Fresh fears of freight ferry farce as no-deal Brexit puts contracts in spotlight

Alexandra Rogers

A NEW £300m plan to acquire additional freight services in the event of a no-deal Brexit risks descending into chaos because of the government’s pledge to leave the EU on 31 October.

Fears have been raised that the government could be forced into another high-risk freight procurement process because of Boris Johnson’s commitment to leave the EU “come what may, do or die” at the end of October.

Earlier this week the government published a new £300m framework of ferry, rail and aircraft providers to carry critical supplies such as food and medicine in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

The Department for Transport (DfT) now has just 14 weeks to build a panel of providers in time for the deadline – five weeks less than when it embarked on its original no-deal ferry plans, which were described as “rushed and risky” by the parliamentary watchdog last month.

However, in order to call on the quickfire shortlist of bidders, the DfT needs to allow time for any legal challenges by those who approaches or just bad luck could prevent the DfT from entering into any automatic suspension which prevents the DfT from entering into any agreement, creating the chance for delays and cancellations of cross-Channel freight on the first day of a no-deal Brexit.

Andrew Dean, director of public law at Clifford Chance, told City A.M.: “Disgruntled bidders, internal approvals or just bad luck could block the DfT from entering into the framework agreement for months, leaving the UK without the necessary freight capacity support on day one of a no-deal Brexit.”

CONTINUES ON P2
**The City View**

Buoyant Next shows retailers how it’s done

Investors exposed to the troubled sector of retail property were dealt a fresh blow during trading yesterday. Shopping centre landlord Intu led the market fallers after it cancelled its dividend and posted mounting losses, wiping 32 per cent off of an already-battered share price. Although Intu’s downward spiral yesterday underlined a year to forget for many retail landlords, its boss was at least optimistic about one thing: bricks-and-mortar stores are “not dead yet,” proclaimed chief executive Matthew Roberts.

While retail real estate stocks tumbled by the close of trading, one fashion tenant was certainly proving that point. Clothing group Next’s share price closed up at its highest price in almost exactly 12 months – capping off a year in which the fashion firm has thrived amid some of the most-miserable conditions ever seen on the UK high street. A surprise four per cent rise in full-price sales was reported by the chain, despite it facing challenging comparisons from the blistering summer weather last year. Shareholders and analysts cheered a hike in the full-year profit guidance by £10m to £725m.

As Shore Capital noted, “there are few retailers with upwards momentum in guidance”, but Next appears to be one of them. Online sales are looking healthy, and the rate of decline in its physical shops was not as drastic as some experts had been forecasting.

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Irish central bank warns no-deal Brexit would see growth plummet

HARRY ROBERTSON

THE CENTRAL Bank of Ireland yesterday warned that a no-deal Brexit could shatter the country’s economic growth and cost its economy €34,000 jobs.

In its quarterly bulletin the Bank said growth in a no-deal scenario would be just 0.7 per cent in 2020, compared to 4.1 per cent if Brexit did not happen.

“As a result,” it said, “by the end of 2020 our estimates suggest that there would be around 34,000 fewer jobs in the economy compared to the level of employment that could be realised in a no-Brexit scenario.”

The Bank said there would be “heightened stress in financial markets” and “disruption at ports and airports as border infrastructure is unable to cope with the new customs requirements”.

“Exports would fall due to an immediate and large reduction in demand from the UK.”

The warning comes as new Prime Minister Boris Johnson ramps up preparation for a no-deal Brexit in an attempt to force the European Union back to the negotiation table by scaring them with the prospect.

Yesterday Johnson told Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar on a phone call that Britain will leave the EU on 31 October “no matter what”.

A Number 10 spokesperson said Johnson’s “clear preference is to leave the EU with a deal, but it must be one that abolishes the backstop”.

BA loses bid to block strikes by pilots over pay

ALEX DANIEL

BRITISH Airways has lost its bid to stop pilots from striking later this summer over a pay dispute, in a result which could spell chaos for British holidaymakers.

