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BUDGET **P20****



WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2020 | ISSUE 3,569

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FIRST EMERGENCY RATE CUT SINCE '08

WALL ST SLIDES DESPITE FED'S DRAMATIC INTERVENTION

**HARRY ROBERTSON
AND ANNA MENIN**

@harryrobertson @annamenin

THE US Federal Reserve slashed interest rates yesterday at an emergency meeting as policy makers around the world vowed to contain the economic fallout from coronavirus.

Fed chair Jay Powell said the 50 basis point (0.5 percentage point) cut came after rate-setters had witnessed the "broader spread of the virus" and "come to the view that it is time for us to act in the support of the economy".

The shock move was the first time the Fed has cut rates between scheduled meetings since 2008, at the height of the financial crisis — but US markets still finished significantly down on the day.

It lowered the bank's interest rate range to between one and 1.25 per cent. Powell said the central bank had seen signs that the virus was damaging the travel and hospitality industries as well as supply chains, adding it "poses evolving risks to economic activity".

Many analysts said the Fed's move is likely to herald the start of a global rate-cutting cycle as central banks seek to

respond to an expected demand slump.

Australia slashed rates to a record low of 0.5 per cent yesterday and investors are betting on a cut from the Bank of Canada when it meets today.

Outgoing Bank of England governor Mark Carney yesterday signalled that Threadneedle Street would be prepared to cut rates to "help UK businesses and households manage through an economic shock that could prove large but will ultimately be temporary".

He told MPs the Bank will "take all necessary steps to support the UK economy and financial system" and did

not rule out following the US example with an emergency rate cut.

The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee meets on 26 March, overseen by new governor Andrew Bailey.

However, both Powell and Carney stressed they do not view coronavirus as a 2008-level event. Powell said the US economy is strong and "will get to the other side of this".

Carney said: "The prospect with this situation is that we will have disruption not destruction."

CONTINUES ON P2



Coronavirus worries have hit the US hard, as Wall Street suffers under volatile markets

THE CITY VIEW **P2** AIRLINES WARN WORSE YET TO COME **P5** SHOULD WE READY FOR A RECESSION? **P15**

Startups and watchdog in merger row

JAMES WARRINGTON

@j_a_warrington

BRITISH startups were yesterday plunged into a bitter war of words with the competition watchdog as the two sides clashed over the regulation of major mergers.

Industry body the Coalition for a Digital Economy (Coade) penned a scathing letter to chancellor Rishi Sunak warning that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) risked "killing" British tech firms by launching lengthy investigations, while global rivals were free to pull ahead.

"The recent actions of the CMA reflect an ignorant one-size-fits-all approach to tech acquisitions, investment and mergers that can only damage the tech ecosystem in the UK," Coade executive director Dom Hallas wrote in a letter, seen by *City A.M.*

The watchdog has made a number of high-profile interventions in recent tech deals, including Just Eat's merger with Takeaway.com and Amazon's investment in Deliveroo. Hallas said these risked deterring both scaling companies trying to grow in global markets and the investors backing them.

But the CMA yesterday returned fire, insisting instead that regulators had not come down hard enough on tech firms.

CONTINUES ON P3

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THE CITY VIEW

The biggest economy in the world is scared

THE FINAL weeks of 2019 saw the traditional flurry of analysts and market commentators raising the prospect of so-called black swan events in 2020. Looking back through these notes today, one is confronted with a range of nightmare scenarios ranging from military conflict in the South China Sea to the collapse of a major investment bank and global food shortages caused by climate change. Other scenarios included Apple buying Disney, the US introducing capital controls and Hillary Clinton bagging a surprise victory in the US presidential election. The closest anyone came to raising fears of a global pandemic was a prediction that China's swine fever would spread beyond the country borders. We now know that something far worse emerged from the food markets of Wuhan, and yesterday the US Federal Reserve intervened with its first emergency cut to interest rates since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in October 2008. The Fed's decision is hugely significant. The world's largest economy has looked to the horizon, and shuddered at what it's seen. Fed chair Jerome Powell said yesterday that the rate cut "won't reduce the rate of infection, won't fix a broken supply chain," but would "provide a meaningful boost by preventing further tightening of financial conditions." As of last night, the US markets weren't responding to his antidote. Attention now turns to the Bank of England, with a swarm of economists now predicting a cut when the Monetary Policy Committee next meets. Just weeks ago, attention was on the run of good economic news — the increased optimism in corporate Britain, the encouraging PMI numbers and gains in wage growth and employment. The mood music turned against a cut to interest rates here, but the tune appears to have changed. There is now no doubt that the coronavirus will take a bite out of global economic growth, at a time when many countries — including our own — can ill afford it. Elsewhere, Germany's economy has been in the doldrums as its manufacturing output slumps. How will it cope with a deeper global slowdown? Japan is already heading straight for recession, and now faces postponing or cancelling the Olympic games as it grapples with the outbreak. What's more, Japan's central bank — like the ECB — has exhausted its room for monetary stimulus. And all the while, fear of the virus spreads faster than the virus itself. Taken together, these twin demons pose a deeply dangerous risk.



There is no doubt that the virus will take a bite out of global growth

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MODEL BEHAVIOUR Chanel hits the runway as Paris Fashion Week storms ahead despite growing coronavirus outbreak fear



FASHION pundits yesterday flocked to the Chanel show during Paris Fashion Week despite warnings over the spread of coronavirus. Last week's string of runways in Milan saw fashion brand Dries Van Noten hand out surgical masks for audience members, while Chinese labels cancelled shows as the virus began to gain force in Italy. Yesterday's Chanel show, led by creative director Virginie Viard, marked a stark style departure from her predecessor Karl Lagerfeld who died last year.

World Bank puts up \$12bn funding

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The World Bank late last night said it would provide up to \$12bn in funding for countries to help them adapt their responses to the coronavirus outbreak, as global bodies rallied around a multilateral effort to contain the virus' spread.

The lender said up to \$6bn in funds would be made available from its private finance arm, the International Finance Corporation. Meanwhile \$2.7bn would come from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for middle-income countries, and \$1.3bn from the International Development Association for poorer nations.

The funds will be targeted at improving local health infrastructure and aid to stage public interventions if required. World Bank president David Malpass said the lender wished to

avoid any measures that could impact on trade.

Spring meetings for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will be held virtually.

The FTSE closed up 0.95 per cent yesterday, while US stocks at first jumped in reaction to the Fed move but quickly fell into the red. The S&P 500 closed 2.81 per cent lower while the Dow Jones ended 2.94 per cent down. European stocks trimmed earlier gains but finished higher.

Responding to the Fed's decision, Erik Norland of CME Group said: "The rate cut failed to support equities for more than a few minutes largely because a cut was already priced in."

Seema Shah of Principal Global Investors said it was "another case of the Fed being held hostage by markets". She added: "If the Fed hadn't delivered, that in itself would have been a negative shock."

UK construction sector bounces after election

HARRY ROBERTSON

@harryrobertson

UK CONSTRUCTION output rose at its fastest rate in over a year in February, as new orders picked up at a fast clip.

The IHS Markit/Cips construction purchasing managers' index (PMI) jumped to 52.6 in February, up from 48.4 in January.

A score of above 50 indicates expansion and it was the first time the index had climbed above this mark since April 2019.

New orders rose at their fastest pace since 2015, data firm IHS Markit said yesterday, as confidence recovered following Prime Minister Boris Johnson's landslide election win in December.

Duncan Brock, group director at Cips — the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply — said it was "the residential sector that was the main winner" in February.

FINANCIAL TIMES

SUNAK TO END FREEZE ON FUEL DUTY IN BUDGET

Chancellor Rishi Sunak will next week use his Budget to signal the end to a decade of freezes on fuel duty, as he announces a raft of measures intended to help Britain meet its climate change targets. As the first stage Sunak will scrap the £2.4bn diesel subsidy for users of farming and construction vehicles — part of what government officials say is a wider package of green taxes to help Britain achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

TESLA SHORTSELLERS REAP \$2.8BN IN TOUGH MARKET

Investors betting against Tesla stock have reaped a \$2.8bn (£2.2bn) paper

WHAT THE OTHER PAPERS SAY THIS MORNING

gain as the US stock market has suffered its swiftest fall since the financial crisis. The car maker is a popular target for shortsellers, who hold a collective \$12bn in Tesla short interest.

THE TIMES

SHETTY MULLS SALE OF PHARMA ARM TO SAVE FIRM

The founder of NMC Health is considering a sale of his pharmaceuticals business as he tries to salvage his dwindling assets and cut debts. BR Shetty is said to have received preliminary expressions of interest for Neopharma from trade and private equity suitors.

GRENFELL ARCHITECT DID NOT KNOW OF FIRE RISK

The architect who led work on the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower was unaware of the risk that cladding could spread fire up and along the outside of a high-rise building, an inquiry was told yesterday.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

PROPERTY TYCOON CLEARED OF ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Notorious property tycoon Nicholas van Hoogstraten has been cleared of a charge of abusive behaviour after he called a police officer a "poofter" during a row in a car park. The British-born businessman — who changed his name to Nicholas Adolf von Hessen — made the comment after his son was arrested.

CHINA BILLIONAIRE STARTS VENTURE TO RIVAL MUSK

A Chinese billionaire has started a venture to launch satellites, rivalling similar ambitions from Elon Musk's Space X. Li Shufu is the owner of Geely, a Chinese automotive giant in control of Volvo Cars.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

US PUSHES GOOGLE ON COLLECTING PATIENT DATA

A bipartisan trio of US senators pushed again for answers on Google's controversial Project Nightingale, saying the search giant evaded requests for details on its far-reaching data tie-up with health giant Ascension. The senators said they were put off by the lack of disclosure around the effort.

CHIEF EXEC OF SAKS PARENT HUDSON'S TO STEP DOWN

Hudson's Bay's chief executive is leaving the company, following a deal it reached last week with shareholders to go private. Helena Foulkes joined the parent of Saks Fifth Avenue from CVS Health in 2018.

MPs urge PM to ditch Huawei deal

POPPY WOOD

@poppyeh

A GROUP of MPs will today petition the government to reduce Huawei's involvement in the UK's 5G network by 2023, amid growing concerns surrounding the Chinese tech giant.

A cross-party group of around 40 MPs will today call on the Prime Minister to pedal back on his controversial decision to grant the Chinese

state-subsidised firm permission to supply equipment to more than a third of the UK's 5G network.

Writing in today's Telegraph, former Conservative leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith said: "The only way out of this mess is that the government should accept we are deeply compromised and ensure that Huawei goes from its present position to not just 35 per cent but to zero per cent involvement over the next two to three years."

Duncan Smith is set to lead talks between MPs in today's Westminster Hall debate amid growing concern that Britain's networks could be exploited for surveillance by the Chinese state.

The Telegraph reported that fellow Conservative MPs David Davis, Damian Green, Tobias Ellwood, Owen Paterson and Sir Bill Cash are expected to be among a slew of Tory heavyweights set to challenge the government on its Huawei decision.



Duncan Smith will today lead a group of MPs challenging the PM's Huawei decision

Watchdog calls for more power over tech bids

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Speaking in London, CMA chair Lord Andrew Tyrie said there had "probably been under-enforcement of merger control in digital markets", adding that this could have a negative impact on consumers.

Tyrie took aim at large online platforms, which he said could "destroy a small business with a change to an algorithm".

The comments came after CMA chief executive Andrea Coscelli cited Facebook's takeovers of Instagram and Whatsapp as examples of mergers that had contributed to "poor market outcomes".

In his speech Tyrie argued that the watchdog should make greater use of its so-called soft power, meaning it should engage more with tech firms before enforcement action became necessary.

But he also called for stronger competition and consumer protection powers to ensure the watchdog had a "hard edge".

One industry source told *City A.M.* that promoting soft power while also calling for more enforcement was "inherently contradictory".

A report published earlier this week by law firm Allen & Overy revealed the CMA had become a "standout enforcer", blocking three deals last year and causing a further five to be abandoned.

In his letter, first reported by Sky News, Hallas cited the Furman Review into digital competition which last year warned enforcement could be "slow and unpredictable".

"The CMA now risks making the very mistake that the review identified — killing British companies with lengthy investigations whilst global digital markets move on around them," Hallas added.

"There must be a more appropriate approach than stifling British companies of investment whilst their global competitors grow."

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Future unclear for Vauxhall's Ellesmere plant

JACK RICHARDSON

@JackRich93

A FINAL decision on the future of Ellesmere Port's car plant will likely not be made until the end of the year amid uncertainty over Britain's relationship with the EU, the firm's chief executive said yesterday.

"The decision will not be taken until we have a clear understanding of the outcome of the discussions between the British government and the European Union," boss Carlos Tavares told reporters in a conference call.

"We won't have an answer on [the Ellesmere Port] until at least midway through this year and most probably not until the end of 2020," he added.

The car industry has been one of the many sectors to say it could be adversely affected if a trade deal with the EU is not struck.

PSA, which is currently merging with Italy's Fiat Chrysler, makes Vauxhall and Opel cars at the plant.

The Ellesmere Port facility is listed as a candidate to make the next generation Vauxhall Astra.

The company also has a factory in Luton which manufactures commercial vehicles.

Tavares also said the company has enough supply stocks to weather the economic effects of coronavirus.

On the advice of the Chinese authorities, the company will resume operations in Hubei province on 11 March.

Several international car companies including Nissan, Hyundai and Tesla have had their operations disrupted in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

Nissan has had to temporarily close one of its main factories in Japan due to difficulty sourcing parts from China.

The world economy has also faced turmoil as stock markets and the oil price fell last week with the virus spreading to more countries.



The takeover deal will secure the future of a mining project in north Yorkshire

Sirius investors back Anglo American tie-up

JACK RICHARDSON

@JackRich93

INVESTORS late last night approved a controversial £405m rescue bid by rival Anglo American for troubled mining firm Sirius Minerals.

A lengthy meeting in London approved the deal, with 80.3 per cent of votes in favour and 19.7 per cent against. It will provide a saving grace

for Sirius' north Yorkshire mining project, which was set to be shuttered if no deal could be reached.

Sirius shares rose 7.7 per cent to 4.67p ahead of the news yesterday.

Chief executive Chris Fraser had previously urged shareholders to support the Anglo deal, saying there was no obvious alternative.

Jupiter Fund Management, which holds a 7.8 per cent stake in Sirius,

had also pledged to vote for the deal.

However a rift had broken out among more high-profile investors. Crispin Odey, husband of Jupiter boss Nichola Pease, had been a long term critic of Anglo's proposal and had rallied against the takeover bid, arguing it undervalued Sirius.

The proposed Yorkshire mine is thought to be the largest deposit of potash fertiliser in the world.

Fresnillo posts steep dip in profit for 2019 following four production cuts

JAMES BOOTH

@JamesdBooth1

MINING firm Fresnillo fell yesterday reported a plunge in pre-tax profit of 63 per cent for 2019 after a volatile year for the company.

The company cut its production forecast four times last year, as it grappled with lower quality ore and construction delays at its Herradura mine in Mexico.

Pre-tax profit fell 63 per cent to £178m and revenue grew less than one per cent to £2.1bn.

"2019 was a more challenging year as expected, but we remain determined and optimistic for the future," said chief executive Octavio Alvidrez.

Total silver production fell 11.6 per cent as a result of lower ore grade at Saucito and lower than expected ore grades at Fresnillo and San Julian

Veins. Gold production also fell due to lower production at Noche Buena and a lower ore grade at San Julian Veins.

The company said yesterday it expected production to stabilise this year and to increase next year.

"We will rise to the immediate challenges... and move forward with certainty and vigour," said Alvidrez.

Shares rose 4.8 per cent to 649p yesterday despite the news.

MAC ATTACK Selection of scotch whisky set to fetch upwards of quarter of a million



SIX BOTTLES of Macallan whisky, ranging in age from 50 to 65 years old and encased in Lalique glass, will go under the hammer at Sotheby's this month with an estimate of £320,000 to £480,000. The distiller has become a collectors' favourite in recent years.

Rescue deal for British Steel to complete at last

EDWARD THICKNESSE

@edthicknesse

BRITISH Steel's survival was finally confirmed yesterday as Chinese conglomerate Jingye announced that it was on course to complete the acquisition of the steel maker next week.

The deal, which will be signed on 9 March, will preserve 3,200 of the firm's jobs in Scunthorpe and Teeside, with another 100 roles moving over to Barrett Steel after the sale of four distribution centres.

However, the acquisition does not at this stage involve the assets of British Steel France, which are subject to approval by the French government.

Jingye said that it had not yet had an indication from the French as to when a decision would be reached.

Following the impasse, the Chinese firm said it had agreed to the Official Receiver's proposal, supported by the government, to complete the transaction in stages, first completing on the UK and Netherlands assets before completing on the French assets.

The £50m deal will see Jingye invest £1.2bn on the site, improving its

energy efficiency and environmental footprint.

Jingye's offer, which was accepted in November, came after talks with Turkish company Ataer broke down because of what one source called "difficulties" with the Turkish government.

Chief executive Li Huiming said: "We are delighted to have reached this agreement and look forward to completing the transaction over the coming days so we can begin a new chapter in British steel-making."

Steel workers' unions welcomed the decision, with Unite's assistant general secretary Steve Turner saying that workers would "be feeling a sense of relief today that the deal has finally been confirmed".

Roy Rickhuss, general secretary of Community, said: "It is welcome news that the completion of the deal is now in sight. This is all credit to the world class workforce who have kept British Steel running through this long period of uncertainty".

Both agreed that it was critical that the government's role in ensuring a buyer did not end here.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

In May 2019 British Steel fell into insolvency after failing to obtain a £75m cash injection from the government, throwing thousands of jobs into jeopardy at Britain's second-biggest steel maker.

Since then, the Official Receiver has been running the firm while the government has been searching for a buyer.

WHAT DOES THE DEAL INVOLVE?

The deal, which is worth around £50m, will see Jingye buy steelworks at Scunthorpe and UK mills at Teesside Beam Mill and Skinningrove, as well as subsidiary businesses FN Steel and TSP Engineering. The Chinese firm will put £1.2bn into the site in a bid to improve its environmental credentials.

Q&A

WHAT ABOUT JOBS?

Jingye says the deal will save 3,200 jobs in Teeside and Scunthorpe, with another 100 jobs transferring to Barrett Steel, which is buying some of British Steel's distribution centres.

WHY DOES THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT GET A SAY?

Hayange, the firm's steel mill in France, produces rail for national train firm SNCF and is one of the most profitable parts of the firm. It has been dubbed a "strategic asset" by the French government, meaning it can grant or withhold approval for any change of ownership.

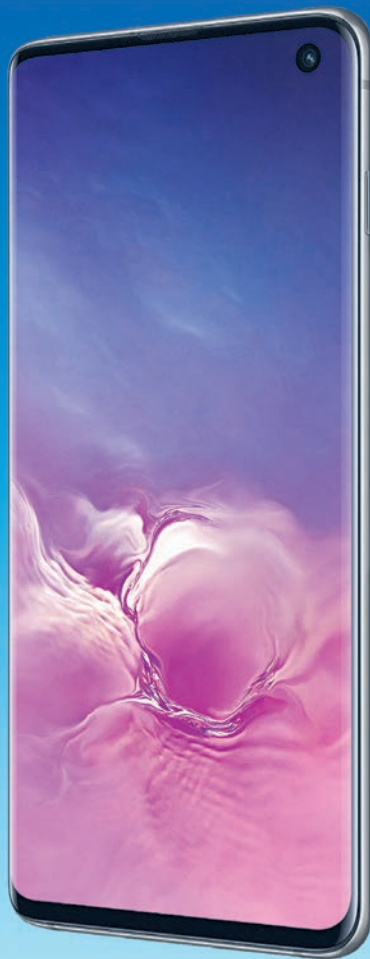
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Representative Example	Duration of Agreement	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total Amount Payable	Interest Rate	Representative APR	Device Cash Price	Airtime Plan until March 2021	Airtime Plan April 2021 - March 2022	Airtime Plan April 2022 - March 2023
Samsung S10 128GB	36 Months	£30.00	£18.37	£661.00	£691	0%	0%	£691	£21	£21 + RPI% announced in Feb 2021 = Price A	Price A + RPI% announced in Feb 2022

Each year your Airtime Plan will be adjusted on your April bill by the RPI rate of inflation announced in the preceding Feb. See o2.co.uk/prices. Samsung Galaxy S10 (128 GB) O2 Refresh tariffs start at 5GB of data for £39.37 per month which consists of a £18.37 Device Plan for 36 months and a £21 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. O2 Refresh custom plans: Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 36 months (excludes dongles). The device cost will be the same whatever you choose. There may be an upfront cost. You need a monthly rolling Airtime Plan as long as you have a Device Plan. Pay off your Device Plan at any time and you can choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade, or leave. If your Airtime Plan ends for any reason you will need to pay your Device Plan in full. Device subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefonica UK Ltd, SL1 4DX. Telefonica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Johnson unveils virus battle plans

CATHERINE NEILAN
AND STEFAN BOSCIA

@CatNeilan @Stefan_Boscia

UP TO a fifth of the UK's workforce could be made absent by coronavirus during its peak weeks, Boris Johnson warned yesterday as he published his action plan to tackle the outbreak.

