by Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson.

Spielberg, the man behind *ET* and the Indiana Jones films, and Jackson, who created the *Lord Of the Rings* trilogy, will each direct one film and serve as producers on all three chosen from the 23 books published between 1929 and 1976.

Tintin is a pet project for Spielberg, who secured the film rights in the past 12 months.

He said the computer



Tintin comes alive Hergé/Moulinsart

animation technology in the productions would be unlike anything ever seen with Hergé's characters "reborn as living beings".

Campbell diary out on July 9

Alastair Campbell's diaries are to be published on July 9, barely a fortnight after Tony Blair resigns as Prime Minister on June 27.

Mr Campbell, who served at Downing Street for six years, had made clear that he would not bring out the diaries, to be titled *The Blair Years*, until his former boss had left power.

He is rumoured to have been paid £1 million by Random House for the 350,000 words in the book and has refused any serialisation deals with newspapers.

20 TV shows in phone-in probe

Ofcom, the television regulator, is investigating more than 20 cases in the phone-in quiz scandal, including those of GMTV, *Blue Peter* and *Five's Brain teaser*.

Ed Richards, Ofcom's chief executive, told a House of Commons select committee yesterday that there was evidence of a "systemic failure of compliance".

He said: "We currently have over 20 investigations still in play in relation to specific incidents ... We would expect results on many of those in the coming weeks."

Fleet of spyplanes 'may be created'

The creation of a fleet of unmanned aircraft as part of efforts to gather intelligence on terrorists and criminals is being considered by the Home Office, it has been revealed.

The use of drones for a "range of policing and security applications" is being explored, Tony McNulty, the policing minister, confirmed in a House of Commons written answer.

Unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, are already widely used by the military in a range of countries for missions.

One offence but 542 'crimes' for police

By John Steele
Crime Correspondent

POLICE spent months gathering statements from 542 people who donated money to a youngster who collected £700 for Comic Relief but then kept it.

The case was then recorded as 542 crimes of obtaining money by deception, boosting detection rates even though the youngster only received a warning, the Police Federation conference in Blackpool heard yesterday. It also emerged that

an unidentified child in North Wales received a "penalty notice for disorder" (PND) for chalking on the pavement.

The cases were highlighted as absurd examples of the "target culture" reviled by many rank and file officers in England and Wales, which is "criminalising middle England".

The critics say pressure to boost the apparent success rate against crime forces police to make ridiculous decisions and use arrests, cau-

tion or fines for trivial incidents which would not previously have been treated as crimes.

Investigation of more serious offences is then neglected.

Simon Reed, a Bedfordshire officer and a senior official in the federation, outlined the Comic Relief case: "A child obtained £700 by deception, keeping sponsorship money for Comic Relief."

"One crime? No, not under the relentless drive for sanction detections. They turned

this £700 into 542 separate crimes by sending out community support officers to knock on doors to take statements."

Tony McNulty, the Home Office police minister, told the conference: "If there are personalities in the system as people say I want to know about it and get them changed."

"I don't apologise for measuring performance and establishing some targets," he added, although he conceded there might be too many targets.