The airline has been in talks with pilots union British Airline Pilots’ Association (Balpa) in an attempt to keep them from striking over the summer months. After pilots voted to strike after rejecting a pay increase of 11.5 per cent over three years, BA took the case to the High Court last month.

After that was dismissed, the airline attempted to appeal against the decision. The Court of Appeal yesterday rejected the appeal.

The airline has said the pay rise is “fair and generous”. BA pilots will join Heathrow and Gatwick airport staff in striking this summer. Ryanair pilots are also in the process of deciding whether or not to go on strike.

Balpa chief executive Brian Stratton described British Airways’ actions as an attempt to “injunct this industrial action on a technicality.”

“BA’s attempt to defeat the democratic view of their pilots in court, rather than deal with us across the negotiating table, has sadly wasted huge amounts of time and money that could have been put into finding a peaceful resolution.”

“A British Airways spokesperson said: “We are disappointed that the pilots’ union, Balpa, has chosen to threaten industrial action and protect our customers’ travel plans,” said the airline.

Ryanair warns of fresh job losses amid Boeing and political woes

ALEXANDRA ROGERS

RYANAIR boss Michael O’Leary has blasted Boeing for the grounding of the 737 Max aircraft, in a video sent to workers and customers yesterday. A British Airways spokesperson said: “We are disappointed that the pilots’ union, Balpa, has chosen to threaten industrial action and protect our customers’ travel plans,” said the airline.

Ryanair boss Michael O’Leary has warned staff that hundreds of jobs could be lost as the airline reels from a decline in earnings and the grounding of the Boeing 737 Max aircraft.

In a video sent to workers and seen by Bloomberg, the airline chief executive told staff that Ryanair needs 900 fewer pilots and cabin crew than initially planned due to the airline’s poor financial performance and the continued grounding of the Boeing 737, which has hurt its growth and cut flight numbers.

“We over the next couple of weeks will be doing our very best to minimise job losses, but some are unavoidable at this time,” O’Leary said.

Last week, O’Leary warned he could not rule out job losses if the jet remains grounded for longer than expected.

He slammed Boeing over the controversy, saying his airline could have no Boeing 737 Max jets available next year unless the aircraft manufacturer “gets its sht together”.

Mark Carney on climate change: Capitalism is part of the solution

SEBASTIAN MCCARTHY

BANK OF England governor Mark Carney has swung to the defence of capitalism over its role in tackling climate change, saying that the financial system is “part of the solution” in dealing with current environmental challenges.

The head of Britain’s central bank said last night that “capitalism is part of the solution and part of what we need to do”, adding that “there will be great fortunes” for companies involved in helping tackle global warming.

In an interview with Channel 4, Carney insisted that “the most important thing is to move capital from where it is today to where it needs to be tomorrow. The system is very much part of the solution.”

Carney has been calling on the City’s financial giants to throw their weight behind climate initiatives.

His comments come after recent anti-capitalist protests in the Square Mile, placards targeted financial firms and criticised them for not playing a large enough role in tackling climate change.

In his interview Carney also said that companies in the City have also had to look at how exposed they were to fossil fuels.
Labour would be ‘off our rockers’ not to back Remain, MP warns

Javid to splurge £2.1bn on plans for EU divorce

Javid said: “With 92 days until the UK leaves the European Union it’s vital that we intensify our planning to ensure we are ready. “If we can’t get a good deal, we’ll have to leave without one. This additional £2.1bn will ensure we are ready to leave on 31 October, deal or no deal.”

Reports of an emergency Budget containing further measures to cope with the fallout from a no-deal Brexit were criticised by the head of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) think tank yesterday. Paul Johnson said it would “seem particularly perverse to make a whole lot of economic choices just before we know what sort of Brexit we’ll have”.

The money announced yesterday doubles the amount of no-deal funding for this year. It takes the total made available for EU exit preparations to £6.3bn. Over £400m will be spent on ensuring Britons have the medicines they need post-Brexit, “including through freight capacity, warehousing and stockpiling”. Although Johnson has said he wants a deal, he has argued that the EU is most likely to come back to the table if it believes Britain will walk away.