Downing Street is bracing itself for a reasonable worst-case scenario, warning that it is "more likely than

not that the UK will be significantly affected". Up to one per cent of infected people could die from coronavirus, with authorities saying 80 per cent of the country could be infected at the most.

Measures likely to be deployed if the virus reaches that point include closing schools, encouraging greater home working and reducing the number of large scale gatherings.

It is thought this could last for

around 12 weeks in order to fully mitigate the spread of coronavirus, while ensuring the country's ability to continue to run as normally as possible.

It came as London mayor Sadiq Khan yesterday said Londoners are unlikely to be told to stop using the Tube during the coronavirus outbreak.

Khan yesterday said he couldn't foresee banning public gatherings or telling people to stay away from public transport.



Londoners will likely get to keep using the Tube as the virus spreads across the UK

Airline bosses warn the worst is yet to come

EDWARD THICKNESSE

@edthickesse

AIRLINE bosses have warned that the worst is yet to come for the industry after coronavirus fears saw passenger demand slump, with carriers cutting flights to locations round the world.

Speaking at an industry conference in Brussels, outgoing IAG boss Willie Walsh said that there had been "a very significant fall-off in demand" in Italian markets, while Ryanair's Michael O'Leary said he was expecting a "very deflated booking environment" for two or three weeks.

Both however agreed that there would be a "rapid return to normal" if the outbreak stabilises and follows the pattern in Asia.

O'Leary was speaking after budget carrier Ryanair revealed year-on-year passenger growth for February, increasing 10 per cent from 9.6m to 10.5m passengers.

However, after last night's warning over the cancellation of 25 per cent of its Italian short-haul programme for the three weeks from 17 March, it added that traffic and load factor were "likely to be lower than normal due to the fall in bookings during that period in response to the virus".

IAG-owned British Airways also warned that it will cut more than 400 flights, including at least one a day to New York's JFK airport, in response to outbreak, between 16 and 28 March.

Airlines did at least have a better day on the world's markets, having led the way in the record falls posted over the last week. IAG, which fell as low as 420p yesterday, rallied to post a seven per cent rise, making it the FTSE 100's best performing stock.

Tour operator Tui, which is widely tipped to fall out of London's blue-chip index in today's reshuffle, also rose three per cent, as did Ryanair, while Easyjet rose 4.5 per cent over the day's trading.

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Robert Walters shares sink on profit warning

JOE CURTIS

@joe_r_curtis

ECONOMIC bellwether recruiter Robert Walters' shares sank yesterday as it warned 2020 profit will miss expectations due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The recruitment agency's shares fell seven per cent to 494p after the coronavirus profit warning compounded a dire 2019 filled with Brexit and economic uncertainties.

Profit before tax slipped three per cent to £47.4m last year, Robert Walters said yesterday. Earnings per share fell four per cent as a result to 48.4p, while revenue dipped one per cent to £1.22bn.

The recruiter hailed a "resilient" performance as group net fee income climbed three per cent to a record £405.5m, despite 2019's challenges.

But investors sold out of the firm as it warned the coronavirus threat was a greater risk to the company than any recent economic headwind it has survived.

"We've been through downturns and banking crises and political uncertainty and trade wars," chief executive Robert Walters told *City A.M.*

"But nothing it quite like this incident. This is affecting everywhere in the world."

In 2019, Robert Walters' divisions outside the UK delivered 76 per cent of profit to offset the UK's weak hiring market amid prolonged Brexit anxiety. France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain all delivered record levels of net fee income and Japan made up for Hong Kong protests causing turbulence in Asia.

But the coronavirus, which began in China, has spread around the globe to affect almost 70 countries.

"Coming on the back of some degree of turbulence last year, [coronavirus] is definitely impacting just about everything," chief executive Walters added.



The Tokyo Olympics are due to take place in Japan in July this year

Japan mulls options to delay Tokyo games

JOE CURTIS

@joe_r_curtis

JAPAN may be allowed to postpone the Tokyo Olympics until the end of 2020, the minister responsible for the games said yesterday.

Olympics minister Seiko Hashimoto has said Japan's agreement with the International Olympic Committee to host the 2020

games could be deferred until the winter.

"The contract calls for the games to be held within 2020. That could be interpreted as allowing a postponement," the minister said in response to a question in parliament.

The Tokyo Olympics are due to get underway in July this year in the capital. But Japan has counted 274 cases of coronavirus as infections

worldwide continue to spike, with the Tokyo marathon scaled down.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last week ordered all schools to close until April, affecting more than 10m children.

A fortnight ago a spokesman for the mayor of London told *City A.M.* that the capital would "step up to the plate" if the International Olympic Committee needed an alternative.

Greggs reheats overseas plans to drive growth

JESS CLARK

@jclarkjourno

GREGGS will consider international expansion in the next five years to continue the strong growth it has achieved in the UK, the bakery chain said yesterday as it reported record results for last year.

Chief executive Roger Whiteside said the company has not yet started to look at options but it has acknowledged that global expansion may be necessary beyond 2025.

The high street bakery launched in Belgium in 2003 under the Engelse Bakker brand, but ended the international experiment after five years.

Whiteside said yesterday that its diversification into a cafe chain could benefit its next global push.

Whiteside, who indicated that the 2025 plan is likely to happen under different leadership, said another option is to expand within the UK under a different brand.

Greggs, which has 2,000 stores in the UK, is still ramping up expansion in the country as it improves its coffee range to compete directly with cafe chains, and opens new sites at transport hubs, petrol stations and service stations.

The company also recently announced a delivery partnership with Just Eat, which Whiteside said has performed strongly, and will trial opening Greggs stores within Asda supermarkets.

Greggs reported record results for the 52 weeks to 28 December, as profit soared 31 per cent to £108.3m and total sales hit £1.16bn – an increase of 13.5 per cent – with like-for-like sales in company-managed shops up 9.2 per cent. January sales were strong, but Greggs warned that storms in February had led to a “significant slowdown”, particularly in Wales.

The cafe chain also said coronavirus could have a negative impact on the business if consumer demand slumps.

STOPPED IN ITS TRACKS RMT suspends next week's South Western Railway strikes



RAIL workers union RMT yesterday said it has suspended strike action on South Western Railway that was due for next week to allow talks to take place this Friday. The action was due to take place on 9 March and 12 March. Usual service is expected.

Dixons Carphone shakes up its executive team as chief resigns

JESS CLARK

@jclarkjourno

DIXONS Carphone has announced a shake up of its executive team, as its chief operating officer steps down after 11 years at the company.

Alan Ritchie will leave the business in June, and chief digital officer Mark Allsop will take on chief operating

officer duties alongside his current role from 4 May.

Dixons Carphone also announced that former John Lewis director of partnership strategy Ed Connolly will join the company as chief commercial officer.

Connolly will replace Steve Ager, who is also leaving in June after 12 years at Dixons Carphone.

WPP ad agency wins huge Intel global account

JAMES WARRINGTON

@j_a_warrington

WPP WAS granted a welcome boost yesterday as Intel selected one of the ad giant's companies as its global creative agency of record.

VMLY&R is set to take the lion's share of Intel's global creative account, which is estimated at \$1.4bn (£1.1bn), according to industry sources.

The deal, which is thought to be one of the largest in recent years, will see other WPP agencies work with the chipmaker across its brand, products and partner marketing.

Shares in WPP rose as much as three per cent following the announcement, before closing just under two per cent higher.

It comes as a much-needed fillip to the holding group, which last week suffered its biggest daily share price drop in three decades after disappointing fourth-quarter results.

“Intel is a brand synonymous with innovation worldwide and we are delighted that a WPP team has been entrusted with the next stage of its creative transformation,” said WPP chief executive Mark Read.



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StanChart scouts Winters' successor

ANNA MENIN

@annafmenin

STANDARD Chartered chairman Jose Vinals has reportedly approached banking executives this year in a bid to gauge their interest in replacing current chief executive Bill Winters.

Vinals has been sounding out possible candidates from companies in Britain, south-east Asia, and Europe, according to Bloomberg, in a search

that is not currently part of any formal selection process.

Winters, who has led the London-based bank since 2015, had a public spat with shareholders last year after some opposed the lender's compensation policy, calling investors' criticism of his pension award "immature and unhelpful".

StanChart eventually cut Winters' pension allowance, but Vinals was not happy about the chief executive's

public handling of the matter, Bloomberg reported.

A StanChart spokesperson said its chairman and board think that Winters is the best chief executive the bank could have, and would like to keep him on "as long as possible".

Winters recently dismissed speculation he could leave the lender. "I don't know who the colleagues are saying that I've checked out, but they're... not close to me," he told Bloomberg.



Standard Chartered chief Bill Winters took over the reins in 2015

Pensions body launches probe over benefits

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesdbooth1

THE PENSIONS Regulatory (TPR) yesterday launched a consultation on new tougher rules on the funding of defined benefit pension schemes.

TPR is proposing a twin-track approach to funding defined benefit schemes, which are pension funds where an employer legally has to make up any shortfall in the event that the scheme is underfunded.

Under the proposals, trustees will be able to choose either a fast track or a bespoke approach to completing and submitting a valuation of their scheme.

If a trustee can demonstrate their valuation meets TPR's guidelines, it can follow the more straightforward but prescriptive fast track approach.

The bespoke option will offer more flexibility but require greater supporting evidence from trustees about how they will manage risk and is likely to attract greater regulatory scrutiny.

Martin Jenkins, head of pensions at law firm Irwin Mitchell, said: "The timing is unfortunate. The latest figures say £100bn has been wiped off pension fund assets because of the market reaction to coronavirus and a lot of [financial officers] will say they are still working through some of the complexity of the existing regime."

The TPR said schemes should develop appropriate recovery plans in cases where a funding shortfall arises.

It will also expect trustees to set a funding and investment strategy to try and reduce the reliance of the scheme on the sponsoring employer.

TPR's executive director of regulatory policy David Fairs said: "These schemes will be more vulnerable to risks associated with poor funding levels and shorter investment horizons... Trustees should aim to reduce their scheme's reliance on the sponsoring employer."

If you answered
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Aggreko set to monitor virus' risk to Olympics

JACK RICHARDSON

@JakRich93

5.10%

SHARES in back-up power generator company Aggreko closed up more than five per cent yesterday as the firm reported strong profit and said it was making progress with the Tokyo 2020 Olympics despite the coronavirus outbreak.

The temporary power supplier yesterday reported an increase in profit after tax from £125m to £129m for 2019.

Final dividend per share increased from 17.1p in 2018 to 18.3p in 2019.

Operating cash inflow ballooned 48 per cent from £423m to £628m from 2018 to 2019.

"Our 2019 results demonstrate the significant progress we have made to improve the group's financial performance," said chief executive Chris Weston.

The business noted its rental solutions arm had performed strongly with an operating profit increase of 22 per cent and the power solutions utility arm's underlying profit also increased by 21 per cent. However, the power solutions industrial arm's underlying profit fell seven per cent.

Aggreko will supply equipment for the Olympic and Paralympic games, which have faced speculation of being disrupted or even cancelled due to the crisis.

Companies around the world have been affected by the spread of the coronavirus with sectors including the car and airline industries reporting significant disruption.

Last week saw a major fall in international markets with the oil price around \$50 (£39) a barrel.

This comes on the day the US Federal Banking Reserve cut interest rates in order to safeguard the US economy from a slowdown.

China, the source of the outbreak, is also seeking to stimulate its economy following the disruption.



Bailey has faced calls to make it mandatory for firms to publish their climate risk

Bailey urged to keep climate focus at Bank

HARRY ROBERTSON

@harrygrobertson

INCOMING Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey must maintain Threadneedle Street's concern with climate change after he takes over this month, more than 101 economists, scientists and industry leaders have said.

Signatories to a letter to Bailey, organised by left-leaning research

and campaign groups, include former UK chief scientific adviser Sir David King and former Bank rate-setter and Citigroup chief economist Willem Buiter.

The Bank has earned international plaudits for its approach to climate change under current governor Mark Carney, who has warned the financial sector needs to do more.

But last night campaigners called

on Bailey to make it mandatory for firms to disclose their climate risk "as soon as possible", and raised fears the Bank is not acting fast enough.

The letter came ahead of Bailey's appearance before MPs today and after anti-Brexit lawyer Gina Miller last week called for a review of his appointment at the Bank of England, following his allegedly "toxic" tenure as head of the City watchdog.

Direct Line says coronavirus claims could weigh on its travel business

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesbooth1

DIRECT Line said yesterday that the coronavirus outbreak could hit the 2020 sales of its travel business.

The insurer said it had incurred coronavirus-related claims of around £1m, the majority of which were for trips to regions where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advised

3.78%

against all but essential travel.

The company also estimated the cost of storms Dennis and Ciara in February at £35m, against an expected annual weather cost of around £64m. It said it was too early to assess the impact of Storm Jorge which hit the UK at the weekend.

Direct Line said profit before tax for 2019 was £509.7m, down 12 per cent on the previous year. Gross written premiums fell 0.3 per cent to

£3.2bn, of which premiums from its own brands were flat at £2.2bn.

It also announced a £150m share buyback and said it was giving its staff £500 of free shares each.

Chief executive Penny James said: "We have delivered a good set of results, and continued to improve the quality, while navigating a difficult motor market and delivering significant change in the business." Shares rose 3.8 per cent to 324p.



Sainsbury's was the only Big Four supermarket to report growth in the period

Lidl knocks big rivals off course in grocery war

JESS CLARK

@jclarkjourn

LIDL was the fastest growing supermarket in the UK over the last 12 weeks, taking the crown from online grocer Ocado.

The German discounter increased sales by 11.4 per cent in the 12 weeks to 24 February, becoming Britain's fastest growing grocer for the first time since November 2017, as it opened its 800th store last month.

Rival budget supermarket Aldi reported 5.7 per cent sales growth, boosted by demand for alcohol and chilled convenience items such as dips and prepared salads.

Sainsbury's was the only one of the so-called big four UK supermarkets to report sales growth in the period, as revenue ticked up 0.3 per cent. However, its

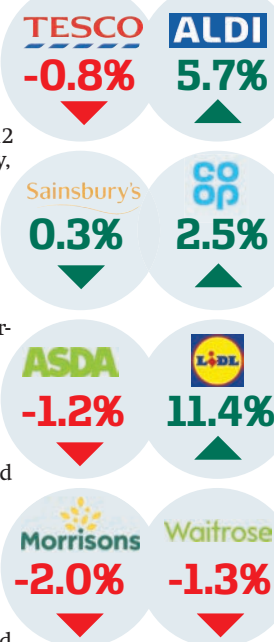
market share fell to 15.6 per cent.

Fraser McKevitt, head of retail and consumer insight at Kantar, said: "Sainsbury's has performed well this period despite a challenging market, growing sales in its Sainsbury's Local convenience stores as well as online.

"It's worth noting, however, that continued pressure from the discount retailers meant the retailer still lost market share this month."

Tesco sales dipped 0.8 per cent and Asda sales slumped 1.2 per cent, while Morrisons' reported sales fell two per cent.

Meanwhile, Ocado continued its double digit growth with a 10.8 per cent rise in sales, and Waitrose – which will end its partnership with the online supermarket in September – suffered a 1.3 per cent drop in sales.



Source: Kantar



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IN BRIEF

NIVEA MAKER BEIERSDORF REPORTS SOLID OUTLOOK

Nivea maker Beiersdorf said yesterday it expected similar sales growth and profitability in 2020 compared with 2019 and that a strategy of investing in new business should mitigate the impact of the coronavirus. Chief executive Stefan de Loecker told analysts the consumer business and was "considerably below plan" for January and February because of the coronavirus. The outbreak has also affected its adhesives unit, as has weakened demand from the car sector. De Loecker said Beiersdorf was well placed to ride out the impact of the coronavirus because of the strategy that he launched last year of investing in new business areas within the firm.

URBAN EXPOSURE MULLS BREAKUP AMID PRESSURE

London-listed property development finance group Urban Exposure is set for a large-scale breakup and sale of its constituent parts amid growing pressure from financier Robert Tchenguiz. The firm is close to a sale of its loan-book to investment fund Pollen Street Capital, Sky News reported yesterday. If plans go through, Urban Exposure will sell its asset management arm to its own executive team, and the parent company will then be delisted and dissolved. The Aim-listed firm, which has been trading at a steep discount against its net asset value, has faced scrutiny from Tchenguiz over its corporate structure. His firm R20 has a 12.6 per cent stake in Urban Exposure.

Travis Perkins is rare gem amid a difficult market

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesdbooth1

1.94%

BUILDING materials business Travis Perkins said yesterday it had swung to a profit in 2019.

It said operating profit was £232m, compared to a £22m loss last year.

Adjusted operating profit rose 7.8 per cent to £442m, despite a "challenging market backdrop".

Revenue grew 3.2 per cent to £6.9bn, with like-for-like revenue growth of 3.8 per cent.

Basic earnings per share was 48.9p, up from a loss of 34.4p last year.

It said its profit was driven by a strong recovery in its Wickes business, its transformation programme in its plumbing and heating business and the impact of cost cutting.

The added that it had delayed the divestment of its plumbing and heating business in late 2019 due to "unprecedented uncertainty".

The building merchant said its process to demerge DIY division Wickes was "well progressed" with completion set for the second quarter.

It sold its wholesale plumbing and heating unit Primaflow to distribution group Newbury Investments for £46m in January.

Chief executive Nick Roberts said: "The group remains focused on delivering against our key priorities, and we are optimistic that we can build on the positive performance in 2019, continue to outperform our end-markets and deliver improved returns for our shareholders."

Shore Capital analysts said: "We believe there is better value and clearer strategies available elsewhere in the building materials sector."

Canaccord Genuity analysts said: "There is plenty of change being undertaken by the group currently. The 2019 results all look broadly as expected, with no big surprises and profits slightly ahead of expectations."

Analysts at UBS said: "2019 trading was resilient but 2020 outlook looks somewhat softer with trading still challenging near-term."

Travis Perkins shares rose 1.9 per cent to 1,472.5p yesterday.

CMC Markets' profit jumps despite stock volatility caused by Covid-19

JOE CURTIS

@joe_r_curtis

14.32%

ONLINE trading platform CMC Markets yesterday predicted that its full-year profit would beat market forecasts amid higher customer trading due to the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak.

Net operating income for the year to the end of March is set to beat the current estimate of

£199m to £202.3m.

"I am delighted that CMC's strategy of targeting and retaining higher valued clients and our diversifying revenue base... has continued to yield positive underlying performance throughout the second half of the year," chief executive Peter Cruddas said.

CMC has previously forecast profit before tax to land somewhere in the range of £46.9m to £56.7m.

The rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus outside of China last week wiped £200bn off the FTSE 100, and saw US and UK stocks suffer their worst week since the financial crisis.

CMC said net operating income rose 45 per cent for the six months to the end of September, when it hit £102.3m. It said yesterday it continues to maintain momentum in 2020.

CMC shares rose 14.3 per cent to 175.6p yesterday.

HAMMER IT HOME Cairn Homes posts revenue climb as average sale price rises



CAIRN Homes yesterday reported a 28 per cent jump in operating profit, with the Irish housebuilder benefitting from an increase in the number of homes sold and a rise in average selling prices. Revenue also increased 29 per cent to €435m (£379m).

UK infrastructure firm John Laing reports growth in net asset value

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesdbooth1

BRITISH infrastructure company John Laing said yesterday its net asset value (NAV) grew 4.3 per cent in 2019.

The FTSE 250 company said NAV per share was 337p at 31 December, compared to 323p per share on 31 December 2018.

NAV grew to £1.6bn from £1.5bn the previous year. Pre-tax profit for the year fell to £100m from £296m the previous year.

