

## News in brief

### MILAN THE HOSTS

Milan will host the 2009 Homeless World Cup, the annual, international football tournament for homeless people. Sixty-four nations and 700 players will be united in the heart of the Italian football capital, Sempione Park, in September 2009. The bid was won by a collaboration of Milan City Council, Milan Provincial Council, Italian Football Federation, Inter FC, Politecnico and Bocconi universities, Terre di Mezzo street paper and other organisations.

### DIABETES WEEK

The Diabetes UK Roadshow is coming to Manchester as part of Diabetes Week on 10-14 June to give people an opportunity to learn more about the disease. Diabetes UK has teamed up with the organisers of the latest exhibition by anatomist Dr Gunther von Hagens, Body Worlds 4, at Manchester's Museum of Science & Industry. The Diabetes UK Roadshow unit will be outside the museum.

### ANIMAL ACTION

The Department for Environment, Food And Rural Affairs has launched a plan to reduce the threat to Britain's native biodiversity from invasive non-native species of animals. The plan, featuring an information campaign, website to show the types of invasive species and where they are, and a means of responding rapidly to threats, aims to protect native wildlife from the likes of floating pennywort and the North American signal crayfish.

### HELP FOR SINGLE PARENTS

The charity Holiday Endeavour for Lone Parents (HELP) is offering single parents discounts on holidays at Pontins and Haven as well as in its own caravans. HELP says the holidays offer single parents – both mothers and fathers – a chance to make new friends and meet others in similar situations. For more details send a 9" x 6" self-addressed envelope with a 36p stamp to HELP, PO Box 244, Gainsborough, Lincs, DN21 9AQ.

## News

# Class action on housing

CIARA LEEMING

**A scheme that is changing the face of towns across the north is more about imposing middle-class values on neighbourhoods than practical regeneration, it has been claimed.**

In his new book *Housing Market Renewal and Social Class*, Professor Chris Allen of Manchester Metropolitan University urges readers to question whose interests the government's Housing Market Renewal – or Pathfinder – is serving.

The flagship initiative is pumping millions of pounds of taxpayers' money into six areas in the region deemed to have suffered from "market collapse".

Under the controversial 15-year scheme – running in Merseyside, Manchester and Salford, East Lancashire, Oldham and Rochdale, Hull and East Riding, and South Yorkshire – thousands of mainly terraced homes are being demolished, some properties are being refurbished and new houses and flats are being built.

Most areas that are a focus for Pathfinder renewal are rundown working-class neighbourhoods on the edge of town and city centres.

Its supporters say intervention is a necessary step in tackling social decline and population flight – and will help attract the new residents they claim will turn the areas into "sustainable" communities.

But Allen, a sociologist, is sceptical about the thinking behind HMR. In his book he argues that its

architects have failed to take into account the different attitudes to housing held by working class and middle class people.

Using the Kensington area of Liverpool as an example, he warns that HMR is imposing the dominant view – one of housing as an investment – on communities which do not share it.

The book says: "HMR is about attracting a new class of people into areas. Working-class people tend to regard housing differently to middle-class owners. They see it more as a basic essential – a place to live.

"For those in the middle class it becomes more symbolic of cultural consumption, of who they are. HMR is very much based on that view. "It's very much about the space of positions on the market. Each house has a place compared to others – and people move up the housing ladder..."

That "working-class attitude" is summed up in the way residents often refer to their homes as "bricks and mortar" or "just a place to live", rather than in terms of a position on the housing ladder.

These residents were shown to happily occupy "failed" inner city areas such as Kensington and have few plans to move out. Most are, as he puts it, "terrorised" by the thought of mortgage debt.

Allen believes these neighbourhoods caught the regenerators' attention because middle-class buyers showed little



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interest in them as investments.

While conventional forms of urban renewal focused mainly on improving the physical fabric of areas, HMR "seeks to 'renew' the market for houses in inner-city areas, such as Kensington, rather than simply the houses themselves".

He adds: "The key purpose of HMR, then, is to 'reconnect' neighbourhoods such as Kensington to the space of positions in the market for houses."

This is done by demolishing low-value terraced housing and replacing it with the type of higher-value town houses and apartments more attractive to wealthier people.

"This institutional pursuit of a 'class remake' of Kensington violates working class forms of being towards houses as a 'dwelling space,'" warns Allen.

## Hall undresses for the homeless

KEVIN GOPAL

**Homeless people in Emmaus communities across the north are set to benefit when the model Jerry Hall disrobes this week.**

Hall has agreed to auction off 30 years of dresses, including frocks by Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent, who died last week, in aid of Emmaus, whose 14 communities for homeless people include sites in Bolton, Burnley, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Mossley and Sheffield.

Emmaus communities help people move on from homelessness, providing work and accommodation in a supportive

environment. Further Emmaus communities are planned for Preston and Salford.

Details of the auction on 10 June in London are at [www.kerrytaylorauctions.com](http://www.kerrytaylorauctions.com).

Hall, who is also auctioning off the dress she wore at her wedding to Mick Jagger, said: "I have led a very glamorous life in many ways, but I know all too well how quickly lives can become derailed. I have been fortunate enough to have always had plenty of support, but not everyone is as lucky.

"It is easier than you might think to lose everything. Anyone could become homeless."



Hall wearing Antony Price