The money will be spent on border customs operations, critical medical supplies and a public information campaign.

BRITAIN’s new chancellor Sajid Javid has announced an extra £2.1bn of funding to “turbocharge” preparations for a no-deal Brexit, including money to ensure we “continue the vertical of vital medicines”.

From the money, £1bn will be provided to departments and devolved administrations immediately, while £2bn will be made available “should it be needed”, the Treasury said.

The extra funding comes as part of Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s strategy to make no-deal planning his government’s number one priority.

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Intu share price crashes amid wider losses as it warns of ‘no quick fixes’

Joe Curtis
@joe_c_curtis
INTU’s shares plummeted yesterday as it cancelled its dividend and fell to an almost £900m loss for the first six months of 2019. The retail landlord admitted there were “no quick fixes” as it blamed the wider retail collapse for its property woes.

Instead it embarked on a five-year turnaround strategy as new chief executive Matthew Roberts admitted the property developer requires “radical transformation.”

Intu sank to a loss before tax of £896m, almost double the £486m losses it racked up in the same period in 2018. Shares fell nearly 32 per cent. Revenue fell marginally from £322.1m last year to £315m for its latest half-year, as net rental income fell 18 per cent to £205.2m and like-for-like net rental income dropped 7.7 per cent.

Net debt dropped slightly to £4.7bn as Intu paid down its huge debt pile with £153m from the sale of its Derby shopping centre.

Investors will receive no interim dividend, compared to one of 4.6p per share for its 2018 half-year.

Matthew Roberts, chief executive, said: “These challenges, facing Intu and the whole sector, have been well-documented and, while there are no quick fixes, I am confident that we can address them head on. Over the past nine months we have carried out the most comprehensive review that Intu has ever undertaken.”

IN A SPIN Aston Martin swings into the red as shares skid to a fresh low

James Warrington
@j_w_warrington
SHARES in Aston Martin slumped 15 per cent on Wednesday after the luxury car maker announced it had lost £78.3m, blaming a slowing global market and tumbling UK and European sales.

Aston Martin is still reeling from a profit warning which slashed its market value in half.

Investors will receive no interim dividend, compared to one of 4.6p per share for its 2018 half-year.

The London-headquartered car maker is still reeling from a profit warning which slashed its market value in half.

The gloomy figures mark a continuation of a tough period for the asset manager which has suffered a spate of client withdrawals since it was formed through a merger in 2016.

Total assets under management ticked up one per cent over the period to just under $160bn due to positive market movements.

Net profit increased to $109.4m in the second quarter compared to the first three months of the year. However, this was a sharp drop from the $140.6m posted over the same period last year.

“Overall, we are seeing improving trends across many areas of our business, but the current concentration of outflows is masking much of this progress,” said chief executive Dick Weil.

It said it completed $75m of share buybacks over the quarter.

Next bucks high street gloom as sales roar ahead

Jess Clark
@jclarkjourno
HIGH street retailer Next announced yesterday it expects to make more profit this year than previously forecast after a boost in full price sales, bucking the trend reported by competitors.

Shares in the company rose eight per cent as it increased its full-year profit guidance by £10m to £725m, a boost to the takeover app.

The decline in discounted sales is “radical transformation.”

Intu saw profit fall dramatically in the first half of the year due to investment in its delivery platform. However, revenue was up as more customers signed up to the takeaway app.

Like-for-like sales increased 2.8 per cent in the 10 weeks to 27 July

Food orders bring out summer sunshine at Mitchells & Butlers

Jessa Clarrk
@jclarkjourno
Toby Carvery owner Mitchells & Butlers reported in a trading update yesterday that strong food sales have boosted the pub company’s performance this summer.

The company, which also owns the O’Neill’s pub chains, said like-for-like sales increased 2.8 per cent in the 10 weeks to 27 July, driven by a 5.4 per cent increase in food sales.