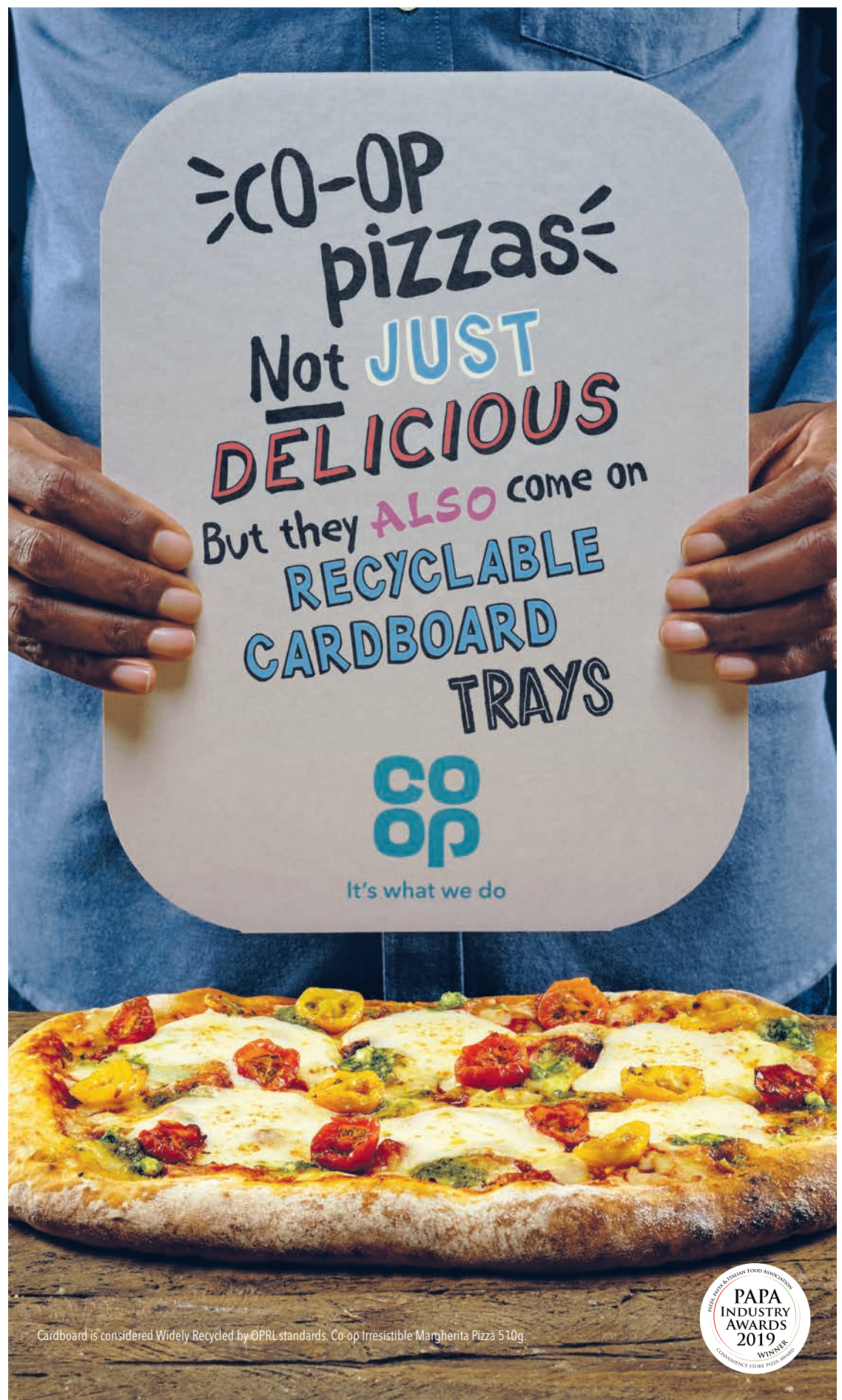
The company blamed write downs

on renewable energy projects in the first half of 2019 and an exceptional gain in 2018 for the drop.

John Laing said it would stop investing in standalone wind and solar projects following a review last year. It said it was preparing its existing wind and solar assets for sale in the short-to-medium term.

Chief executive Olivier Brousse said: "Value enhancements in the second half as expected... have helped to mitigate the impact of the first half write downs."

Shares rose 4.8 per cent to 358.4p.



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Whitehall requires project 'delivery revolution' to avoid wasting £10bn

STEFAN BOSCIA

@Stefan_Boscia

THE GOVERNMENT will waste £10bn in its attempts to "level up" the country's infrastructure unless it reforms project delivery, according to a leading London think tank.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak is expected to announce a wave of new projects in next week's Budget to fulfil the Tories' election promise to

spend £100bn on infrastructure.

However, a new Resolution Foundation report said project delivery within Whitehall needed reform to "avoid wasting up to £10bn on poorly chosen, designed, or executed infrastructure projects".

The think tank said the government should increase transparency by forcing departments to publish project business cases; hand more oversight powers to the

National Infrastructure Commission; and devolve decision making powers over investment decisions to local authorities.

Cara Pacitti, Resolution Foundation researcher, said: "While an infrastructure revolution is desperately needed, it's equally important the government get its priorities right and ramps up the focus on delivery as much as it ramps up investment spending."

Business appeal over Crossrail 2 gets DfT backing

STEFAN BOSCIA

@Stefan_Boscia

THE BUSINESS case for Crossrail 2 has been given approval by the Department for Transport (DfT), bringing the project closer to a decision on its final fate.

The latest business case for the new north-south Tube line was submitted to the government by Transport for London (TfL) in June last year. It includes details on an updated route for the line, expected to span from Surrey to Hertfordshire, how it will be funded and how to avoid the delays and budget blowouts of Crossrail 1.

It is expected TfL would have to fund half of the project, with the other half coming from the Treasury's coffers.

TfL said in committee papers released this week that the transport department has green-lit the business case and will be considered in the government's spending review this year.

The transport body added: "The DfT commented on the high quality of the document and stated no further work is required on the [business case] at this time, and it could

therefore be used to support a decision on the project at the next spending review."

A DfT spokesperson told *City A.M.* that the government is still reviewing whether to fund the project.

It comes after the government's official infrastructure adviser, the National Infrastructure Commission, said last week that the project should get a funding guarantee this year.

However, problems surrounding Crossrail 1, which will be three years late and more than £3bn over budget, has thrown Crossrail 2 into some doubt.

There has also been talk that the government's plans to "level up" the rest of the country, by investing in infrastructure in the north and midlands, will mean London projects will be left on the shelf.

Adam Tyndall, infrastructure programme director at the advocacy group London First, said Crossrail 2 would benefit the whole country.

"London is ready to pay its fair share of the costs and, in doing so, further contribute to levelling up the whole country," he said.

OVERGROUND UPGRADE TfL unveils new electric trains on the London Overground



A RAFT of new trains were rolled out on the London Overground yesterday. The new electric trains will increase capacity by 10 per cent and replace the oldest rolling stock on the network. They feature air-conditioning, wi-fi and USB charging points.

Driverless car startup Five raises \$41m investment from Direct Line

EMILY NICOLLE

@emilynicolle

LONDON tech firm Five has today closed \$41m (£32m) in funding from a slew of new investors, including Trustbridge Partners, Direct Line and Sistema VC.

The series B fundraising was supported by existing backers Lakestar, Amadeus Capital Partners, Kindred Capital and Notion Capital – which between them have backed the likes of Airbnb, Klarna, Graphcore and Paddle.

Five, which creates technology for self-driving cars that was used in on-street trials across London last year, has raised \$77m to date.

The startup said it will use the new capital to create new products, utilising the data gained from these trials in Croydon and Bromley.

Direct Line's managing director of motor insurance Gus Park will join Five's board as part of the deal.

Chief executive Stan Boland said he viewed the investment as "validation" of the startup's success and place in the growing sector.

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Friday March 13th 2020

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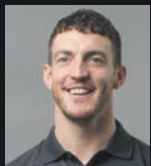
As part of the Hästens Bed Talk Series, and in observance of World Sleep Day, Hästens invites you to Breakfast In Bed, a conversation around the importance and benefits of good sleep.

Date: Friday 13th March

Time: 8.00am Arrival and Breakfast, 8.30–9.30am Panel and Q&A

Location: M Restaurants Threadneedle Street, Unit 2-3, 60 Threadneedle St, London EC2R 8HP

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Mchiro, Clinical Director, Backspace



Dr Kat Lederle,
sleep expert and published author



Laura Bond,
Nutritional Therapist (DiplON), Journalist & Speaker



Sara Di Carlo,
European Retail Director, Hästens Beds

Moderator:

Steve Dinneen, Editor, City AM Magazine.

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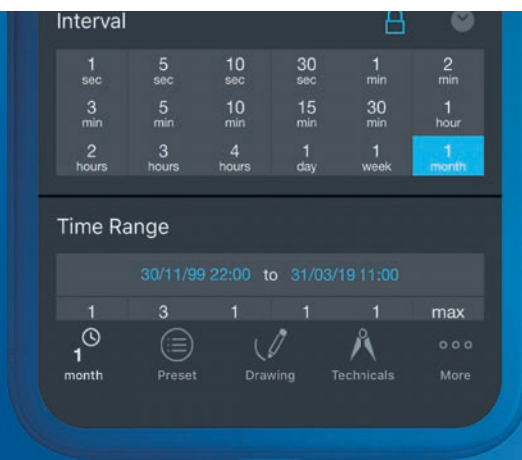


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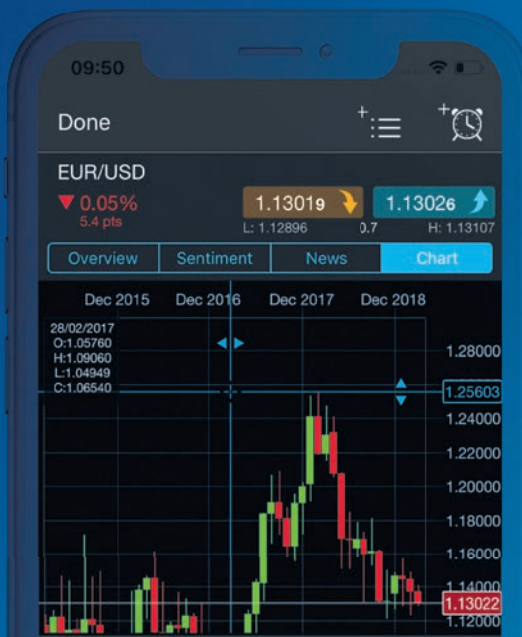
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Direct Line to cut jobs as customers mostly online

IT'S BEEN a difficult start to the year for Direct Line. The company has paid out £1m worth of travel insurance claims as trips get cancelled due to the spread of coronavirus, and £35m in home insurance payouts due to last month's storms.

The Direct Line insurance group, which also owns the Churchill and Green Flag brands, said that the changes were necessary for the company to economise and "reflect changing customer behaviour".

However, YouGov data shows that

Stephan Shakespeare



the changing customer journey for insurance isn't unique to Direct Line, and that when it comes to buying financial products such as life insurance, very few Brits prefer to buy in-store or over the phone.

More than two-fifths of consumers purchase their financial products online, either completely from start to finish or at least for most of the buying process (44 per cent).

Almost a fifth of this group (17 per cent) purchase solely online – from comparing options on comparison sites to completing their order.

While one in 10 (11 per cent) Brits say that they split their purchasing equally between online and offline, nine per cent prefer to shop for financial products mostly offline – and 13 per cent do so entirely.

This preference for online purchases among Direct Line policy holders also reflects the views of the population, proving this changing customer behaviour is industry wide (45 per cent shop online versus 11 per cent offline).

YouGov data also shows that a fifth confess to rarely or never purchasing financial products highlighting that Direct Line's potential market is already diminished.

Changing business procedures to better fit the needs of customers is therefore vital to

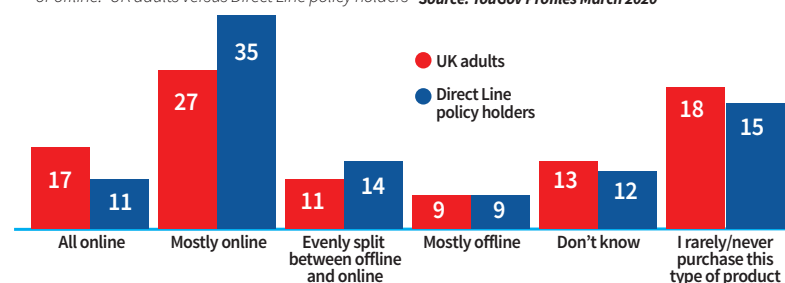
remain profitable.

Considering almost six in 10 of those aged 18 to 24 prefer to shop online rather than in stores (57 per cent) and only three in 10 trust insurance companies to act in their best interest (31 per cent), appealing to this younger demographic could help Direct Line and other insurance companies to tap into a market that is currently less inclined to purchase insurance.

Stephan Shakespeare is chief executive at YouGov

CONSUMERS PREFER TO BUY FINANCIAL PRODUCTS ONLINE OVER OFFLINE

"For financial products, please indicate whether you tend to make most of your purchases online or offline." UK adults versus Direct Line policy holders Source: YouGov Profiles March 2020



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US equity giant in £400m bid to buy Huntsworth

JAMES WARRINGTON

@j_a_warrington

SHARES in healthcare and communications group Huntsworth skyrocketed yesterday after a US-based private equity firm said it has agreed a takeover deal worth roughly £400m.

Clayton, Dubilier & Rice (CD&R) yesterday said it would pay 108p in cash per share for the owner of City PR giant Grayling, which provides marketing services to healthcare clients.

The offer represents a 50 per cent premium on Huntsworth's closing price on Monday. However, shares surged almost 53 per cent to 110p following the announcement yesterday.

Analysts at Peel Hunt described the bid as an "excellent price for the bidding company", compared to its target price of 120p.

"We expect this modest valuation to leave the door ajar for speculation on the potential for a competing approach," they said.

New York-based CD&R said it viewed Huntsworth's underlying markets in the US and Europe as "attractive and underpinned by long-term, stable pharma-related trends". It added that it planned to help the healthcare firms pursue future acquisitions.

Huntsworth chairman David Lowden said: "Whilst we believe that

Huntsworth is strongly positioned as an independent listed company, the all-cash offer from CD&R represents a compelling opportunity for shareholders to realise an attractive cash value in respect of their shares."

He added: "In addition, the board believes CD&R will be an excellent partner for Huntsworth, its employees and customers."

It came as Huntsworth reported a 27 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £39.1m in the full year.

This was driven by a return to growth in its communications division, which includes London PR firms Quiller, Citigate Dewe Rogerson and Red Consultancy. The group's medical arm also performed well, as like-for-like revenue grew nine per cent.

"Healthcare remains our focus for growth and investment, as it continues to be a fast-growing sector led by increasing global demand for new drugs to help ageing populations," said Huntsworth boss Paul Taaffe.

The deal would be the latest major acquisition by a US private equity firm in Britain as investors capitalise on a drop in the value of the pound.

Buyout firm Advent earlier this year completed its £4bn takeover of defence giant Cobham, while Blackstone has agreed to buy Legoland owner Merlin for £6bn.

WRITTEN IN THE STARS Sky confirms Disney Plus deal as it bolsters its portfolio



SKY YESTERDAY confirmed it has signed a multi-year deal with Disney Plus to make the nascent streaming service available to its pay-TV customers. Disney Plus, which launches in the UK on 24 March, will boast originals including a new Star Wars series.

Murdoch's News UK and Bauer launch new digital ad platform

JAMES WARRINGTON

@j_a_warrington

COMMERCIAL radio groups Bauer and Wireless have teamed up to launch a new digital audio advertising platform in a bid to take on rival Global.

Octave Audio will allow advertisers to target digital listeners across the two companies' stations, as well as on-demand catch-up shows.

Bauer owns brands including Kiss, Absolute and Magic, while Wireless, which is owned by Rupert Murdoch's News UK, operates

Talksport and Virgin Radio.

The launch marks the radio operators' efforts to take on rival Global, which controls stations such as Capital, Heart and LBC.

Bauer last year withdrew from Global's audio ad platform Dax in an effort to gain greater control over user data. Octave Audio, which will launch in spring this year, will tap into first-party data to help target specific audiences.

"This partnership brings the strengths of Wireless and Bauer Media to a new level," said Dominic Carter, group chief commercial officer at News UK.

MPs to grill BBC amid questions over its future

JAMES WARRINGTON

@j_a_warrington

TOP BBC executives are set to be hauled in front of MPs to face a grilling over their plans for the future as the broadcaster attempts to stave off a string of crises.

Outgoing director general Lord Tony Hall and chairman Sir David Clementi will both give evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee next week, as well as director of policy Clare Summer.

It will be the first hearing called by the DCMS Committee, which was officially formed yesterday under chair Julian Knight – a vocal critic of the licence fee.

The committee said its decision to question top brass followed a number of recent developments at the BBC, including plans to slash 450 jobs, a government consultation into non-payment of the licence fee and questions over equal pay.

"The BBC has made headlines for the wrong reasons in recent months," Knight said in a statement. "Unprecedented changes in how we watch and listen mean the broadcaster faces a fight for its future."

It is the latest blow for embattled bosses at Broadcasting House, as the government ramps up its rhetoric against the broadcaster. Senior aides to the Prime Minister last month told the Sunday Times they were "not bluffing" about plans to scrap the licence fee.

LEADING LIGHTS

Telling, Showing, Uniting Philanthropy and Volunteering in the City

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
LORD MAYOR'S CITY GIVING DAY 22 SEPT 2020
CITYA.M.

City Giving Day is good for business

Hear from Gill

Lofts, UK Head of Wealth and Asset Management



and MindOut. Following this we ran our annual pro bono Charity Consulting Day, where around 100 of our Advisory Consultants gave their time to help solve some of the biggest business challenges faced by 5 of our chosen charities. On the day itself we facilitated a mental health session to encourage our people to take a break and discuss mental health issues, and were proud to welcome the Rt Hon Lord Mayor of London, Peter Estlin who helped raise awareness of the bone marrow register managed by blood cancer charity, DKMS. We fundraised through a bake sale and VR games, and 2 workshops for students in the local community rounded off a great day.

We were thrilled to participate in City Giving Day once again in our Canary Wharf office – it is a great opportunity to connect with our wider community, support some incredible causes through a variety of volunteering efforts, and it is important to our people. This year we focused on charities doing some brilliant work around social mobility and mental health, including our EY Foundation.

In the run up to City Giving Day, we held our own charity quiz night, with proceeds shared between Whizz-Kidz



“

It's a brilliant opportunity for us to engage with staff at EY, for them to hear from the young people we support, and to learn about the positive impact of our partnership.

Whizz-Kidz



@LMAPPEAL

#CGD
#GoRed



Hear from Pranathi Praveen, UK Financial Services Advisory – Cybersecurity

Organising City Giving Day for EY has allowed me to bring a non-work passion into my working life. It is incredible to see how colleagues come together to make a difference – whether it's making or buying a cupcake to raise money or facilitating a pro bono workshop to equip young girls with essential technology life skills. It's a great day of celebration that really instils a sense of community and raises funds and awareness for some great causes.

JOIN US AND REGISTER NOW AT

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Chevron shows off war chest by pledging \$80bn

JENNIFER HILLER

CHEVRON yesterday said it would keep its spending in check and return up to \$80bn (£62.5bn) to shareholders over the next five years, with chief executive Mike Wirth making the case that his company is the oil major best able to produce oil and generate profits at the lowest cost.

The number two US oil producer laid out its plan to weather what is turning into one of the most challenging markets in years, as coronavirus concerns dent short-term demand and environmental and investor pressures cloud the longer-term outlook for the industry.

Oil prices are down 20 per cent this year and natural gas prices have fallen to their lowest since the 1990s.

Industry returns have lagged the broader market for a decade, souring investors.

European majors such as BP have set significant commitments to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions from their operations.

Wirth, however, yesterday laid out a long-term case for growing global demand for oil and gas.

"The world will need more of what we produce, not less," he said. Chevron currently produces about 3m barrels of oil daily.

Chevron will stick to its previously announced capital spending plan of \$19bn to \$22bn annually through 2024, setting it apart from chief US rival Exxon Mobil, which is spending heavily to boost production.

But the company has based its plans on a \$60 international oil price, about \$7 higher than current prices, and is working toward "increased growth in a world which looks to not need it," analysts at Tudor, Pickering, Holt & Co said.

Returning cash to shareholders is the "number one priority," Wirth said in a meeting with analysts and investors in New York. *Reuters*



The vehicle agency has said that chicken excuses will not wash when it comes to tax

DVLA says a van full of chickens no excuse for not paying car tax

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesdbooth1

THE DRIVER and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) said yesterday that excuses it has received for not paying vehicle tax included people saying their van was full of chickens.

The agency said it had received a weird and wonderful range of excuses for non-payment of car tax.

One person said: "I would've taxed my van but my bitter ex put four live chickens in it."

Another said: "I'm about to start a prison sentence, so is there any way you could hang on to my ice cream van for six months 'til I get out?"

DVLA chief executive Julie Lennard said: "Taxing your car is so easy to do online, so there really is no excuse — even if it is filled with chickens."

Fuel prices fall on the back of virus epidemic

JACK RICHARDSON

@JackRich93

PRICES of petrol and diesel fell in February, marking one of the biggest monthly reductions for more than 20 years.

According to data released today by the RAC, average UK unleaded petrol prices fell 2.93p to 124.02p a litre at the end of February, compared to 126.95p at the start of the month. This means the cost of filling up a 55-litre family car with petrol is £1.61p less than it was in January at £68.21.

Diesel also fell 4.24p over the same period from 131.28p to 127.04p, marking the 11th biggest monthly drop since RAC fuel price records began in 2000.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said: "The oil price has slumped due to the spread of the coronavirus prompting fears of slower global demand."

He added that this might lead to a move from oil producer group Opec and its allies to restrict production when they stage an extraordinary meeting in Vienna on Friday. "[This] would very likely put an end to falling fuel prices," Williams said.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

If you're planning to buy a second home overseas, it's worth adding up the total cost of buying and owning a property. This will give you a realistic budget for when you start searching and it means you won't have to miss out on the property of your dreams.

INVESTIGATE ALL THE COSTS

Legal fees and property taxes add to the cost of purchasing a property. In addition, consider the ongoing costs of local taxes and maintenance. If you buy a managed property overseas, perhaps attached to a golf club or ski resort, you will have management fees to consider but this may take care of some of the other elements so check what is covered.

UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS

The house-buying process varies from country to country. Understanding what funds you will need and when can be very useful; some countries require immediate holding deposits and specific percentages of the property value for the overall deposit prior to settlement.

MANAGE THE IMPACT OF CURRENCY COSTS AND MARKET FLUCTUATIONS

The pound has been particularly volatile since the EU referendum due to the ongoing political uncertainty. In addition, international payments can incur fees which add to the overall cost. Different providers offer different rates and fee structures, so make sure when you're getting quotes that you have the overall cost in sterling. A money transfer specialist can offer great rates and a range of convenient specialist services designed to help make transfers easy and affordable.

SPECIALIST CURRENCY TOOLS TO MANAGE YOUR MONEY ABROAD

If you're buying a property, you can help protect your budget with a forward contract, which will fix a

IS 2020 THE YEAR TO BUY A HOLIDAY HOME?

Tanya Uniacke explores how a realistic budget can help you buy a home abroad



Tanya Uniacke is Head of UK Origination at moneycorp

prevailing exchange rate for up to two years. (Please note, a forward contract may require a deposit.) With the right planning, a forward contract will allow you to secure your exchange rate long before you're due to pay a house deposit, giving you some certainty on your budget.

MAKING YOUR DREAM A REALITY

The expert guidance of a foreign exchange specialist to help you make your dreams a reality. That's why we recommend currency specialist moneycorp, a company that has been helping customers buy property overseas for more than four decades. Volatile exchange rates may not be ideal, but there are plenty of ways to mitigate any impact it may have on large payments like house deposits. Your dedicated account manager can

provide an overview of market trends and movements as well as a range of specialist tools to help you make the most of your money.

We recommend moneycorp because they provide guidance on exchange rates and a wealth of currency tools to manage your money when buying a property overseas. However far forward you are in the planning, moneycorp is on hand to help you choose the solution that is right for you. With a moneycorp



However far forward you are in the planning, moneycorp is on hand to help you.

account, you will have access to:

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- Convenient online platform and mobile app to manage and track your payments
- An automated Regular Payment Plan for scheduled costs
- Tools to track, target and even fix exchange rates for major payments
- Free expert guidance and support from a team of specialists

We have been delivering great value currency services for over 40 years and achieved Feefo 2020 Platinum award for consistently outstanding customer service. It is why we are partnering with City AM – visit www.cityam.com/talk/moneycorp-talk to find out more on how we serve the payment needs of global businesses, importers and exporters, online sellers and personal clients.

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DOOMSDAY SCENARIO

Tim Bond gives the low down on the likely ramifications of the coronavirus on the global economy

UNFORTUNATELY, it is starting to look like the coronavirus is going to spread widely. I say this not with any insight into epidemiology. Rather, I don't think governments have implemented anything approaching the sort of policies that might be expected to contain its spread.

Travel within and between nations is more or less unconstrained, people are working normally and public transportation systems remain full. For most, it is business as usual.

As a result, I expect the virus to continue to spread. To think otherwise requires a belief that the virus will somehow become less infectious outside China. That is not a rational view.

Logic dictates that the virus's spread will be worse outside China, because China went into a lockdown quarantine and the rest of the world hasn't. If we can believe the data, China's success in limiting the outbreak was due to the simple tactic of isolating everyone in their homes for three weeks.

Only if we see a similarly scaled drop in interpersonal contact across the world can we believe the infection is going to be contained. This means a large drop in global GDP is a prerequisite for getting the virus under control. The only plausible short term curtailment mechanism is a large reduction in contact between citizens. I suspect that most people understand this, and if governments don't do it, people will, albeit in a more disorganised, and much less effective manner.

LACK OF CONTROL

The more that governments are involved in the process, the shorter the quarantine and the faster the normalisation afterwards. China probably represents the shortest possible timeline for the containment process because of its greater willingness and ability to exercise absolute control over citizens than anywhere else in the world. We can therefore assume that the fight against the virus will take longer elsewhere. There are no logical grounds for assuming that the spread of infection and the hit to GDP will be much less in the rest of the world than in China. The opposite is much more likely.



Short of a miracle, a deep global recession is inevitable. That implies a large, if temporary, drop in profits, and a jump in unemployment and default rates.

“
There are no logical grounds for assuming the spread of infection and GDP hit will be less here than in China

Of the two, company failures pose the main risk. It is easy to imagine large companies maintaining payrolls through a temporary disease outbreak. It is less easy to imagine small companies doing the same.

However, most employers should be able to see an endpoint to the current crisis in a way that was not possible in 2008-09. Company failures are another matter. In China, the government has ordered a temporary debt jubilee through to June, forcing forbearance on lenders. This will curtail the spike in Chinese default rates.

FEWER OPTIONS

Such a solution is not possible in market-based economies, where tax relief is the main avenue for getting fiscal help to stretched borrowers. It seems very

improbable that any fiscal easing in developed economies will be so effectively targeted that a spike in corporate defaults is prevented. And the politics behind using taxpayers' money to bail out irresponsibly levered firms are complicated. Should the taxpayer support the firm whose six-times debt/Ebitda ratio was a function of double-digit coupons paid to private equity owners?

FISCAL RESPONSE

When governments moved to support the banks in 2008, they exacted haircuts and imposed severe restrictions on behaviour afterwards. Will this apply to irresponsibly run corporates who need government help to survive the virus?

One can postulate an environment in which there will not be very much left on the table for equity holders in those

companies. A deep global recession, a savage decline in corporate profits and a very large increase in corporate financial distress, seem very likely.

In this context, the rate cuts and quantitative easing by the world's central banks are more or less irrelevant. Instead, we should think more about the scale of the fiscal response, the intelligence of its targeting and the strings that are attached.

The idea that we might have discounted all this in the existing limited equity and credit market reaction is just naive.

I doubt we are much more than 20 per cent into the eventual scale of the reaction.

Tim Bond is a partner and portfolio manager at Odey Asset Management

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LONDON REPORT

London shares rise as Fed opts to combat virus

LONDON'S bluechip index rose for a second day yesterday, as the US Federal Reserve cut interest rates to protect the US economy from the impact of the coronavirus, marking the central bank's first emergency rate cut since the financial crisis.

G7 finance officials also pledged "appropriate", unspecific policy moves as the coronavirus spreads around the world, hitting sports events, trade exhibitions and other large gatherings worldwide.

Britain's blue-chip index ended the day one per cent higher, while the domestically focused mid-cap index rose two per cent.

Banks ended the day in the red, down 2.13 per cent, while miners and airlines up between 2.2 per cent and 2.8 per cent, after they were caught up in last week's rout that erased over \$5 trillion (£3.9 trillion) from global equity markets.

Australia's central bank cut interest rates to a record low yesterday, while those in Japan, Britain, France and the United States have signalled willingness to inject more cash into the system.

But analysts have expressed doubt about the efficacy of interest rate cuts amid severe disruptions to the supply chain. Several multinational companies including **Rio Tinto** and **Diageo** have flagged a hit to profits this year.

"A Fed rate cut of 50 basis points rate won't get people on planes, it won't get people out spending money at a time when potentially people are going into quarantine and people are avoiding large groups," said CMC Markets chief market analyst Michael Hewson. Britain unveiled its

Aggreko climbed five per cent as it said Olympics plans were progressing

"battle plan" to tackle the spread of coronavirus yesterday, warning that as many as a fifth of employees could be off work at the peak of the outbreak.

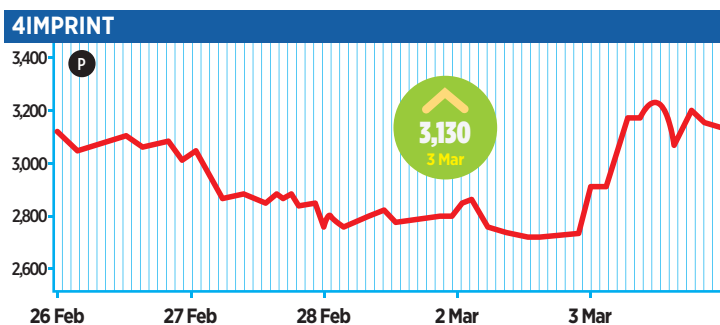
Marketing firm **4imprint** jumped 15 per cent after saying it had so far seen minimal impact from the health crisis.

Aggreko surged five per cent and was eyeing its best day in over seven months as it kept its 2020 targets, and said plans for the Tokyo Summer Olympics were "progressing well".

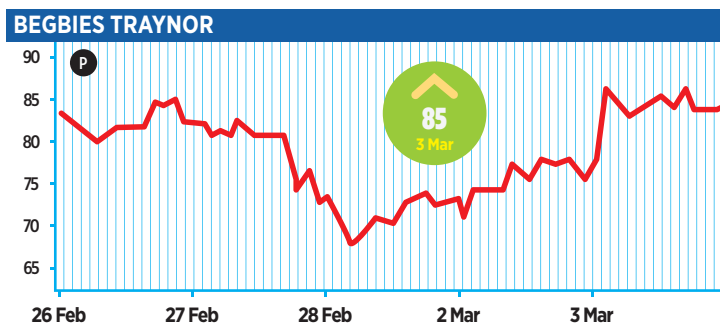


BEST OF THE BROKERS

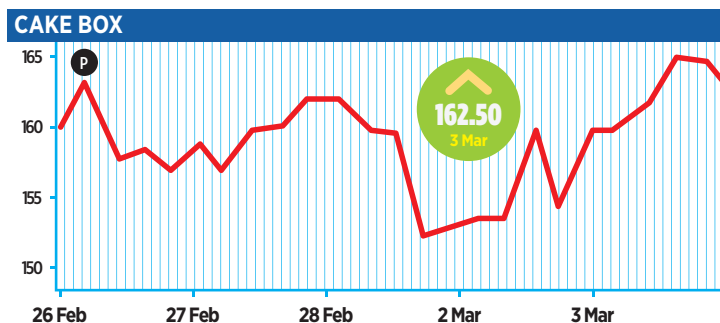
To appear in Best of the Brokers, email your research to notes@cityam.com



4imprint, the purveyor of personalised promotional products, may not be the flashiest stock in existence, but it put in a strong showing yesterday. Analysts and investors alike hailed the FTSE 250 company's strong results, which sent shares rising over 15 per cent. Peel Hunt analysts welcomed news that trading for 2020 had started well, but warned that the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on demand was not yet clear. Analysts raised the company's rating to "add" from "hold", with a target price of 3,250p.



Shares in corporate restructuring specialists Begbies Traynor have fallen as much 15 per cent so far this year, but Canaccord Genuity analysts think the tumble isn't justified. After all, who stands to benefit more from challenging market conditions than an insolvency specialist? Begbies' board has said it expects to deliver full-year results "at least" in line with expectations as it continues to benefit from the turbulence. Analysts kept the company's rating unchanged at "buy", and maintained a target price of 105p.



Liberum analysts are eating up Cake Box, a company they said benefits from a capital light rollout model as light as its sponge. The company has a proven track-record of growth and expansion, they added, and has a strong market position thanks to being the only national chain selling egg-free, fresh cream celebration cakes (who knew?). Not keen to over-egg the pudding, however, analysts warned increasing consumer interest in healthier diets could hit the company, but remained optimistic overall. They rated the company as "buy", with a target price of 250p.

NEW YORK REPORT

Another foul day on Wall St after rate cuts

WALL Street tumbled in a volatile session yesterday after the US Federal Reserve surprised investors with a half percentage-point cut in interest rates, amplifying fears about the magnitude of the coronavirus' impact on the economy.

All three major US stock market indexes closed nearly three per cent lower after the Fed's first emergency rate cut since the 2008 financial crisis.

The rate reduction underscored the US central bank's concern about the new coronavirus, which has spread around the world after emerging late last year in China. It came two weeks ahead of a scheduled policy meeting, where traders had fully priced in a 50-basis-point cut.

Stocks had initially jumped more than one per cent, but then dropped as traders worried whether pumping more money into financial markets would address the central problem—a drop in business activity as workers and consumers stay home.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 2.94 per cent to end at 25,917.41 points, while the S&P 500 lost 2.81 per cent to finish at 3,003.37.

The Nasdaq Composite descended 2.99 per cent to 8,684.09.

Wall Street last Friday had its biggest weekly decline in more than a decade as cases of the virus outside China fanned fears of a global recession.

Like other recent sessions, volume was heavy on US exchanges, with 14.7bn shares changing hands compared with a 9.8bn share average for the last 20 days.

All of the 11 major S&P sectors fell, with the information technology index slumping 3.8 per cent. **Apple** and **Microsoft** fell 3.2 per cent and 4.8 per cent respectively.

Yesterday's selloff left the S&P 500 down about 11 per cent from its record high close on 19 February.

Healthcare equipment maker **Thermo Fisher Scientific**, rose 1.8 per cent after it launched an \$11.6bn (£9.05bn) bid for German genetic testing company Qiagen.

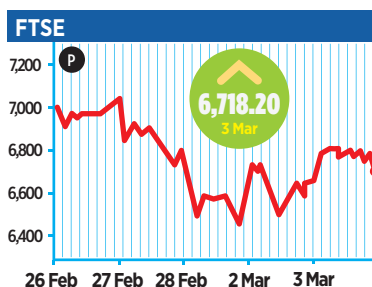
Protective mask maker **Alpha Pro Tech** jumped nearly 20 per cent.

TOP RISERS

1. IAG Up 7.23 per cent
2. M&G 4.65 per cent
3. Just Eat Takeaway Up 4.5 per cent

TOP FALLERS

1. Barclays Down 2.61 per cent
2. Hargreaves Lans. Down 2.28 per cent
3. Morrisons Down 2.22 per cent



CITY MOVES WHO'S SWITCHING JOBS

TRUELAYER

Truelayer, a leading provider of financial APIs, has appointed payments expert Max Emilson as chief revenue officer to drive global sales and nurture current partnerships. Prior to joining Truelayer, Max spent eight years working for Klarna, helping grow the business from a local payment method in the Nordics to a well-known global brand. As vice president of channel sales he created partnerships with major e-commerce players



including Stripe, Shopify, and Adyen, and was part of the team that created a small and medium business package to automate sales, boosting its scalability.

VAYNERMIDIA

Vaynermedia London announced that Becky McOwen-Banks will be joining the agency as its first executive creative director. Becky joins from FCB Inferno, where she was creative director for over five years creating award-winning work for UEFA Women as well as BMW, Nivea, NS&I and The Girl Effect. Rob Lenois, global chief creative officer of Vaynermedia, added: "The creative momentum we've experienced across the board recently has been phenomenal. Hiring Becky as our very first executive creative

director for the London market speaks volumes to where we are going."

PROFUSION

Data science company Profusion has announced that Charlie Wijeratna has joined its board as non-executive director. Charlie will help expand Profusion's commercial offering, develop its charitable programmes and support its new Data Academy. Natalie Cramp, chief executive of Profusion, said: "Appointing Charlie is a real coup for us. [He] brings a wealth of senior experience from a range of different organisations. This talent and insight will help Profusion capitalise on the soaring demand for data-driven marketing services."

Gold Prices Rally as Fed cuts rates by 0.5%

GOLD AT \$1629 / OZ (AS AT 3:33PM / 3RD MAR)

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Market summary table with columns for FTSE 100, FTSE 250, FTSE ALL SHARE, DOW JONES, NASDAQ, S&P 500, and currency exchange rates (GBP, USD, EUR, JPY).

Table of GILTS (Government of Ireland Treasury Securities) with columns for Price, Chg, High, Low.

Table of AEROSPACE & DEFENCE stocks including BAE Systems, Meggitt, QinetiQ, etc.

Table of BANKS including Bank of Georgia, Barclays, BOE Group, etc.

Table of BEVERAGES including Barr (AG), Britvic, Coca-Cola HBC AG, etc.

Table of CHEMICALS including Croda International, Elementis, Johnson Matt, etc.

Table of CONSTRUCTION & MATERIALS including Balfour Beatty, CRH, Galliford Try, etc.

Table of DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS including Smith (DS), Smiths Gp, Smurfit Kappa Gp, etc.

Table of ELECTRICITY stocks including Contour Global, Drax Gp, SSE, etc.

Table of ELECTRONIC & TELECOM stocks including Halma, Morgan Advanced, Oxford Instruments, etc.

Table of EQUITY INVESTMENT INSTRUMENTS including 3i Infrastructure, Aberforth Smk Cos, Alliance Trust, etc.

Table of FOOD & DRUG RETAILERS including Greggs, Morrison (WM), Ocado Gp, etc.

Table of FOOD PRODUCERS including Assoe British Foods, Bakkavor, Cranswick, etc.

Table of FORESTRY & PAPER including Mondi, 3i Group, Ashmore Gp, etc.

Table of GENERAL FINANCIAL including JPM American, JPM Emerg Mkt, JPM Indian IT, etc.

Table of GENERAL RETAILERS including B&M, Dixons Carphone, Dunelm Gp, etc.

Table of HEALTH CARE EQUIPMENT & SERVICES including Convatec, Medicin Int'l, NMC Health, etc.

Table of HOUSEHOLD GOODS including Barratt Devel, Bellway, Berkeley Grp Hldgs, etc.

Table of MINING including Persimmon, Reckitt Benckiser, Redrow, etc.

Table of INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING including Bodycote, Hill & Smith, IMI, etc.

Table of INDUSTRIAL METALS including Evraz, Ferrexpo, Clarkson, etc.

Table of INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION including Fisher (James), Royal Mail, Signature Avi, etc.

Table of LEISURE GOODS including Games Workshop, Aviva, Legal & General, etc.

Table of MEDIA including 4imprint, Ascential, Auto Trader Gp, etc.

Table of REAL ESTATE including Assura, Big Yellow Gp, BMO Comm Prop, etc.

Table of MINING including Anglo American, Antofagasta, BHP Group, etc.

Table of MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS including Vodafone Gp, Admiral Gp, Beazley, etc.

Table of NONLIFE INSURANCE including Admiral Gp, Beazley, Kainos Gp, etc.

Table of SOFTWARE & COMPUTER SERVICES including Avast, Aveva Gp, Computacenter, etc.

Table of OIL & GAS PRODUCERS including BP, Cairn Energy, Eneagen Oil & Gas, etc.

Table of OIL EQUIPMENT & SERVICES including Hunting, Petrofac, Wood Gp(J), etc.

Table of PERSONAL GOODS including Burberry Gp, CapIt & Court Prop, CLS Hldgs, etc.

Table of PHARMACEUTICALS & BIOTECHNOLOGY including AstraZeneca, Dechra Pharma, Genus, etc.

Table of TOBACCO including Br Am Tob, Imperial Brands, M&C Saatchi, etc.

Table of TRAVEL & LEISURE including Carnival, Cineworld Group, Compass Gp, etc.

Table of TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE & EQUIPMENT including Scienc Comm, IQE, James Halstead, etc.

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CRYPTO A.M. DAILY POWERED BY BEQUANT. Includes CRYPTOCURRENCIES table (Bitcoin, Ethereum, etc.) and CRYPTO & COFFEE section with market analysis.

Table of COMMODITIES (Gold, Silver, Copper, etc.) and TOURIST RATES (Canada, New Zealand, etc.).