Drink sales dipped 0.3 per cent in the period compared with last year’s sales during the football World Cup and UK heatwave. Sales of drinks were up 3.9 per cent in the 43 weeks to 27 July.

Mitchells & Butlers chief executive Phil Urban said: “We are pleased with sales performance which remains convincingly ahead of the market.

“Whilst growth across the market during the early weeks of the period reflected the World Cup and sunny weather last year, we are encouraged by how growth has strengthened in recent weeks.”

Investment swallows Just Eat profit amid boost in customer numbers

Jess Clark
@jclarkjourno
JUST Eat saw profit fall dramatically in the first half of the year due to investment in its delivery platform. However, revenue was up as more customers signed up to the takeaway app.

Profit before tax plunged 98 per cent to £800,000. Revenue was up 30 per cent from £358.3m to £464.5m as orders increased 21 per cent to 123.8m. In total, 2m net new customers joined the platform in the first half of the year.

The company invested £73.2m in Brazilian joint venture partner iFood and its own delivery services during the first half.

Interim chief executive Peter Duffy said the firm had been “working at pace” to become the preferred food delivery app against strong competition. The results followed the company announced it had agreed terms for a £9bn merger with Dutch platform Takeaway.

Takeaway’s chief executive, Jitse Groen, will become chief executive of the group, with Just Eat chair Mike Evans taking the role of chairman of the supervisory board and Takeaway chairman Adriaan Nuhn acting as vice-chairman.
Credit Suisse back on track as profit soars despite challenging backdrop

JAMES WARRINGTON
@j_a_warrington
CREDIT Suisse has said it is on track to meet its full-year target after posting its strongest quarterly results in four years. The bank reported pre-tax profit of SFr 1.3bn (£1.1bn) in the second quarter, up 24 per cent on the previous year. Net profit attributed to shareholders soared 45 per cent to SFr 937m.

Credit Suisse said the figures marked a recovery from the first quarter, when pre-tax profit rose just one per cent amid tough trading for its investment banking division. Return on tangible equity, which measures profit as a percentage of shareholders’ funds minus intangible assets such as goodwill, hit 10 per cent for the first time since the fourth quarter 2015. “We have been explicit that we wanted to be a leading wealth manager with strong investment banking capabilities, and we have continued to make progress on both of these fronts,” said chief executive Tidjane Thiam (pictured, right).

“These results, delivered in a challenging environment, indicate that our bank has emerged from three years of restructuring with a strong franchise and an efficient platform, allowing us to support our clients and generate growing returns for our shareholders.” Credit Suisse reported “healthy” levels of client engagement so far in the third quarter.

Lloyds misses target as payout dents earnings

JAMES BOOTH
@jamesbooth1
LLOYDS Banking Group undershot analyst profit expectations for the first half of 2019, with a £650m provision for payment protection insurance (PPI) payouts weighing heavily on its earnings yesterday. The bank posted pre-tax profit of £2.9bn, earnings yesterday.

As a result of the charges, the bank said it expects capital build to be at the lower end of its 170-200 basis points range and for return on tangible equity to be around 12 per cent. The bank’s chief executive Antonio Horta-Osorio said business confidence had suffered from recent economic uncertainty, while companies’ investment and employment intentions both declined. Richard Hunter, head of markets at Interactive Investor, called the results “forgettable, even if Lloyds itself is for the moment content with plotting a stable course”. Shares fell 3.2 per cent yesterday.

Credit Suisse posted its strongest quarterly results since 2015

Revolut goes live with zero-fee stock trades

EMILY NICOLLE
@emilynicolle
DIGITAL bank Revolut has today launched a commission-free stock trading service, more than a year after it was first announced. The fintech unicorn will present a fresh rival to London startup Freetrade, in addition to larger services such as IG and eToro.

Enabled via a partnership with UK-based Drivewealth, premium Revolut users in the European Economic Area will be able to make up to eight instant fee-free trades in over selected 300 New York-listed stocks per month, while standard users will be limited to three trades following an initial rollout period. The fintech unicorn said it will add more stocks over time, as well as expand its offering to include companies listed in the UK and EU. Revolut will also offer trading in fractional shares, which allows users to access more expensive stocks by buying parts of a share.