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FORUM

EDITED BY RACHEL CUNLIFFE



Yes We Can: American politics is a masterclass in messaging

US POLITICS is a fascinating watch, especially if you're interested in branding, communications, and the successes and failures of connecting with audiences. And for those that follow it through this lens, right now is prime-time viewing.

As Democrats vote on their candidate to take on Donald Trump in November, the political battlegrounds in the US are becoming case studies in communications.

POWER OF MONEY

Everything is easier when you have a big budget. Michael Bloomberg has reportedly spent over \$500m on TV and social ads, taking him from nowhere to 19 per cent in some national polls last week.

US politics is often about raising money and proving to your donors that you warrant their backing. That's not a concern for billionaire candidates. Bloomberg has essentially bought a place in the running without doing all the hard yards or having a rallying point of difference.

THE CHALLENGER MOVEMENT

Everyone loves an outsider – someone who has taken on the mainstream and revolutionised a category. Barack Obama was the quintessential challenger brand. Trump also harnessed that route, playing the role of the anti-Washington champion of ordinary folk.

Today, Bernie Sanders is the challenger brand, having galvanised an energised youthful base. Joe Biden, as a previous vice president, is the established Democrat, and despite

Jamie Williams



his big South Carolina win, hasn't managed to generate the excitement or movement style of the 78-year-old socialist.

But can Bernie bring onboard the middle ground – critical for any challenger movement looking to go mainstream? It's what Innocent and BrewDog did, establishing a disruptive anti-corporate niche movement before hitting the mainstream.

REPEAT WITH MEANING

Throw someone one ball and they'll catch it – throw them four and they'll drop them all. Giving consumers one simple message and repeating it over and over can be effective. JFK's 1960 TV ad repeated

"Kennedy" 16 times in the first 15 seconds. Things have developed since then, but finding a simple message that resonates is gold dust. Obama's "Yes We Can" phrase caught fire and enthused a movement across America. Trump's "Make America Great Again" took it to another level.

Worryingly for the Democrats, none of the candidates have a simple, insightful message that voters can buy into. Without one, taking on the Trump machine will be tough.

In the advertising world, brands like Ronseal, Specsavers and L'oreal have perfected this simple repeated message with huge success. "Does what it says on the tin", "Should have gone to Specsavers", and "Because I'm worth it" have weaved their way into popular culture and become valuable assets in themselves.

DEFINE YOUR ENEMY

Recognising an enemy is a useful tool for brands and politicians alike. For all his faults, nobody can deny Trump's brilliance at taking down his enemies. "Lying Ted Cruz", "Little Marco Rubio", "Low Energy Jeb" – he saw off his 2016 Republican challengers with relative ease, and then moved up a level with "Crooked Hillary".

"Sleepy Joe Biden" is this year's target. But the main enemy in 2016 was the Washington "swamp". Trump's proclaiming that he would "drain it" was enormously effective in beating Hillary Clinton.

Sanders has a clearly articulated enemy in greedy corporate America, but can he get that message to resonate with enough of the country?



Can Bernie bring onboard the middle ground – critical for any challenger brand?

The Home Office is due a shake-up, and it's in Britain's interest that ministers win

THE REVERBERATIONS around the resignation of Sir Philip Rutnam, the top civil servant at the Home Office, continue. Priti Patel, the home secretary, is receiving a barrage of abuse.

Labour's John McDonnell has pronounced that he cannot see how Patel could carry on. He raised the possibility that she might be in some way "suspended". It seems to have slipped the shadow chancellor's mind that he himself was keen to carry out a purge of economists in the Treasury and Bank of England if Labour had won the election. The officials which remained would have required "re-educating".

But right now it doesn't really matter what Labour thinks. The salient point about the criticism of Patel is that it is coming from the serried ranks of the metropolitan liberal elite. The Guardian newspaper has been in a total lather. The BBC's coverage has hardly been impartial.

Paul Ormerod



This group see Rutnam as one of their own: a professional expert, conscientiously going about his business. Naturally, they regard his actions as sound, carried out in the interests of the nation as a whole.

An important part of economic theory takes a completely different view of the motivations of bureaucrats. James Buchanan was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1986 for his work in developing what is called "public choice theory".

Public choice economics rejects the idea that bureaucrats act in a disinterested, objective way. They are no less selfish than the rest of

us. Their primary motivation is not to serve the public, it is to further the interests both of themselves as individuals and of the bureaucracy as a whole.

The Home Office itself provides many examples which support this view. When tasked by ministers with deporting those without correct documentation, the bureaucrats did not try to track down, say, Albanian drug dealers. Instead, they minimised effort to themselves, identifying people who had lived here for decades but whose paperwork was not quite in order. The result was the Windrush scandal.

Some 20 years ago, I was involved in a project on crime for Charles Clarke when he was home secretary under Tony Blair. I discovered an influential group in the Home Office who believed that the number of criminal offences actually carried out was more or less constant from year to year.

It may have appeared from the

For brands, kicking against an enemy can be enormously effective. In its "we try harder" campaign, Avis, the second biggest car rental company in the US, took aim at category leader Hertz. It gave Avis an underdog springboard for communicating across all of its media channels and it worked a treat. Brands that know their enemies tend to have a clearer vision of themselves.

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

In politics, image is (almost) everything. Style and body language help candidates stand out, get noticed, and be liked. Obama was the consummate storyteller, every address a masterclass in engagement. If more of this had rubbed off on Biden, he might well be leading the Democratic pack. Conversely, Trump connects with his base through his all-American macho image of success and "winning" that plays well to a certain audience.

For brands, what they say is often superseded by how they say it. In an environment where consumer touch points are becoming more diverse and fragmented, tone of voice is increasingly more important.

The Democratic race reached a critical moment this week with "Super Tuesday" – but there is still all to play for. Despite Bernie's lead and Biden's recent comeback, nobody has truly broken through. It's a chaotic category, with everything to play for. As an ongoing lesson in communications, it remains a fascinating watch.

• Jamie Williams is managing partner of creative agency isobel.

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

Not for sale

[Re: Is there a case for Britain keeping the Elgin Marbles?]

The Parthenon sculptures are dispersed, blown around the world by history. One quarter of the originals – known as the Elgin Marbles – are in the British Museum. Greece has never sued Britain for them, as experts agree that Lord Elgin obtained permission to take them from Athens. He did not loot them. He saved them.

Culture is international – and sellable. There is no room for nationalism in this debate. If a foreign buyer legally purchases a statue from Roman Britain, or a Damien Hirst, the British government cannot claim that they belong to the UK. The same is true for the Parthenon sculptures. There are no separate rules for Greek art.

The EU has not demanded that Britain relinquish the Elgin Marbles. A document mentions "unlawfully removed cultural objects". This would not include the Elgin Marbles, which were acquired lawfully.

However, in the years ahead, British politicians will look for things to give the EU in return for improved trade terms. This must not include the Elgin Marbles, which are seen in Britain, for free, by six million people a year, fostering love and admiration of ancient Athenian art. The British Museum is a world treasure: its contents are not for sale by politicians.

Dominic Selwood, barrister and historian



BEST OF TWITTER

The experts knew this was inevitable. They knew, when it came, the forecasts had to be as accurate as possible. They needed to know often people mix with one another. Thanks to the experiment, we've now got a dataset that does exactly that, at a scale never been seen before. We don't have many weapons in the fight against infectious disease, but maths is a powerful ally.
@FryRsquared

If you wanted to stop the spread of a virus, I'm not sure that having millions of people on casual contracts without sick pay living in shared accommodation would be the ideal starting point really.
@JonnElledge

GOVERNMENT CORONAVIRUS ADVICE POST DISCUSSIONS WITH DOCTORS & SCIENTISTS:

- wash your hands.
- Other advice includes:
- Don't put knife in toaster.
- Don't get in the van.
- If you see the Coronavirus hanging in the air, don't catch it with an empty jar to bring home to inhale.
@WeeMissBea

I performed at an event tonight where no one kissed or shook hands or hugged. Half of them were French or Swiss. It was like watching British people resist saying "sorry" to the lamp post they've bumped into.
@ShappiKhorsandi

We talk a lot about transport in the north but has anyone proposed a network of ziplines? I reckon they'd be the cheapest and quickest form of transport. Leeds to Manchester in about 30 mins, might be a bit breezy but think of the views over the Pennines
@RobynVinter

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS › E: theforum@cityam.com COMMENT AT: cityam.com/forum

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Rent controls are a minefield of unintended consequences

THERE is no denying that London faces a housing crisis. Similarly, there is no denying that many people feel that their rents take too high a proportion of their income.

If you are Sadiq Khan, the solution is obvious: if people object to high rents, the state should cap them – problem solved. It is an appealing enough proposition, especially for a politician heading into an election. But is it really that simple?

Modern politicians often lack the courage to admit that even the most well-intentioned policies have unforeseen consequences. As economist Friedrich Hayek said, there will always be gaps in our knowledge when making policy. This is why we should always consider the possible consequences of any decision – both intended and unintended.

Khan need not look far for his own examples. A freeze on some travel fares makes for a good headline and a popular election pledge, but in practice it meant less money for investment in London's public transport system.

So what could the unintended consequences of rent controls be?

Quite simply, high rents indicate that supply is not meeting demand. Imposing rent controls may make the mayor feel better, and arguably improve life for some renters in the short term, but it doesn't solve the lack of supply. In fact, it may make it worse.

Rent controls will force so-called marginal landlords, who will decide that the lower income is not worth the hassle of renting out rooms in their home, to leave the market and reduce supply. They could also encourage marginal

Syed Kamall



tenants – those who do not necessarily need to rent (those happy to continue living with parents for example) – to move into the rented sector and further drive down supply.

Khan wants to take a leaf out of Sweden's book, but seems less keen to learn lessons from the Swedes' experience. Research from the Swedish think tank Timbro revealed that rent controls in Stockholm led to an increase in the subletting market, with sub-letters paying rents twice as high as the official tenants, and in the illegal rental market, with one in five young tenants admitting to having paid illegally for a rental contract.

Swedish controls have also led to a misallocation of housing (resulting in long commutes for families with chil-

dren), corruption, and even a crime wave linked to the complex system for allocating housing. Some of this illegal activity and misallocation may already happen in London, but rent controls will only make the problem worse.

The solution to the housing crisis is, quite evidently, to increase the supply of housing. It cannot be overstated. More homes of every kind – for renting and owning, flats and houses, social housing and private – will drive down prices for everyone.

Developers who want to build constantly vent their frustration at the bureaucracy of the planning process, the lack of experienced planning officers, and the inability of local authorities to make quick decisions with clear and consistent guidelines.

If any current or future mayor really wants to reduce rents in London, they could do two things: bang the heads of local authority planning departments together to encourage more planning permission, and lobby Westminster to allow local authorities to receive more of the income from development. A land value tax, for example, would mean any increase in land value when planning permission is issued would be retained locally, incentivising the issue of more permits.

The mayor of London has a unique national and international platform. Khan could serve Londoners – and the rest of the country – better by pushing for a housing revolution, not fighting for failed economic policies that entrench the problem.

• Professor Syed Kamall is academic and research director at the Institute of Economic Affairs.

“

Sadiq Khan is fighting for failed economic policies that entrench the problem

DEBATE

Should the chancellor rethink plans to get rid of entrepreneurs' relief in next week's Budget?

Critics of entrepreneurs' relief want proof of its economic impact, but it's not as simple as throwing a couple of headline figures around and dismissing beneficiaries as the already “staggeringly rich” getting richer.

Everyday entrepreneurs treat their businesses as a nest egg akin to the family home. Scrapping the relief would punish those who personally guarantee loans, take risks (often with little salary of their own), and endure sleepless nights to create jobs and growth.

Their businesses fund public services and welfare systems through corporation tax, business rates, national insurance, and the collection of VAT. Such long-term contributions are worth far more than the cost of the relief.

YES

CAROLINE PLUMB



Don't be fooled into believing the caricature that the government is trying to spin of millionaire businessmen: 90 per cent who use entrepreneurs' relief will not make life-changing sums, but deserve some payback for the risks they take. Or would we rather those founders invest not in jobs but in FTSE-tracker funds, which are taxed in the same way?

• Caroline Plumb OBE is chief executive and co-founder of Fluidly.

Entrepreneurs' relief is one of the most egregious examples of a tax break that just does not do what it says on the tin.

The relief allows effectively all business owners to pay a reduced rate of capital gains tax of 10 per cent. But detailed research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies has shown that this has not increased productive investment or innovation by firms. Instead, it simply incentivises owners to move their income from “pay as you earn” (PAYE) to capital gains, avoiding income tax and national insurance along the way.

The relief is also part of a wider moral problem in the UK: those who own their own company are asked to contribute proportionately less in tax than those who happen to work for them – who

NO

ALFIE STIRLING



are often on far lower incomes as well. Entrepreneurs' relief was supposed to increase entrepreneurship. It doesn't. It was supposed to boost investment. It doesn't. And every year it costs the Treasury an estimated £2-3bn – around five times as much as total spending on homelessness services in England. It's time for a rethink.

• Alfie Stirling is head of economics at the New Economics Foundation.

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Certified Distribution
from 30/12/2019 till
02/02/2020 is 85,521

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PERSONAL FINANCE



AS RISHI Sunak, the new chancellor, prepares for his first Budget next week, the pensions industry will be watching what happens with eagle eyes.

Reports have circulated that the government, emboldened by its landslide General Election win last year, could bring in sweeping changes to how some people save for retirement. Some predict that Sunak will take aim at the complex and contentious pension tax relief. Others hope he will make the system more friendly to those who have invested well.

With a wishlist ranging from specific measures to make it more profitable for doctors to stay in work, to broad-brush reforms which could turn the industry on its head for low earners, Barnett Waddingham's pensions specialist James Jones-Tinsley tells *City A.M.* how the chancellor can bring about meaningful change in the sector.

HOW CAN THE CHANCELLOR HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND PENSION TAX RELIEF?

First, simplify it. Currently, personal contributions to a pension attract tax relief at the highest rate of income tax paid by an individual. However, the way tax relief works is opaque and largely misunderstood. If the chancellor agrees to introduce the same rate of relief for everyone, regardless of earnings, the chosen rate should be at a level that encourages basic rate taxpayers to save into a pension, while not over-penalising higher rate taxpayers.

For these reasons, a flat rate of 20 per cent is too low. A rate of 30 per cent or above would be more reasonable.

Such a seismic change should not be rushed, however. Instead, the chancellor should set up an independent commission to agree the rate and oversee its successful delivery, in much the same way as happened with auto-enrolment.

WHAT CHANGES WOULD HELP OLDER WORKERS KEEP HIGH PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS?

Ditch the money purchase annual allowance. Where a saver aged 55 or over starts to take income from a money purchase pension scheme, the amount that they can carry on paying into their pension shrinks from £40,000 a year to just £4,000.

This is a largely unknown tax trap that is too easily triggered, and unfairly prevents older workers from making significant pension contributions when they may need to.

HOW TO PREVENT GOOD INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE FROM BEING TAXED?

Scrap the lifetime allowance. This is the maximum amount that a person can save into pensions during their lifetime. 10 years ago, it stood at £1.8m. Today, it is £1.06m — nearly £750,000 lower. Its austerity-led reduction over the last 10 years has effectively turned it into a tax on successful investment performance, with any excess taxed by as much as 55 per cent. Today's low annual allowance has all but made the lifetime allowance redundant.

HOW CAN THE CHANCELLOR HELP HIGH EARNERS LIKE DOCTORS?

Get rid of the tapered annual allowance. This reduces how much someone can pay into their pension when their annual income is more than £150,000. The rules surrounding it are far too complex. As a result, many people, including doctors and other public sector professionals, end up facing significant and unexpected tax bills where they inadvertently contribute too much to their pension. Any tax rule that makes doctors refuse to work extra shifts in order to reduce patient waiting times — as we have seen — has to be ditched.

FINALLY, WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR LOWER INCOME WORKERS?

End the tax relief inequality in workplace pension schemes. Lower earners have typically been auto-enrolled into workplace pension schemes since 2012. Some of these schemes operate on a net pay basis, while others offer relief at the source.

This means that employees who earn less than the personal allowance of £12,500 and are auto-enrolled into a net pay scheme do not receive pension tax relief on their contributions. Those auto-enrolled into a relief at source scheme do.

To borrow from the chancellor's own words, the tax treatment between the two types of scheme needs to be "levelled up", so that lower earners are treated the same from a tax relief perspective, regardless of which type of scheme they join.

BUDGET: INCOMING

With pensions reforms on the way, **Alex Daniel** asks James Jones-Tinsley what could be done to shake up the industry

How to pick a decent investment manager

HUMANS are bad investors. Unfortunately, they think they are great at it. So how can you protect yourself from yourself?

Here is are your need-to-knows in finding an investment manager who might help.

YOU ARE A BAD INVESTOR

If you have money, you were probably successful. Congratulations. That does not make you a good investor. Research shows that there is no correlation between investment results and wealth, social status, or education.

Believing otherwise usually results in the accumulation of ego-driven investments. And those rarely end well.



Neil Cockerill

YOUR INVESTMENT MANAGER IS NOT MUCH BETTER

Few UK managers are experts in strategies which they invest clients' money into. But that does not stop them claiming otherwise. These managers regularly (and sometimes outrageously) overstate their competence.

The truth is that most managers excel at sales and service. Most of

them do not, on the other hand, excel at research and investing.

That would be fine (sort of) if they could admit the limits of their knowledge. But they believe their own hype, leading them to stake out ill-informed positions using other people's money.

PROTECTING YOU FROM YOURSELF

Despite the foregoing, investors who hire managers still earn better returns over time. This is because managers protect you from yourself while providing baseline advice.

But the best managers are honest about where they add value (and where they don't). They don't need to be Warren Buffett or our very own Jason Hsu — they just need to be

trustworthy, informed, and engaged.

THE VALUE OF PRODUCT

UK firms invest more in sales and marketing (service) than in-house investment research (product). Most are not managers at all — they are sales and distribution platforms buying third-party products.

It's no surprise that these managers often put their clients' money in trendy active funds with high fees. Our advice: when selecting an investment manager, find one that prioritises research, not sales.

TRANSPARENCY IS KEY

Transparency and trust are at the heart of the manager relationship.

Steer clear of managers with complex fee structures. Instead, look

for simplicity and predictability.

Moreover, it pays to avoid managers who cannot speak directly about their research. Managers who outsource their product may struggle to respond to these questions — but you deserve answers before you turn over your hard-earned cash.

Selecting a quality manager requires due diligence. However, if handled properly, it's a decision you'll make only once in a lifetime.

But if it still sounds too daunting, you might be better off without a manager at all. Just put your money in a low-cost, diversified exchange traded fund. Then walk away and check back in 20 years.

.....
 ● Neil Cockerill is a senior investment manager at Henderson Rowe

OFFICE POLITICS

Step it up to tackle the homeless crisis

Shelter's Vertical Rush challenge is back, raising funds to combat rough sleeping

SLEEPING on a cold, wet pavement is not a fate anyone should have to face in the fifth wealthiest country in the world. And yet, 4,266 of our fellow citizens were recorded doing just that on a given night last autumn, according to government figures published last Thursday.



Polly Neate

Each person counted is living through the horror of street homelessness. This is the very worst manifestation of the national emergency our housing crisis has become.

People who sleep rough suffer loneliness, serious ill-health, violence, and even death. Take the appalling news last month that at least seven people had been crushed to death by rubbish trucks in the last five years, after being so desperate they used a bin for refuge.

When people are losing their lives because of the housing crisis, it should sound the alarm. We need real and lasting action to tackle homelessness.

The Prime Minister has said he is committed to this, and reiterated last week that he will make it his mission to end the "scourge" of street homelessness before the end of this parliament. To that end, he has added an extra £236m to the government's rough sleeping strategy to provide

"move-on accommodation" for up to 6,000 rough sleepers, and appointed Dame Louise Casey to investigate the root causes of homelessness.

All of this is encouraging news – and indeed, the government's strategy does appear to be making a small dent, with the number of people sleeping rough last year nine per cent lower than in 2018. But a huge word of warning is needed. Despite the slight progress, rough sleeping remains 141 per cent higher than it was in 2010. There is clearly still a marathon to be run before this crisis is solved.

The government's statistics on rough sleeping are also shaky. They are just a snapshot – and a gross underestimate at that. We know that many people are simply missed by this basic count.

And no matter what figures you look at, rough sleeping is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to home-



Taking place at London's Tower 42 on 12 March, 1,000 runners will power up 932 steps to raise funds for those without a place to call home

lessness. More than 280,000 people in England are homeless – over 170,000 in London alone. This includes tens of thousands of families with children trapped in temporary accommodation, as well as people crashing on friends' sofas or in otherwise unstable living arrangements.

Why are so many people being tipped into homelessness? The answer is no mystery: homelessness is being driven by the failure of consecutive governments to build the social homes that we need. Combined with sky-high private rents and cuts to



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Free

Freerice is a charity app with a difference. Unlike others, you don't need to shell out money straight from your own pocket. Instead, you just play trivia games, and sponsors will take care of the cash going to those in need. Designed by the World Food Programme, it's a way to learn new things while you donate.

housing benefit, people are left with nowhere they can afford to live.

Until the government takes responsibility for building more social homes, Shelter's frontline services remain critical. Our expert advisers and support workers will stand by the side of anyone facing homelessness – and fight hard to get them the help they need.

Shelter helps millions of people each year, but we can't do that without the public's support. We rely on the generosity of people who care.

So if you're one of those people, and you feel motivated to support our work and to try something different, why not sign up for our tower-running challenge Vertical Rush on Thursday 12 March? Taking place at London's iconic Tower 42, over 1,000 runners – including our very kind celebrity supporters – will power up 932 steps, all to raise vital funds for those of us without a place to call home.

Without tackling the core reasons behind homelessness, emergency measures to cut rough sleeping or increase the number of hostel rooms can only go so far. After all, a hostel bed is not a home. But until the government solves the root cause of the problem, we're here, with the help of Londoners, to fundraise, volunteer, and campaign for change.

Polly Neate is chief executive of Shelter. Visit www.shelter.org.uk/verticalrush to find out more.

COFFEE BREAK

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SUDOKU

Place the numbers from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each row, each column and each 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9 to solve this tricky Sudoku puzzle.

8			2	5	9			
	5		1					8
			9	6	1			
3	8	7						9
	7		6					2
			1					5
	3							
	6		7	8				2
7								4

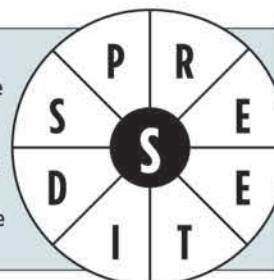
KAKURO

Fill the grid so that each block adds up to the total in the box above or to the left of it. You can only use the digits 1-9 and you must not use the same digit twice in a block. The same digit may occur more than once in a row or column, but it must be in a separate block.

		18	13	10	16		11	33	7
	10						6		
35							13		
	7			22					11
15			39				9		
22			10				6		
	8	17		16		4		31	12
10				38					
21				29					
	23							12	
24							5	11	
	17								
16				15					
					28				

WORDWHEEL

Using only the letters in the Wordwheel, you have ten minutes to find as many words as possible, none of which may be plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. Each word must be of three letters or more, all must contain the central letter and letters can only be used once in every word. There is at least one nine-letter word in the wheel.



LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

QUICK CROSSWORD

C	A	M	E	R	A	I	C
O	L	B	R	U	N	C	H
R	E	S	I	D	E	J	U
P	X	T	H	R	U	S	T
S	P	A	I	N	A	R	E
G	R	A	N	I	T	E	
V	I	O	L	E	T	E	N
I	U	A	R	I	S	E	N
C	A	N	C	A	N	N	U
T	D	K	I	G	A	L	I

KAKURO

1	9	3	2		7	2	8	1
4	5	2	1		8	6	9	3
2	7		4	6	9	8		
6	8	9		2	6	1		
			1	2	7		4	2
2	5	3	4	9	6	7	1	8
5	9	8		1	2	3		
	2	1	5		9	7	5	
	6	3	8	9		9	2	
1	8	5	2		7	9	6	3
8	9	7	4		4	7	2	1

SUDOKU

6	5	2	8	3	1	9	4	7
1	9	7	4	6	5	3	2	8
4	3	8	7	9	2	1	6	5
8	4	3	1	2	7	6	5	9
5	7	9	3	4	6	2	8	1
2	6	1	5	8	9	7	3	4
9	1	6	2	5	8	4	7	3
3	2	5	9	7	4	8	1	6
7	8	4	6	1	3	5	9	2

WORDWHEEL

The nine-letter word was DESTROYER

QUICK CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6
7										
						8		9		
10										
11										
		12				13		14		15
16										
19										
						20				
21										

ACROSS

- 4 Traditional stories accepted as history (5)
- 7 Vast (7)
- 8 Substance used to flavour food (5)
- 10 Bulbous spring-flowering plant (9)
- 11 Period between childhood and maturity (11)
- 17 Censure severely (9)
- 19 On high (5)
- 20 Sports competitor (7)
- 21 Destitute (5)

DOWN

- 1 Austrian capital city (6)
- 2 Minute rudimentary plant contained within a seed (6)
- 3 Foolhardy (6)
- 4 State of disorder (4)
- 5 The object here (4)
- 6 Make a search (4)
- 9 Unsullied (4)
- 12 Hinged section of a table (4)
- 13 Trite or obvious remark (6)
- 14 Got close (6)
- 15 Number written as XI in Roman numerals (6)
- 16 Farm outbuilding (4)
- 17 Cipher (4)
- 18 Sit tight (4)

FOOD&DRINK

CULTURE CLUB: THE BEST GALLERY RESTAURANTS

TOWNSEND

WHITECHAPEL GALLERY

WHAT IS IT? The Whitechapel Gallery has converted its ground-floor cafe into a more serious dining space, creating an intimate, light-filled restaurant serving modern British cuisine that sits somewhere between “casual lunch” and “proper dinner”. It’s named after Charles Harrison Townsend, the architect who designed the distinctive art nouveau building in 1897. It’s a relatively small venture, a mere 36 covers, although if you’re hosting a casual business lunch you should be able to bag a walk-in so long as there isn’t a newly-opened exhibition.

WHO’S RESPONSIBLE? It’s the brainchild of director Nick Gilkinson, previously of Anglo, and head chef Joe Fox, who used to ply his trade at Petersham Nurseries; a solid combination in anyone’s book. The menu claims to be inspired by the “wily creativity” of the gallery’s namesake, made up of traditional British dishes with European and colonial influences.

WHAT SHOULD I ORDER? The menu is divided into snacks, starters and mains, the former including a well executed fried squid dish with a vivid green garlic mayo, and some decent purple sprouting broccoli in hazelnut crumb. There’s an absurdly generous starter of potato dumplings with potted brown shrimp,

WORKING LUNCH

Steve Dinneen on the best places to wine and dine your favourite clients



which would probably be better placed as a main but is satisfying nonetheless. Egg, flowering kale and battered anchovy looks great but is a hotchpotch of flavours and temperatures (cold egg, warm kale, aggressively salty anchovy). I realised at this point I’d probably over-ordered, something that was confirmed when a vast bowl of granny-style lamb mince and creamed potato arrived, although it was so well prepared I somehow managed to put it away. The piece-de-resistance was an excellent curried potato cake with chard and pureed carrot, suffused with a faint hint of curry. Wonderful stuff, and with mains averaging around £16, you certainly get your money’s worth.

AND DESSERT? Yes, although after all that I didn’t try any of them. If you pace yourself better than I did, you could order ginger and treacle cake or rhubarb crumble.

WHAT ABOUT DRINKS? There’s a decent selection of wine available by the glass, and bottles ranging from £24 to almost £100. You could also get yourself a negroni, provided you don’t plan on getting very much work done when you get back to the office.

HOW TO BOOK Call 020 7522 7896, go to whitechapelgallery.org, or visit The Whitechapel Gallery at 77-82 Whitechapel High St, E1 7QX

Where to find top meals in London’s cultural hotspots

From the Tate Modern and the NPG to the ICA and Somerset House, there are plenty of places to dine in the shadow of art, says Steve Dinneen

London is not short of galleries. The Tate Modern, British Museum, National Gallery and Natural History Museum all draw more than 5m visitors a year. Being host to so many humans gives you something of a captive audience, and captive audiences don’t always inspire top-quality cuisine (see also: hotel restaurants). So which London institutions are worth eating in?

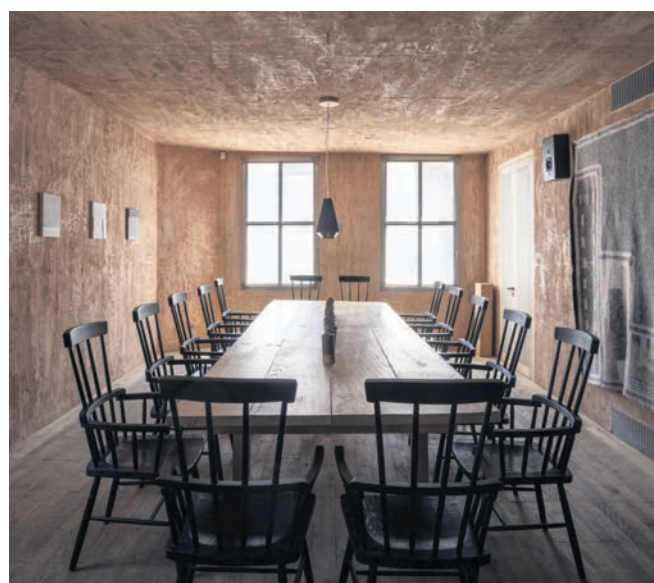
If you’re in the mood for fine dining, it’s hard to fault Skye Gyngell’s Spring in Somerset House. The former Petersham Nurseries Cafe chef – who infamously called her Michelin star a “curse” – is known for her meticulous attention to detail and irreproachable sourcing of produce. The dining room is brighter than heaven itself, every surface gleaming white, a blank canvas, so to speak, for her seafood-, fish- and vegetable-heavy cooking.

Also at Somerset House is the more



intimate Bryn Williams, which serves that catch-all cuisine “modern British”, albeit with a European-meets-Welsh accent. Williams recently devised a special mushroom-based menu to complement the Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi exhibition over the corridor in the exhibition space.

The ICA may not have the clout of the Tate Modern, but it has a restaurant that’s a destination in its own right: Rochelle. The dining room, overseen by Margot Henderson and Melanie Arnold, is a lesson in casual



eating, a place where excellent food comes without any air of pretension.

“We have a varied and creative group of people who frequent the gallery,” says Henderson. “They have often come here to drink up the culture. I like to think some of our dishes are very ICA: a little bit hippy, very vegetable based... It is a joy to be surrounded by such beautiful buildings. The foliage always lifts my heart as I walk through the park.”

Another lesser-known gem is the Garden Cafe at the Garden Museum, where you can enjoy seasonal modern European cooking amid more foliage

than you can shake a spoon at.

Rather more traditional is the National Theatre’s House restaurant, which was overhauled a few years back. While not quite a destination in its own right, it’s a more than adequate stop-in if you’re about to watch, for example, Lesley Manville star in *The Visit* (and in this instance you’ll need the extra fortitude to sit through the three and a half hour marathon).

For something a little more off the beaten track, you could try Mãos, located at the Blue Mountain School in the East End, run by Christie Brown and James Brown. “We love the fact



From left: Margot Henderson of Rochelle fame; The interior of Maos in the Blur Mountain School; The dazzling interior of Spring in Somerset House

that Mãos is part of a bigger project,” says Christine. “We see it as a cultural space in itself. We break the boundaries of regular restaurant dining by encouraging our guests to explore the space and engage with the chefs while they are dining. There’s a complete removal of ‘front and back of house’ – the whole process is visible from the outset.”

For something less challenging, Portrait Restaurant in the NPG and Tate Modern Restaurant in the new Blavatnik Wing of the Tate Modern both offer perfectly decent food with views that will impress your mum.



WEEKLY GRILL

Chucs executive chef **Simon Henbery** on chef-on-chef violence, and why we should embrace knobbly veg

WHO ARE YOU?

I'm Simon Henbery, an old married dad of two and accidental chef from south west London. I fell into cooking over 20 years ago after a failed university attempt and never looked back. After working around London, including seven years with Jamie Oliver at Fifteen and Barbecco, I'm now executive chef director for Chucs, looking after the food and chefs at all of our sites.

WHAT'S NEW?

We recently opened Chucs Cafe Kensington, which has been a great success. It's really rewarding to see something exceed your expectations after all the hard work. We have a couple more new sites coming in the next few months.

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE GET WRONG WHEN COOKING?

I have a saying I've been using in the kitchen for years, especially with the

younger chefs: "Make love to it, don't f**k it!" Treat your ingredients with respect.

WHAT FOOD MAKES YOU HAPPY AND WHY?

A really good cheese board. This would be my desert island dish: good cheese, good bread, good wine.

YOU COME HOME DRUNK AND HUNGRY - WHAT DO YOU COOK?

Some sort of toasted cheese sandwich. Extra mature cheddar, Worcestershire sauce, pickled chillies. Sometimes with McCoys salt and vinegar crisps.

WHAT'S YOUR EARLIEST FOOD MEMORY?

Eating proper Alphonso mangoes in the summer in Raynes Park. Mum split them between me and my brothers - I always got the stone and had to stand on the

garden step and eat it so I didn't stain the floor in the kitchen.

WHAT'S THE WORST THING YOU'VE EVER PUT IN YOUR MOUTH?

Cottage cheese, Kingston hospital, extended stay circa 1986.

TELL US ABOUT THE BEST MEAL YOU EVER HAD

There are two, over ten years apart. First, The Square in 2006. It was a Rolls Royce of a restaurant. Flawless. Then Sat Bains in Nottingham about six years ago - unbelievably inventive. He's one of my favourite chefs now.

YOU'RE MAYOR FOR A DAY - WHAT FOOD LAW WOULD YOU INTRODUCE?

Something to stop this supermarket obsession with perfect-looking

vegetables. We don't all look great and neither do they. It's a terrible waste.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE DISH?

Lamb biryani - I never tire of Indian food.

WHAT SHOULD EVERYONE HAVE IN THEIR KITCHEN CUPBOARD?

Chillies, anchovies, capers, pickles, salad cream. My fridge is full of weird bits, from homemade tobacco to my mate's kimchi.

WHAT'S THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS THING YOU'VE SEEN A CHEF DO?

Pick me up by the throat for phoning in sick - no names!

• To reserve a table at The Chucs Restaurant & Café Collection call 020 7766 2814 or go to chucsrestaurants.com

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE:

Forget everything you think you know about lady's fingers: here's how to make them really shine at a dinner party.

When I first moved to London some 35 years ago, I soon discovered good Indian food and immediately fell in

MARK HIX

Chef and restaurateur



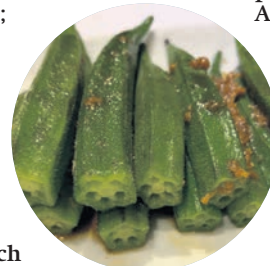
love with okra. A lot of my friends refer to it as devil's food so I go out of my way by forcing it upon them when I cook dinner.

Okra gets a bad rep because it's

often cooked poorly: get it wrong and it becomes slimy; freeze it and it tastes horrible; overcook it and it's quickly ruined. But if you buy it dead fresh, cook it briefly and serve it with the right dish, it tastes amazing.

A great dish using okra is the classic New Orleans gumbo, in which the okra is sliced and cooked with either shrimp or chicken, re-

leasing its distinctive flavour and helping to thicken the soup. Another is one I found in a little hidden away Sichuan restaurant in Earl's Court, okra in ginger, which is what I've chosen for this week's recipe.



OKRA WITH GINGER (SERVES 4)

INGREDIENTS

• 200g very fresh okra

• 25-30g root ginger, peeled and grated
• 3tbs black rice vinegar

METHOD

• Mix the ginger with the vinegar
• Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and cook the okra for 2 minutes then drain in a colander
• Arrange the okra on serving plates and spoon over the dressing.

The Pig Hotels' James Golding & Mark Hix, 17th April
Mark's Kitchen Library
www.hixrestaurants.co.uk

WINES OF THE WEEK

Luca Dusi, co-founder of Passione Vino wine importer, in Shoreditch picks two bottles to buy



1. GESS, VALTELLINA SUPERIORE GRUMELLO, DIRUPI, LOMBARDY, 2015

From the slopes of the magical Valley of Valtellina, this single vineyard within the Grumello sub zone, is a stunner. The 20 year old Nebbiolo vines are organically grown, handpicked and left to age for 24 months in a French oak barrel, following a spontaneous fermentation in steel tanks. Initial minty and eucalyptus tasting notes, make way to small forest berries, moss, a hint of leather and a delicate pinch of pipe tobacco.

• £POA, passionevino.co.uk

2. NOSIOLA 2018 GIUSEPPE FANTI, TRENTO

An indigenous variety of the Dolomites, these vines are planted on the Dolomitic slopes around the Village of Pressano, where they benefit from the mineral richness of its terroir. The minerality is evident and accompanied by a mid-body weight, which shows off freshness and crunchiness with a zesty citrus notes.

• £POA, passionevino.co.uk

For more information and to shop for interesting bottles of wine go to passionevino.co.uk

THE PUNTER

HONG KONG RACING TRADER

Wally Pyrah previews today's racing card from Happy Valley

Purton looks set to Rule Valley again

ONCE again it looks like jockeys Joao Moreira and Zac Purton are going to dominate today's meeting at Happy Valley.

Both reigning champion Purton and former champion Moreira have their cards marked in all eight races and it's inconceivable that both will leave the track empty-handed.

While 'Magic Man' Moreira was sidelined last week, serving a two-meeting suspension, Purton visited the winner's enclosure a handful of times, which cut the Brazilian's lead down to seven in the chase for the title and it's all to play for.

It has been said many times before, that both jockeys through their skill,

commitment, and connections, get the pick of the rides in Hong Kong and are currently riding around 30 per cent of the winners in the territory.

Both will partner the majority of favourites at the inner-city track today, although, at least on the form book, Purton looks to have the stronger.

In fact, the Zac-Man will fancy his chances of taking the first three races on the card, starting with Demons Rock, who looks close to his first win, when he lines up in the Ma Tau Wai Handicap (11.15am).

This is a Class 5 contest, however, and pits horses against each other who are past their best, unreliable, or



Zac Purton looks to have plenty of good chances at Happy Valley today

are simply not very good and therefore Demons Rock can't be considered a betting proposition.

Purton gets the leg up on the Paul O'Sullivan-trained **RULE THEE** in the nine-furlong Kowloon Tong Handicap (11.45am) and the former course and distance winner looks cherry ripe to win his first race of the season.

This former NZ galloper served notice he was about to peak when an encouraging fourth over the extended mile in January.

He then tried his luck on the all-weather the following month and was unplaced on a surface he clearly doesn't like, but was dropped 2lbs in the handicap and now finds himself down in a Class 4 contest.

With a recent encouraging trial catching the eye, and Purton booked for the first time this season, the omens look good.

Purton's best ride of the day should be **CLASSIC POSH**, who returns to the track after a three-month lay-off, in the To Kwa Wan Handicap (12.15pm) over six furlongs.

This son of high-class Australian sprinter Testa Rossa has taken some time to acclimatise to conditions in the territory, but has trialled three times since December, the latest over course and distance with Purton aboard last month.

With blinkers equipped for the first time and a class drop a bonus, he is going to be very hard to beat.

Moreira will be hoping to return from his enforced week's holiday with a couple of winners, including the promising John Size-trained Super Alliances in the To Kwa Wan Handicap (1.15pm) and last-start winner Flash Famous in the San Po Kong Handicap (2.15pm).

Both Moreira on Green Reign and Purton on Beauty Spark go head-to-head in the best race of the day, the £140,000 Kowloon City Handicap (2.50pm).

Both are closely-matched on their course and distance form, but face stiff opposition from the fast improving This Is Class.

POINTERS

Rule Thee	11.45am	Happy Valley
Classic Posh	12.15pm	Happy Valley

Weight not enough to stop Methane from bursting clear

PUNTERS are guaranteed to put their faith in Joao Moreira and Zac Purton when the duo eyeball each other in the Ma Tau Kok Handicap (12.45pm).

Moreira stays loyal to Casa De Forca, despite his mount failing to deliver when sent off a short-priced favourite last month.

That was not the first-time Tony Cruz's gelding has proved

frustrating this season.

He has obvious ability judged on track-work and trial form but hasn't reproduced that on the racecourse yet.

Cruz has called for blinkers for the first time, though there is always the worry they could mean he over races during the contest.

Purton in the meantime renews his association with well-drawn

Tangmere, who finished strongly over nine furlongs last time, but drops down in trip here.

When trainer Caspar Fownes and Purton team up it's always a pointer to the horse's chance. There is no doubt Tangmere is well-rated on his best form, however there is also a question mark around what the gelding's best distance is.

This could be the time to take a

chance on last-start winner **METHANE**, who attempts to defy a 6lb penalty.

The well-bred son of Pierro showed improvement when a convincing winner on his first attempt over the mile early last month and having only raced a handful of times in the territory, he is more than capable of improving again.