Planned features for the service also include exchange traded funds and bonds, and Shares ISA, the startup said.
JESS CLARK @jclarkjourno

SHARES in housebuilder Taylor Wimpey fell more than six per cent yesterday as the company reported a drop in profit due to higher costs.

Profit before tax and exceptional items fell 9.4 per cent in the first half of 2019 to £299.8m from £331m in the same period last year.

In the first half of the year, build cost per unit was £152,500, up from £143,700.

"There continues to be pressure on labour and materials, reflecting wider industry trends," the company said in its half-year results announcement.

Taylor Wimpey said the housing market was generally stable and showed robust demand. But trading in south-east England was "more challenging" at higher price points.

The company said the uncertainty caused by the UK’s exit from the EU had not sparked any change in customer confidence or sentiment.

In the six months to 30 June, revenue rose slightly from £1.72bn to £1.73bn. Earnings per share fell 9.8 per cent from 8.2p to 7.4p and net cash dropped 25.3 per cent from £325.1m to £242m.

Taylor Wimpey chief executive Pete Redfern said the firm had made good progress in the first half, adding: "We delivered a record sales rate in the first half as we saw strong customer demand for our homes in a stable market and the success of our strategy to build more homes on our larger sites coming through more quickly than anticipated."

Redfern added that the company’s full-year results were expected to be in line with forecasts.

Funeral firm Dignity suspends dividend after slump in deaths

JAMES BOOTH @jamesbooth1

FUNERAL firm Dignity suspended its dividend yesterday as a fall in the number of deaths hit its results.

In the six months to 28 June revenue fell 12 per cent to £153.3m against the same period last year. Operating profit nearly halved, falling 46 per cent to £28m, with basic earnings per share dropping 63 per cent to 23p.

Dignity said it was temporarily suspending its dividend until “the current uncertain competitive environment becomes clearer”. Its shares fell more than 12 per cent.

The Competition and Markets Authority is currently probing the sector on concerns of rising prices and a lack of competition.

Mike McCollum, chief executive of Dignity, said: “We remain confident that the changes we are introducing will generate sustainable growth.”

The number of deaths in the first half was 300,000, down seven per cent on the same period last year.

OFF THE SHELF Majestic Wine seeks final offers for merchant arm Lay & Wheeler

MAJESTIC Wine has reportedly asked bankers to find final offers for its fine wine group Lay & Wheeler by the end of August, as it refocuses on its Naked Wines operations. According to Sky News, one insider said that Lay & Wheeler was likely to change hands for about £10m, having been acquired by Majestic in 2009.

Travis Perkins to demerge retailer Wickes to focus on trade customers

JESS CLARK

TRAVIS Perkins confirmed yesterday that it is planning to spin off DIY retailer Wickes as the builders’ merchant revealed it made a profit in its half-year results.

Wickes will be demerged from the Travis Perkins business as a standalone company, in order for the FTSE 250 firm to focus on trade customers. The company said the sale was expected to be completed in the first half of next year.

Last year Travis Perkins announced that it intended to strengthen Wickes’ performance and “review the options” to maximise its value. Since then steps have been taken to give the retailer more autonomy in preparation for a spin-off, Travis Perkins said.

The confirmation that Travis Perkins is demerging follows reports last month that it had begun separating the retailer’s IT systems from the rest of the group. Travis Perkins also put its plumbing and heating division up for sale last year and yesterday said that the process was “well under way”.

Operating profit was £164m in the six months to 30 June, up from a loss of £104m last year.
NEW £50 MILLION LIMIT IS MAJOR BOOST FOR CHARITIES

The Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Mims Davies, recently announced that the maximum amount charity lotteries can raise each year is to increase from £10 million to £50 million. A move that will unlock vital additional funding for charities and good causes working across Britain and beyond.

And one which People’s Postcode Lottery warmly welcomes. It follows a lengthy campaign on the issue, which was backed by over 85 major charities and secured strong cross-party support too.

Ms Davies also stated that a £50 million limit could be implemented, if transparency conditions are met by the charity lottery sector. £100 million being the figure set out by Government as their “preferred option” in last year’s public consultation on reforms.

Outlaid lottery limits have seen charities and good causes, big and small, miss out on funding. In the past two years four out of five small and local charities were turned down for funding.

So, a new £50 million annual sales limit is a highly significant milestone on the journey towards a transformative £100 million limit. This outcome really does matter to charities and good causes across the country and most importantly, the individuals, families and communities across Britain who benefit from their invaluable support and services.

This is a highly anticipated and long-awaited outcome that signals real change in this sector for the first time in a decade. The time for action is now and we would like to see the £50 million annual sales limit introduced as a priority and we know there is strong support for this change from charities.

It has been hugely heartening to note the widespread and overwhelmingly positive response that this change has been met with from charities right across the sector, it further supports the true significance of this increase and the impact it promises.

It is right that the Government has highlighted the need for greater transparency.

“Unexplained wealth order aimed at suspected paramilitary links”

BRAZIL’S right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro cancelled a meeting this week with French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian – getting a haircut instead – amid deepening tensions over climate change policy.

Bolsonaro’s spokesman cited an agenda clash, even though the meeting was cancelled just an hour before.

Bolsonaro went for a haircut at the time of the scheduled meeting on Monday and broadcast it live on Facebook.

Neither the French foreign ministry nor Bolsonaro’s office immediately returned requests for comment.

“City A.M.’s shadow MPC votes to hold rates until the Bank knows more about the shape of Brexit”

The amount is to increase from £10 million to £50 million each year

The Bank of England in tight spot with EU exit looming

We will continue our efforts to ensure players are kept fully informed of the charities and good causes they support – they deserve nothing less. And we stand ready to engage constructively with any further Government consultation on charity lottery regulations.

People’s Postcode Lottery shares Mims Davies’ and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s commitment to ensuring decisions relating to Britain’s charity lottery sector are fit for the future.

Mims Davies notes that the £50 million consultation responses received act as a reminder of the significant contribution that both charity lotteries and the National Lottery make. In fact, this is a theme that has been evidenced before. Three separate economic studies carried out by the Gambling Commission, the body that regulates the sector, found that charity lotteries do not impact the National Lottery.

Indeed, Gambling Statistics show charity lotteries and the National Lottery have grown together – to the benefit of charities. Million limit will let us do just that.

Read more at: Letusdomore.info

Unexplained wealth order aimed at suspected paramilitary links

James Booth

The National Crime Agency (NCA) yesterday said it had secured an unexplained wealth order (UWO) against a Northern Irish woman with suspected paramilitary and organised crime links.

The NCA said it suspected the woman is associated with criminals involved in paramilitary activity and cigarette smuggling.

The order is part of an NCA investigation into six properties valued at £3.2m owned by the woman who lives in London. Four of the properties are in London and two in Northern Ireland.

Interim freezing orders have been granted, so the properties cannot be sold or transferred while the investigation continues. Introduced last year, UWOs reverse the burden of proof, forcing those suspected of gaining assets illegally to prove they were obtained within the law.

Andy Lewis, of the NCA, said: “This is the fourth case in which we have obtained a UWO. This latest order shows that we will act against those who we believe are causing the most harm to our communities.”

Brazil’s right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro cancelled a meeting this week with French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian – getting a haircut instead – amid deepening tensions over climate change policy.

Bolsonaro’s spokesman cited an agenda clash, even though the meeting was cancelled just an hour before.

Bolsonaro went for a haircut at the time of the scheduled meeting on Monday and broadcast it live on Facebook.

Neither the French foreign ministry nor Bolsonaro’s office immediately returned requests for comment.
Serco powers ahead of crowd after US buyout

ALEX DANIEL
@alexmdaniel

SERCO shares rose 5.4 per cent yesterday after it reported a near one-third jump in first-half profit.