With in-form jockey Chad

Schofield, fresh from his winning treble at Sha Tin last Sunday, replacing recently departed Lyle Hewitson, expect the combination to make a dash for gold shortly after turning into the home straight.

POINTERS

Methane	12.45pm	Happy Valley
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LIVE
HONG
KONG
RACING TODAY
AT HAPPY VALLEY

8 RACES
FROM 11:15AM

Shops

BETFRED Ladbrokes
CORAL

Online

B CORAL totepool BetPoint

Watch

sky sports racing

HAPPY VALLEY

Going: Turf - GOOD

11.15 MA TAU WAI HANDICAP (CLASS 5) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 5f 3yo plus 12 dec.

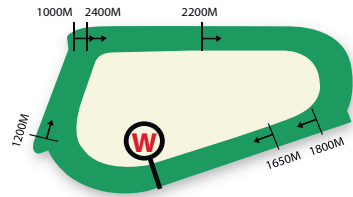
1	904-46 U W BROTHER (35) (B ¹)	H N J Wong(3) 59
(9)	Y Tsui 4-9-6	Runs: 11 Wins: 0 Places: 1
2	86-789 AURORA STEED (7) (B)	N Callan 61
(8)	J Size 5-9-5	Runs: 7 Wins: 0 Places: 0
3	46-098 PRAWN YEAH YEAH (28) (TB) (CD) (G)	M Chadwick 61
(4)	Richard Gibson 6-9-4	Runs: 15 Wins: 1 Places: 0
4	69-642 DEMONS ROCK (28) (B)	Z Purton 65
(6)	D Hall 5-9-2	Runs: 33 Wins: 4 Places: 4
5	0006-0 MULTIMAX (49) (B) (CD) (G)	J Moreira 62
(7)	L Ho 9-9-2	Runs: 51 Wins: 3 Places: 8
6	9846-5 GREAT SON (49) (TB) (CD,BF) (G)	K H A Chan(7) 60
(5)	P O'Sullivan 6-9-1	Runs: 22 Wins: 2 Places: 2
7	5668-0 FARM BUMPER (37)	C Schofield 65
(10)	K Man 5-9-0	Runs: 10 Wins: 0 Places: 0
8	234-06 LA BOMBA (28) (T)	B Shinn 64
(12)	D Whyte 6-8-13	Runs: 11 Wins: 0 Places: 2
9	7441-5 FIRE AND GOLD (37) (B) (G)	M Poon(2) 61
(3)	C Yip 7-8-12	Runs: 20 Wins: 1 Places: 1
10	/0602- TRAVEL SUCCESSOR (315) (TB)	K Teetan 62
(11)	W So 7-8-11	Runs: 30 Wins: 2 Places: 6
11	4987-0 YEE CHEONG LUCKY (10) (B)	C V Wong(5) 64
(2)	A Millard 5-8-8	Runs: 14 Wins: 0 Places: 0
12	6542-4 SHOW MISSION (28) (B) (CD) (G)	G Van Niekerk 64
(1)	C Chang 8-8-6	Runs: 37 Wins: 2 Places: 8
13	898-20 FLYING MONKEY (31) (T) (CD) (GF)	RESERVE 65
(13)	T Yung 8-9-3	Runs: 30 Wins: 2 Places: 4
14	09-097 FAIRY FLOSS (10) (HB)	RESERVE 61
(14)	J Ting 5-8-9	Runs: 10 Wins: 0 Places: 0

★BETTING: 11/4 Demons Rock, 7/2 Multimax, 7 U W Brother, 8 Great Son, Show Mission, 12 Aurora Steed, Fire And Gold, La Bomba, 20 Others

11.45 KOWLOON TONG HANDICAP (CLASS 4) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 1m1f 3yo plus 12 dec.

1	06-186 PLAY WISE (21) (B) (C) (G)	M Poon(2) 73
(12)	C Yip 7-9-7	Runs: 31 Wins: 2 Places: 6
2	893-49 RULE THEE (31) (CD) (G)	Z Purton 79
(9)	P O'Sullivan 8-9-6	Runs: 34 Wins: 3 Places: 5
3	0-0000 SALTO OLIMPICO (10) (B) (CD) (G)	B Shinn 78
(10)	D Hall 7-9-6	Runs: 31 Wins: 3 Places: 3
4	338-17 CALIFORNIA LEGEND (21) (T) (CD) (G)	G Van Niekerk 72
(1)	A Cruz 5-8-13	Runs: 17 Wins: 2 Places: 3
5	43-145 CHEERFUL STAR (10) (TP) (D) (G)	C Y Ho 74
(4)	F Lor 6-8-13	Runs: 28 Wins: 1 Places: 2
6	708-35 FULL POWER (21) (B)	N Callan 78
(11)	Richard Gibson 4-8-11	Runs: 7 Wins: 0 Places: 1
7	50-660 BULLISH GLORY (10) (H) (CD) (G)	M Yeung 77
(3)	C Chang 7-8-7	Runs: 37 Wins: 3 Places: 4
8	220-23 DIONYSUS COLLINI (1) (H) (BF)	J Moreira 74
(5)	K Lui 5-8-7	Runs: 16 Wins: 0 Places: 6
9	8964-8 SANGRIA (42) (B) (CD)	C Schofield 78
(6)	D Ferraris 7-8-7	Runs: 43 Wins: 2 Places: 8
10	0-9538 GALA NIGHT (21) (P)	K Leung 74
(2)	John Moore 4-8-4	Runs: 9 Wins: 0 Places: 2
11	6-8648 CURLING LUXURY (14) (C,D) (G,A)	H N J Wong(3) 78
(8)	Y Tsui 8-8-3	Runs: 51 Wins: 6 Places: 5
12	878-03 FORTUNE PATROL (17) (B) (D) (G)	K Teetan 74
(7)	A Millard 6-8-2	Runs: 31 Wins: 2 Places: 5
13	643-79 SHADOW BREAKER (17)	RESERVE 73
(13)	J Ting 4-8-12	Runs: 6 Wins: 0 Places: 1
14	99-793 HAPPY ROCKY (10) (TB) (CD) (G)	RESERVE 79
(14)	C Chang 9-8-7	Runs: 55 Wins: 3 Places: 9

★BETTING: 2 Dionysus Collin, 7/2 Rule Thee, 8 Cheerful Star, Fortune Patrol, 10 California Legend, 12 Full Power, Play Wise, 14 Gala Night, 16 Sangria, 20 Others



Caspar Fownes' Methane can go back-to-back at Happy Valley



12.15 TO KWA WAN HANDICAP (DIV I) (CLASS 4) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 6f 3yo plus 12 dec.

1	47778- CLASSIC POSH (87) (B ¹)	Z Purton 76
(4)	D Hall 5-9-7	Runs: 7 Wins: 0 Places: 1
2	000-05 SHANGHAI MASTER (28) (CD) (G)	C Y Ho 79
(12)	K Lui 7-9-5	Runs: 29 Wins: 2 Places: 3
3	999-76 SUMSTREETSUMWHERE (25) (HV) (C) (G)	M Chadwick 82
(7)	L Ho 6-9-2	Runs: 26 Wins: 1 Places: 2
4	8 FIRE BALL (49) (BF)	C V Wong(5) 60
(11)	C Yip 4-8-13	Runs: 1 Wins: 0 Places: 0
5	225-31 MASTER ALBERT (35) (TB) (CD) (GF,G)	K Teetan 74
(6)	W So 7-8-13	Runs: 33 Wins: 2 Places: 9
6	0 RESOLUTE (17)	C Schofield 53
(3)	A Millard 4-8-13	Runs: 1 Wins: 0 Places: 0
7	84-5 SMART OF YOUTH (42) (T)	J Moreira 73
(10)	C Shum 5-8-11	Runs: 3 Wins: 0 Places: 0
8	9-088 SACRED TIMING (17) (B)	M Poon(2) 70
(1)	J Ting 5-8-8	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0
9	191-77 AFTER ME (14) (CD) (GF,G)	G Van Niekerk 72
(5)	P Yiu 5-8-7	Runs: 25 Wins: 3 Places: 2
10	0/00-9 HAPPY WINNER (28) (H)	K Leung 67
(9)	C Chang 5-8-6	Runs: 11 Wins: 0 Places: 0
11	00-096 LOOK ERAS (28) (TB) (CD)	H T Mo(3) 82
(8)	Y Tsui 7-8-6	Runs: 42 Wins: 2 Places: 11
12	000-0 HAPPY PROJECT (21) (T)	M Yeung 59
(2)	T Yung 5-8-2	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0
13	00-05 VICTORY MASTERY (21) (E/S)	RESERVE 74
(13)	J Size 4-8-8	Runs: 14 Wins: 0 Places: 0
14	80 HAPPY TANGO (17)	RESERVE 71
(14)	D Whyte 5-8-11	Runs: 2 Wins: 0 Places: 0

★BETTING: 11/4 Smart Of Youth, 3 Classic Posh, 6 Fire Ball, Master Albert, 8 After Me, 10 Look Eras, 14 Shanghai Master, Sumstreetsumwhere, 20 Others

12.45 MA TAU KOK HANDICAP (CLASS 4) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 1m 3yo plus 12 dec.

1	341-54 FLAME LILY (28) (T) (CD) (G)	K Leung 74
(8)	F Lor 6-9-6	Runs: 23 Wins: 2 Places: 8
2	968-86 MIGHTY POWER (28)	M Yeung 75
(3)	T Yung 6-9-6	Runs: 7 Wins: 0 Places: 0
3	4578-9 ALL YOU KNOW (53) (HTB) (CD) (GF,G)	G Van Niekerk 80
(6)	Richard Gibson 6-9-5	Runs: 25 Wins: 2 Places: 5
4	344-38 ORIENTAL ELITE (28) (C) (GF,G)	N Callan 74
(9)	P O'Sullivan 7-9-5	Runs: 17 Wins: 2 Places: 4
5	00721- GREEN DISPATCH (175) (T) (CD) (G)	B Shinn 73
(5)	C Shum 8-9-4	Runs: 38 Wins: 8 Places: 6
6	57-353 CASA DE FORCA (28) (B ¹) (D,BF) (GFA)	J Moreira 79
(7)	A Cruz 5-9-3	Runs: 24 Wins: 3 Places: 5
7	57-223 STARLIT KNIGHT (21) (CD) (GF,G)	K Teetan 78
(11)	Y Tsui 8-9-2	Runs: 44 Wins: 3 Places: 7
8	90-006 TANGMERE (35) (T)	Z Purton 79
(2)	C Fownes 6-9-2	Runs: 21 Wins: 0 Places: 2
9	360-81 METHANE (28) (CD) (G)	C Schofield 77
(10)	D Ferraris 5-9-1	Runs: 5 Wins: 1 Places: 1
10	50-49 PLIKCLONE (21) (H)	M Poon(2) 80
(12)	D Hall 5-8-8	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0

1.15 TO KWA WAN HANDICAP (DIV II) (CLASS 4) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 6f 3yo plus 12 dec.

1	1350-1 SHAMPART (42) (T) (CD) (GF,G)	C Y Ho 76
(3)	C Fownes 6-9-7	Runs: 22 Wins: 2 Places: 3
2	312-23 MEHBOOB (28) (CD) (G)	Z Purton 73
(2)	P O'Sullivan 5-9-5	Runs: 10 Wins: 1 Places: 5
3	498-00 EVERBRAVE (28) (C) (G)	B Shinn 76
(8)	K Man 7-9-2	Runs: 26 Wins: 1 Places: 4
4	0 DASHING GRACE (28) (ET)	M Yeung 34
(5)	T Yung 4-9-0	Runs: 1 Wins: 0 Places: 0
5	090-56 CEREFINO (28) (T) (C) (GF)	K Teetan 77
(1)	W So 7-8-12	Runs: 19 Wins: 1 Places: 0
6	3602-2 SUPER ALLIANCES (56) (BF)	J Moreira 77
(12)	J Size 4-8-12	Runs: 5 Wins: 0 Places: 3
7	0-0 GORGEOUS INHERITOR (45)	M Poon(2) 49
(11)	C Yip 5-8-11	Runs: 2 Wins: 0 Places: 0
8	05-03 VICTORY FOR ALL (21) (B)	G Van Niekerk 75
(7)	Y Tsui 4-8-10	Runs: 9 Wins: 0 Places: 1
9	66-786 WOOD ON FIRE (21) (HP)	M Chadwick 79
(6)	L Ho 5-8-9	Runs: 6 Wins: 0 Places: 1
10	715-97 ADMINS (31) (P) (D) (G,GF)	K Leung 78
(9)	D Whyte 7-8-7	Runs: 27 Wins: 2 Places: 4
11	613-80 ISLAND WINNER (14) (TP) (C) (G)	C V Wong(5) 76
(4)	P Yiu 5-8-6	Runs: 11 Wins: 1 Places: 1
12	59-060 GRAND HARBOUR (21) (HT) (D) (ASW)	H N J Wong(3) 79
(10)	C Chang 10-8-3	Runs: 57 Wins: 3 Places: 14
13	0-459 THIS IS CHARISMA (21) (HB)	RESERVE 75
(13)	K Lui 5-8-12	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0
14	0-060 BEAUTY ANGEL (21) (T)	RESERVE 77
(14)	A Cruz 4-8-12	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0

★BETTING: 5/2 Mehboob, 7/2 Super Alliances, 11/2 Shampart, Victory For All, 12 Cerefino, Wood On Fire, 18 Everbrave, 20 Others

1.45 SAN PO KONG HANDICAP (DIV I) (CLASS 3) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 1m 3yo plus 12 dec.

1	029-00 THE HULK (37) (V ¹)	Z Purton 97
(11)	C Fownes 5-9-7	Runs: 7 Wins: 0 Places: 2
2	721-69 MAGNIFICENT (28) (CD) (G)	J Moreira 92
(2)	L Ho 5-9-5	Runs: 25 Wins: 2 Places: 7
3	045-14 SOLAR WAI WAI (21) (CD,BF) (G)	N Callan 92
(1)	F Lor 5-9-3	Runs: 13 Wins: 3 Places: 3
4	/31-70 BEAUTY HAPPY (21) (B ¹) (G,Y)	K Leung 92
(8)	John Moore 4-9-0	Runs: 6 Wins: 1 Places: 1
5	252-33 SURREALISM (21) (B ¹) (D) (GF,GS)	K Teetan 94
(12)	D Ferraris 5-8-11	Runs: 20 Wins: 3 Places: 7
6	900-04 CALIFORNIA ARGENT (31) (HT) (GS)	B Shinn 98
(4)	A Cruz 5-8-10	Runs: 16 Wins: 2 Places: 3

7	159-03 JOLLY HONOUR (28) (TB) (CD) (HY,G,GF)	G Van Niekerk 95
(3)	Y Tsui 6-8-10	Runs: 19 Wins: 3 Places: 2
8	9-409 TOTAL POWER (21)	C Y Ho 97
(5)	D Hall 5-8-8	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0
9	0-90 SUPER BULLET (25) (B ¹)	M Chadwick 90
(7)	P O'Sullivan 6-8-7	Runs: 3 Wins: 0 Places: 0
10	90-808 THE WEATHERMAN (25) (GF,GS)	K H A Chan(7) 93
(9)	D Whyte 4-8-7	Runs: 12 Wins: 3 Places: 1
11	00-839 JADE FORTUNE (21) (B) (CD) (SW,G)	M Poon(2) 98
(6)	K Man 8-8-3	Runs: 46 Wins: 5 Places: 5
12	085-90 HAPPY FORCE (25) (B) (G)	M Yeung 98
(10)	T Yung 6-8-2	Runs: 17 Wins: 3 Places: 3

★BETTING: 100/30 Magnificent, 7/2 Surrealism, 4 The Hulk, 5 Solar Wai Wai, 6 Jolly Honour, 12 Happy Force, 14 Jade Fortune, 20 Others

2.15 SAN PO KONG HANDICAP (DIV II) (CLASS 3) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 1m 3yo plus 11 dec.

1	5021-7 STAR OF YUEN LONG (59) (BF) (G)	C Y Ho 92
(2)	K Man 5-9-7	Runs: 5 Wins: 1 Places: 1
2	6550-0 BRAVE LEGEND (35) (TB) (CD) (G,GF)	K Leung 97
(6)	A Cruz 7-9-5	Runs: 30 Wins: 4 Places: 2
3	03/2-9 SOUTHERN SUPERSTAR (17)	C Schofield 93
(10)	A Millard 7-9-3	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 2
4	388-13 CHAMPION SUPREME (25) (TB) (D) (G)	N Callan 94
(7)	John Moore 5-9-2	Runs: 16 Wins: 3 Places: 4
5	719-08 XIANG BAI QI (21) (C,D) (G)	K Teetan 93
(5)	D Ferraris 6-9-0	Runs: 31 Wins: 3 Places: 5
6	72-821 FARSHAD (21) (P) (CD) (GF)	M Poon(2) 94
(9)	Y Tsui 6-8-9	Runs: 24 Wins: 3 Places: 3
7	740-27 BIG BANG BONG (21) (T) (CD) (G)	G Van Niekerk 95
(4)	C Chang 7-8-8	Runs: 57 Wins: 5 Places: 11
8	2-646 SUPER DADDY (21)	Z Purton 92
(8)	L Ho 4-8-8	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 1
9	795-86 OWNERS' STAR (14) (TB) (C) (G)	H T Mo(3) 97
(3)	C Shum 5-8-4	Runs: 21 Wins: 3 Places: 3
10	1106-1 FLASH FAMOUS (42) (TB) (CD) (G)	J Moreira 93
(1)	F Lor 6-8-3	Runs: 28 Wins: 4 Places: 2
11	85-170 STARSHIP (21) (B) (D) (GF,G)	M Chadwick 93
(11)	P O'Sullivan 8-8-3	Runs: 40 Wins: 4 Places: 4

★BETTING: 4 Farshad, Flash Famous, 5 Southern Superstar, Star Of Yuen Long, 6 Champion Supreme, 9 Superb Daddy, 12 Big Bang Bong, Xiang Bai Qi, 14 Owners' Star, 20 Others

2.50 KOWLOON CITY HANDICAP (CLASS 3) (3YO+) (COURSE B) (TURF) 6f 3yo plus 12 dec.

1	88-00 MR SO AND SO (14) (G)	C V Wong(5) 92
(1)	C Chang 6-9-7	Runs: 24 Wins: 2 Places: 5
2	121-21 THIS IS CLASS (28) (HP) (CD) (GF,G)	C Y Ho 94
(6)	K Lui 6-9-4	Runs: 9 Wins: 3 Places: 2
3	50-513 HINCHINLOVE (25) (TB) (CD) (G)	M Yeung 97
(3)	T Yung 6-9-2	Runs: 25 Wins: 2 Places: 7
4	00-08 SEVENTH SEA (28)	B Shinn 91
(7)	D Ferraris 5-9-1	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 0
5	709-04 SUPER WISE (17) (ET) (D) (G,GF)	K H A Chan(7) 96
(10)	K Man 7-8-13	Runs: 32 Wins: 3 Places: 9
6	0-624 GREEN REIGN (21) (B)	J Moreira 97
(12)	C Fownes 5-8-10	Runs: 4 Wins: 0 Places: 1
7	99-801 PING HAI GALAXY (21) (CD) (GF)	M Poon(2) 97
(9)	J Size 5-8-10	Runs: 6 Wins: 1 Places: 0
8	7231-9 FALCON TURBO (37) (B) (CD) (G)	K Teetan 99
(5)	D Whyte 6-8-9	Runs: 23 Wins: 2 Places: 5
9	49-333 BEAUTY SPARK (21) (TB)	Z Purton 95
(4)	F Lor 5-8-8	Runs: 7 Wins: 0 Places: 3
10	1807-1 TAKINGUFURTHER (21) (HV) (CD) (G,GF)	G Van Niekerk 96
(11)	J Ting 6-8-5	Runs: 8 Wins: 2 Places: 1
11	174-07 VERY RICH MAN (28) (HT) (CD) (G,GF)	H T Mo(3) 95
(8)	L Ho 8-8-4	Runs: 33 Wins: 4 Places: 7
12	26-598 STARLIGHT (28) (CD) (G,G,Y)	M Chadwick 99
(2)	C Yip 8-8-3	Runs: 50 Wins: 7 Places: 10
13	2840-0 FIRST RESPONDER (31) (T)	RESERVE 99
(13)	John Moore 4-8-8	Runs: 15 Wins: 0 Places: 4
14	900-69 ELIGER (17) (B)	RESERVE 91
(14)	Y Tsui 5-8-5	Runs: 5 Wins: 0 Places: 0

★BETTING: 2 This Is Class, 7/2 Takingufurther, 5 Beauty Spark, 8 Green Reign, 9 Hinchinlove, 10 Ping Hai Galaxy, 12 Falcon Turbo, 16 Starlight, 20 Others

PRIME EXAMPLE

What does the success of Amazon's Premier League experiment mean for football rights? By **Felix Keith**



AMAZON broadcast its first live football matches in December, showing 20 Premier League games to subscribers on its Prime Video platform.