The outsourcer, which has increasingly looked overseas in recent years, said the increase was in part down to revenue growth in North America.

Underlying profit rose 29 per cent to £1.5bn. The figure does not account for exceptional items which include a £22.9m charge relating to incorrect tagging.

Soames said: “The strategic advantage of having a strong international footprint shows clearly in these results, with strong revenue growth in North America and Asia Pacific.”

He said: “I am also delighted to see the UK and Europe division reaping the benefits of the Carillion health facilities management acquisition completed in 2018.”

This transaction is likely to go through faster than expected, chief executive Rupert Soames said, with regulatory approval likely to be granted in the coming months.

The firm continues to defy the woes of its peers in the outsourcing industry such as Interserve, which went into temporary administration after years in the doldrums.

In Serco’s last annual results, the firm finally returned to profitability after years in the red.

Earlier this year, Serco agreed on the acquisition of a US naval defence business for $225m (£184m), which it said will add to the “scale and capability of our US defence business”.

Fiat Chrysler trucks accelerate to defy worldwide industry woes

ALEX DANIEL
@alexmdaniel

AUTOMOTIVE giant Fiat Chrysler surprised markets yesterday by sticking to its full-year profit forecast after strong sales in its US pickup truck division helped to defy an industry slowdown.

Core profit came in at €1.3bn (£1.17bn) for the second quarter beating analyst forecasts of €1.4bn.

The earnings were the car maker’s first since it failed to merge with Renault in June.

Fiat Chrysler’s rivals have struggled this results season, and Renault, Daimler and Aston Martin have all issued profit warnings.

The company said it would continue to focus on the underperforming areas of its business in the second half of 2019. These include its supercar brand Maserati, as well as sales in Europe and the Middle East.

Defence giant BAE Systems profits as streamlining operations pay off

ALEX DANIEL
@alexmdaniel

BAE SYSTEMS shares rose one per cent yesterday as Britain’s biggest defence company reported a nine per cent increase in first-half earnings.

The firm said “a number of operational improvements” had driven the growth, including pushing on with delivering Typhoon and Hawk fighter jets to the Qatari government. Core earnings rose nine per cent to £399m on a year-on-year basis for the first six months of 2019.

Sales increased seven per cent to £9.4bn against the same period in 2018.

The firm increased the interim dividend from 9p per share to 9.6p a share.

BAE said yesterday that it had improved its maritime and combat vehicle operations, which had helped propel the growth in profit.

This came despite the fact it is still struggling to fulfil a major order to Saudi Arabia after Germany banned sales to the country.

The ban followed the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October last year.

Chief executive Charles Woodburn said the firm was still “working closely with key partners and the government” to resolve the issue.

Last month, Fiat Chrysler failed to secure a landmark merger with Renault
Ex-Audi boss faces criminal charges for his role in ‘Dieselgate’ scandal

ALEX DANIEL

FORMER Audi boss Rupert Stadler has been charged for his part in Volkswagen’s emissions cheating scandal, known as Dieselgate.

The Munich public prosecutor’s office said yesterday that it had charged Stadler and three others with false certification and criminal advertising practices.

The issue has cost Volkswagen, which owns Audi, more than €38bn (£36bn) since it admitted in 2015 to using illegal software in its diesel engines to cheat anti-pollution tests. The charges relate to sales of hundreds of Audi, Volkswagen and Porsche-branded cars across Europe and the US.

German authorities arrested Stadler in June last year in connection with the scandal. He remained in custody until October, when Audi sacked him.

Audi confirmed the indictment, and added that one of the other three people charged is a current Audi employee.

The car maker said the case was separate from proceedings against the company itself, which ended in October with Audi agreeing to pay an €800m (£733m) fine.

It added: “Our company continues to cooperate fully with the investigating authorities in order to clarify the circumstances that led to the diesel crisis. This clarification is a prerequisite for the successful new start.”