The decision to make a first foray into the sector was a brave, albeit relatively small, one for the US retail giant. Now that the dust has settled, it looks increasingly like an intelligent one too.

Figures released by Britain's television ratings body the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board showed that Amazon Prime Video subscriber numbers increased by 35 per cent year-on-year in the fourth quarter of 2019, to 7.14m homes. Overall, 1.86m new subscribers signed up last year.

Amazon's Premier League offering was the key to providing the company's best year for subscribers since launching Prime Video in 2014. With a solid precedent established and two more rounds of fixtures left in their package, they will be confident of snaring an even larger audience.

"It's the first time in the UK we've seen a major sport on an over-the-top media service and the delivery of it was near-perfect," Minal Modha, consumer research lead at Ampere Analysis, told *City A.M.*

"Amazon were able to deal with the simultaneous streams and provided an experience which was pretty seamless."

Lewis Wiltshire, a consulting partner at digital sports agency Seven League, agrees.

"It was a really smart move by Amazon to dip a toe into the water with two matchdays and with both of them around Christmas when Prime members are likely to be active," he told *City A.M.* "Prime membership is now one of the most prominent bundles in the media industry."

FACEBOOK NEXT?

That Amazon's move has proven to be a short-term success is fairly obvious, but what it means for the future of Premier League broadcasting is open to interpretation.

Amazon has shown that with the right game-plan, funding and infrastructure, it is possible to muscle in on Sky and BT's stranglehold on English football and get a piece of the most popular and profitable pie in sports broadcasting.

DAZN, the subscription-based streaming platform and self-styled

"Netflix of sports", is seen as another possible bidder. It is due to launch in the UK in May as part of a major global expansion, having spent big to establish itself in nine countries already.

Before Amazon snapped up its package in the last rights tender process, rumours swirled that fellow media giants Apple, Google, Facebook and Netflix could bid. Now that Amazon has taken the plunge, might others reconsider when the next rights packages for 2022-25 go up for sale?

"Not necessarily," said Wiltshire. "Netflix seems pretty clear in its path on sports - it will have major sports documentaries but not premium live rights. Facebook and Google, via YouTube, have both ex-

perimented with live sport but neither seems poised to make the kind of splash Amazon did with the Premier League rights. Would it make sense for Apple TV+? Maybe, in time. That's one to watch."

Facebook is streaming two otherwise unavailable FA Cup fifth-round ties this week, last night's match between Reading and Sheffield United and this evening's fixture between Leicester and Birmingham.

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER

While Amazon's major competitors might be holding fire for the time being, there is another potential player in the market.

The Premier League could cut out the middleman and sell subscriptions directly to consumers via its own streaming service, a prospect already floated by new chief executive Richard Masters.

"I'm not saying it will happen in the next cycle, or when it will happen, but eventually the Premier League will move to a mix of direct-to-consumer and media rights sales," he said last month.

However, like other companies they are in no rush, with broadcast rights still selling like hot cakes.

Although the value of Premier League rights in the UK market dipped slightly in the last sales process, overseas rights for the three-year cycle between 2019 and 2022 rose by 35 per cent to £4.35bn.

Modha says the Premier League could use a direct-to-consumer - or over-the-top (OTT) - service in markets where rights are not selling well, but that scenario is not yet a worry.

"Recent TV deals such as the one with the Nordic Entertainment Group in Scandinavia [worth £2bn over six years, a 20 per cent increase in value] highlights the appetite for TV rights from third parties in a lot of their key markets," she said.

"If they're able to sell the rights at these high values, it would be unlikely that they would want to risk this guaranteed revenue by launching their own service."

Wiltshire added: "The Premier League, and every other major rights-holder, will want to keep OTT as an option, either to replace or augment TV deals."

The bottom line for now is that, while Amazon has shown that streaming services are a viable option, they are not one that any of the other major media players need to take just yet.

SUBSCRIPTIONS STILL ON THE RISE

MAJORITY SIGNED UP

More than half of UK homes - almost 14.3m - now hold a subscription to one of Netflix, Prime Video or Now TV.

DOUBLING SERVICES

A fifth of UK homes - some six million - now subscribe to two or more subscription video-on-demand services.

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FOOTBALL COMMENT

Trevor Steven



AT WEMBLEY on Sunday, Phil Foden gave us all a reminder of his talent and maturity with a man-of-the-match performance as Manchester City beat Aston Villa in the final of the Carabao Cup.

The way he addresses the ball; his balance and awareness; his understanding of the way City want to play; that extra finesse that left-footed players have; in short, Foden is outstanding. You just want to watch the 19-year-old, and I believe we'll be seeing a lot more of him for City and England in the coming months.

Foden's display at the weekend will have come as no surprise to his club coach. Managing a youngster's development can be a puzzle and Pep Guardiola deserves huge credit for his handling of this one.

The player could have become frustrated at being used sparingly – he has started 21 games this season and last, mostly in the cups – especially as Jadon Sancho has flourished since leaving for Germany in search of regular first-team action.

But Guardiola has kept Foden involved and convinced him that, at 18 or 19, he doesn't need to play every game, especially in the Premier League, where the physicality poses a greater risk of injury.

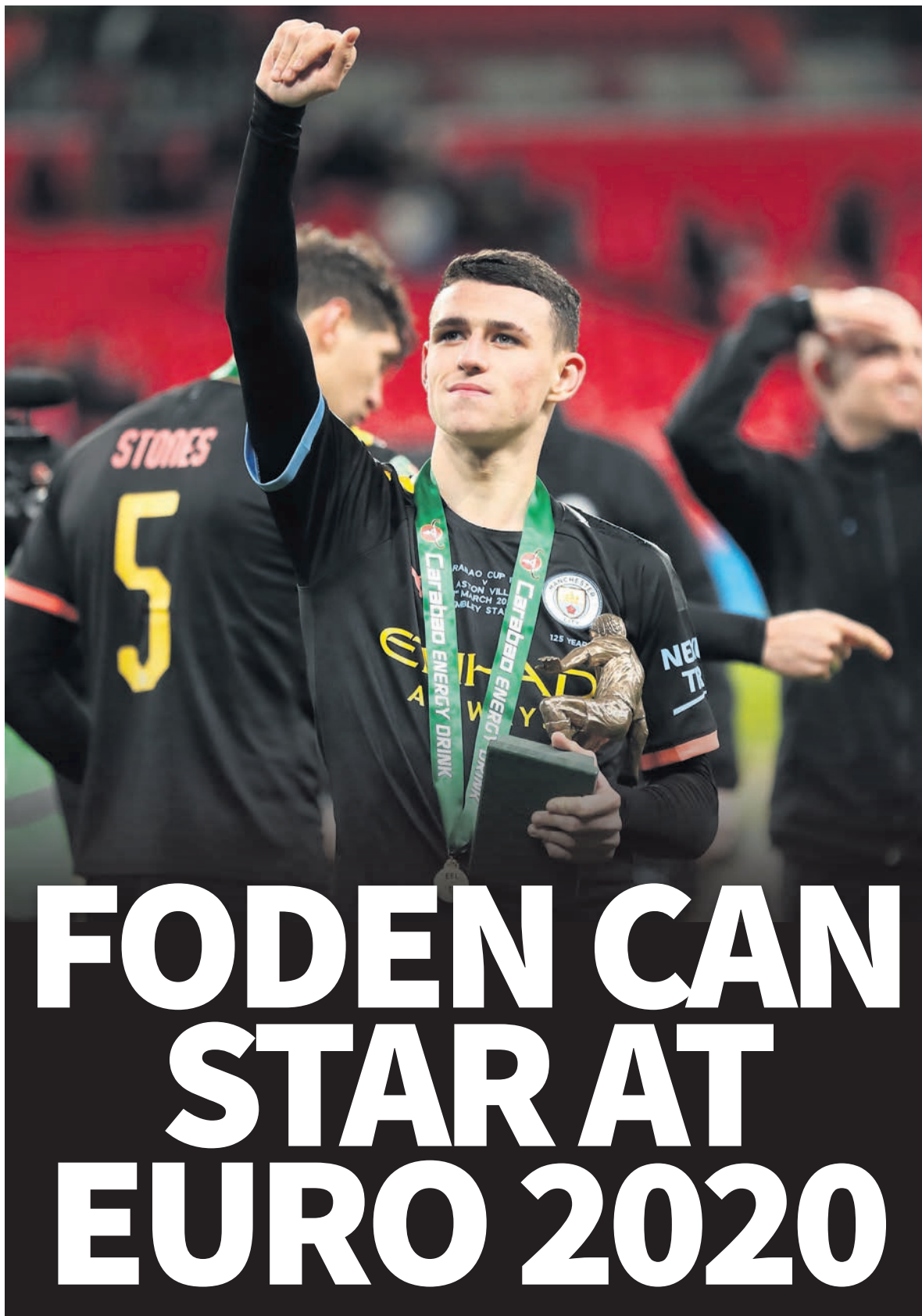
Of course, there has been some pragmatism on Pep's part to playing more senior players ahead of Foden. But that's also a reflection of the competition he faces, and Guardiola will be challenging Foden to refine and fine-tune his game like David Silva and Bernardo Silva have.

APPRENTICESHIP

Now is the time for Foden to take the next step. He has served his apprenticeship, gone through a learning period and is ready for elevation by club and country.

David Silva's departure from City in the summer is a natural opportunity for Foden to be promoted. He will be tasked with emulating Silva at his peak; that is the level the club require.

Fitness permitting, Foden simply has to become a regular starter in the league next season. I'll eat my hat if he doesn't. This isn't some run-of-the-



FODEN CAN STAR AT EURO 2020

mill player – he is exceptional.

Foden's promotion for England could come sooner. Although he isn't 20 until May, he has accumulated enough experience – 26 appearances last season, 25 already this term – to be considered ready.

He is used to training with the best technical team in the country on a daily basis and, as a key figure in the Under-17s' World Cup win three years ago, he knows the national set-up inside out.

Although he seems quiet, that is no barrier to making his mark at senior level. A lot of footballers are introverts off the field who express their personalities when they play the game.

MESSI ROLE

Foden's qualities make him suited to more than one role. He can play as a left-footed winger coming in off the right, as he did against Villa and as is fashionable, or as a No10.

Good decision-making is what



I'll eat my hat if he isn't a regular league starter for City next year. Foden isn't a run of the mill player, he's exceptional

marks out the great players, and he has that. It's difficult to make comparisons but he could become the player that Jack Wilshere never did.

Foden is also excellent in small spaces. Both of the Silvas excel at that but the best in the business is Lionel Messi. I'm not saying Foden will get to that level, but he can have that role.

England certainly have a vacancy for a creative midfielder who can unlock defences and, with James Maddison off the boil and Ross Barkley not playing regularly, I see a chance for Foden.

I'd have no qualms about starting him for England and I would be more surprised if Foden wasn't part of Gareth Southgate's Euro 2020 squad and dazzling at Wembley again this summer.

*Trevor Steven is a former England footballer who played at two World Cups and two European Championships.
@TrevorSteven63*

Rehabilitated Villas-Boas comes in from cold at Marseille

Former Spurs and Chelsea manager is thriving in south of France, writes **Michael Searles**

IT SEEMED to be a case of too much too soon for Andre Villas-Boas when his time in English football ended in ridicule and his rapid rise to the top, aged just 33, overwhelmed him.

The Portuguese had been hailed as the new Jose Mourinho when he arrived at Chelsea in the summer of 2011 following an exceptional treble-winning campaign with Porto.

Nine years on from that appointment – and several clubs

later – Villas-Boas, now 42, is still trying to piece his reputation back together, now with Olympique Marseille.

The beginnings of his rollercoaster career, as a 16-year-old junior scout for then Porto manager Sir Bobby Robson, who lived in the same apartment block, are well documented.

He rose through the ranks and began coaching under the tutelage of Mourinho, who he followed as an assistant to Chelsea and Inter Milan before embarking on a managerial career of his own.

Immediate success in his homeland with Academica and then Porto saw Chelsea swoop in despite his just two years of experience. And

then everything fell apart.

Sacked after only eight months when a stuttering Chelsea lost the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie with Napoli, he then had to watch as assistant Roberto di Matteo steered the club to

European glory.

Undeterred, Tottenham took a punt on him, but he was unable to lead

Villas-Boas is on course to deliver Marseille's best finish for seven years

them into the top four and was replaced after 18 months.

His reputation in tatters, Villas-Boas sought refuge in Russia where he won the league and cup with Zenit St Petersburg between 2014 and 2016, before a year with

Shanghai SIPG in the Chinese Super League.

TOO AMBITIOUS

An almost two-year hiatus followed, during which he fulfilled a long-held ambition to compete in the Dakar Rally, before he returned to management last summer with Marseille.

The Ligue 1 side, too, have endured a turbulent time since Paris Saint-Germain's big-spending reign began in 2012.

At the start of his tenure Villas-Boas targeted a "podium" and, although they sit 13 points behind runaway leaders PSG, they are eight points clear of third-placed Rennes, leaving the club on course for their highest finish in seven years.

Key to his success has been nurturing Marseille's younger talents, such as defenders Boubacar

Kamara and Duje Caleta-Car and midfielder Valentin Rongier, while also getting the best from the experienced heads of goalkeeper Steve Mandanda and talisman Dmitri Payet.

Toppling PSG looks to be a step too far, but finishing second behind Ligue 1's Qatar-bankrolled superpower is almost a prize in itself, and would see France's most decorated club return to the Champions League next season.

Villas-Boas said upon taking his current job that he had been "too ambitious" early on in his career, perhaps recognising the importance of man management as well as tactics. He has always shown a talent for coaching but, now equipped with a decade's worth of experience, Villas-Boas appears ready to complete his redemption and return to the biggest stage.



SPORT



PRIME EXAMPLE

What does Amazon's success mean for football on TV? **PAGE 26**

IT WAS teed up to be the tie of the round and it did not fail to deliver as Chelsea ended Liverpool's dreams of a treble. Goals in each half from Willian and Ross Barkley of drastically differing quality were the difference as Liverpool crashed out of the FA Cup in the fifth round at Stamford Bridge.

Jurgen Klopp's side have lost three of their last four matches to nil and it is surely no coincidence that captain Jordan Henderson has been absent in both the 3-0 defeat to Watford on Saturday as well as last night's.

Once again, there were signs that the relentless run Liverpool have been on over the past 18 months has caused fatigue as mistakes crept in at both ends of the pitch.

The defensive frailties in particular were reminiscent of the team in Klopp's early days as Chelsea repeatedly threatened, while a mistake early on from goalkeeper Adrian gifted Frank Lampard's team the initiative.

TALE OF TWO KEEPERS

It came about during a hectic, end-to-end opening 20 minutes. Adrian looked shaky as he parried a shot from Barkley, which fizzed off of his gloves, but appeared to settle any nerves moments later with a tremendous save from Willian.

However, as he attempted to play out from the back, Chelsea's high press forced Fabinho into a mistake and Willian had another effort from the edge of the box, and this time Adrian palmed it into the corner of his goal.

Both goalkeepers, for different reasons, had points to prove, but when the under-fire Kepa Arrizabalaga was called into action less than 10 minutes later, he made a fantastic treble save. After saving a close-range effort from Sadio Mane he kept his concentration to stop follow-up shots from Divick Origi and Curtis Jones.

Although not his most testing match, a clean sheet will do no harm in his battle to regain the No1 jersey.

CHELSEA'S BLUEPRINT

Chelsea continually looked to get in behind the Liverpool defence, often playing balls over the top for the wingers or up to Olivier Giroud, who proved a handful for defenders Joe Gomez and Virgil van Dijk.

It looked as though they had taken a leaf out of Watford's book on how to beat the Reds and Giroud, in similar vein to Troy Deeney, caused problems for the centre-backs as he brought others into play. His hold-up play opened up space for Willian, Pedro, Mason Mount and Barkley, all of whom had opportunities to score.

It was Barkley (pictured) who made it 2-0, however, after 64 minutes, with a charging run from deep into the opposition's half.



REDS OVERRUN

Liverpool's poor form continues as Lampard's FA Cup calls pay off in some style, writes **Michael Searles**

FA CUP

CHELSEA LIVERPOOL

2 0

Willian 13
Barkley 64

The England international ran directly at goal and, as Gomez backed off, unleashed a fierce strike into the bottom corner past Adrian to book Chelsea's place in the FA Cup quarter-finals and put himself firmly back on Gareth Southgate's radar ahead of this month's internationals.

HAPPY GILMOUR

A number of promising youngsters were given the opportunity to impress including, Liverpool's Jones and Neco

Williams, but it was Chelsea's Billy Gilmour who stole the show.

The 18-year-old started the match in place of Jorginho and with the maturity and composure he demonstrated on the ball it was difficult to tell the difference. Gilmour sat in front of the back four and collected the ball under pressure before looking forward and always keeping possession.

Unlike Jorginho, he also showed his ability to run with the ball and glided past challenges, while also showing

he wasn't afraid to get stuck in with a few firm but fair sliding tackles.

Perhaps even more impressive was the awareness he showed to track Mane's run midway through the first-half as the Liverpool forward was played in on goal.

The young Scot kept goalside to claim the ball on the edge of his six-yard box and managed to keep possession in what was an all-round excellent performance on a memorable night for Chelsea.

ALMIRON HELPS MAGPIES TO FA CUP WIN OVER WEST BROM

Newcastle reached the quarter-finals of the FA Cup for the first time since 2006 with a 3-2 win over Championship leaders West Bromwich Albion last night. Steve Bruce's side raced into a 3-0 lead at the Hawthorns as Miguel Almiron scored twice in the first half before Valentino Lazaro bundled in a third from Allan Saint-Maximin's cross. Matt Phillips fired in to make it 3-1 and Kenneth Zohore netted in injury-time, but it wasn't enough. Elsewhere, Billy Sharp's goal in extra-time sent Sheffield United through to the next round with a 2-1 win over Reading. David McGoldrick's header was cancelled out by George Puscas' penalty, but Sharp's 106th-minute header won it.

SPORT DIGEST

ENGLAND TO FACE FAMILIAR FOES IN THE NATIONS LEAGUE

England have been drawn against Belgium, Denmark and Iceland in League A of the 2020-2021 Uefa Nations League. Gareth Southgate's side will face world No1 side Belgium, who beat them twice at the 2018 World Cup, in September this year, with the finals scheduled for the summer of 2021. Wales will face the Republic of Ireland, Finland and Bulgaria in League B, while Northern Ireland are grouped with Austria, Norway and Romania in the same league. Scotland will play the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Israel in League B.

HUNDRED TO GIVE MEN AND WOMEN EQUAL PRIZE MONEY

The Hundred will offer the winner of the men's and women's competitions equal prize money when it launches this summer. The England and Wales Cricket Board's new 100-ball tournament, which will run between 17 July and 15 August and feature eight city-based sides, has committed to splitting the £600,000 pot equally between genders. "We're really proud of our movement towards making cricket a gender-balanced sport and whilst we're aware there is more to do in this space, this is an important step in the right direction," said Beth Barrett-Wild, head of the women's competition. "It's recognition for the women's players and the huge value they bring."

CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTION RULES VUNIPOLA OUT

England prop Mako Vunipola is no longer available to face Wales in the Six Nations on Saturday after going into self-isolation as a coronavirus precaution. Vunipola was due to meet up with Eddie Jones's 34-man squad on Monday, but has been kept from training because he travelled through Hong Kong on the way back from visiting Tonga. "Mako is not in camp on medical grounds," said a Rugby Football Union spokesperson. "He is not sick but it is a precaution." Vunipola flew to Tonga for family reasons and missed England's 24-12 win over Ireland on 23 February. The virus is prevalent in Hong Kong and travellers are advised to self-isolate for 14 days to avoid spreading it.

RAIN THREATENS TO RUIN T20 WORLD-CUP FOR ENGLAND

England could be knocked out of the Women's T20 World Cup semi-finals by the weather on Thursday. England are due to face India in the last four of the competition in Sydney at 4am UK time. But with Tropical Storm Esther expected to bring heavy rain they might not get the opportunity to reach the final. There is no reserve day scheduled in the event of a wash-out, meaning England would be knocked out if no game goes ahead because they finished second in Group B, while India topped Group A. Rain is threatening both semi-finals, with hosts and defending champions Australia playing Group B winners South Africa after England's game at the SCG.