Ladbrokes Coral owner hit with £5.9m penalty

JAMES BOOTH

LADBROKES Coral owner GVC has been fined £5.9m by the Gambling Commission after it found that the bookmaker failed to put in measures to prevent money laundering and customers coming to harm between 2014 and 2017.

GVC, which acquired Ladbrokes in 2018, has been ordered to make a series of changes to its business and pay a £5.9m fine while investigations into the actions of personal management licence holders continues.

The commission said Ladbrokes failed to carry out any social responsibility interactions with a customer who lost £98,000 over two-and-a-half years, had 460 attempted deposits into their account declined and had asked it to stop sending promotions.

Coral failed to ask a customer who spent £1.5m over a nearly three-year period what the source of their funds was and also could not provide evidence of any social responsibility interactions being carried out.

As part of the settlement, GVC will pay £4.8m in lieu of a financial penalty and will divest £1.1m gained from customers as a result of its failings.

GVC will also review its failed to put in place any social responsibility interactions being carried out.

Contactless payment security fears as TfL gathers up 75,000 lost cards

JACK PENSWICK

MORE than 75,000 debit and credit cards have been handed into TfL’s lost property offices over the last three years, according to findings obtained by think tank Parliament Street.

The figure, secured through a Freedom of Information request, showed that for the financial year of 2018-19, 25,843 debit or credit cards were lost, while 30,429 and 19,210 were lost in 2017-18 and 2016-17. The TfL lost property offices collect items handed in on London buses, London Overground, TL Rail, the Docklands Light Railway, black cab taxis, in Victoria Coach Station, the Emirates Air Line, in the London Transport Museum and in TfL buildings.

The figures accompany fresh fears regarding the security of contactless payments, with a team from research group Positive Technology revealing on Tuesday that there is a loophole in the safety of contactless cards which allows users to go beyond the £30 spend limit, designed to stop individuals from making large payments without PIN number authentication.

Contactless fraud rose from £6.7m in 2016 to over £14m in 2017, according to data from UK Finance.
LONDON REPORT

Homebuilders pull FTSE down on margin fears

The FTSE 100 slipped yesterday from this week’s 11-month high, as wealth manager St James’s Place, homebuilder Taylor Wimpey and mortgage lender Lloyds fell on the back of results, overshadowing an upbeat forecast from clothing retailer Next.

The main index lost 0.8 per cent as exporter stocks also weighed after the pound recovered from a 28-month low. The mid-cap FTSE 250 fell 0.6 per cent as losses led by mail order service Intu and car maker Aston Martin flowed in. Wealth manager St James’s Place fell 5.6 per cent on its worst day in more than three years after it missed forecasts for operating profit, as weaker client sentiment weighed on inflows of new money in the first half of the year.

Housebuilders, already under pressure due to worry about a no-deal Brexit, skidded nearly two per cent after Taylor Wimpey forecast a fall in annual margins. The shares slumped 8.4 per cent. Lloyds Banking Group, Britain’s biggest mortgage lender, slipped 3.1 per cent after a further charge to meet claims for mis-sold insurance to consumers hit its earnings.

Despite the session’s losses, the blue-chip index is set to post its second month of gains, mainly due to hopes among investors that the US Federal Reserve and other central banks would cut interest rates. Last night, as widely expected, the Fed pulled the trigger on a 25 basis points rate cut.

Top risers included TUI, whose shares have plummeted this year as it scrapped its dividend and management after failed takeover bids, lost nearly one third of its value after reporting a fall in first-half net rental income. The stock closed at a record low. Aston Martin, whose shares debuted on the London market last year, plunged 12.3 per cent after posting a full-year loss.

NEW YORK REPORT

Wall St retreats after first rate cut in a decade

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 333.75 points, or 1.23 per cent, to 26,864.27, the S&P 500 lost 32.8 points, or 1.09 per cent, to 2,980.38 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 98.20 points, or 1.19 per cent, to 8,175.42. All 11 major sectors in the S&P 500 closed in the red.

Apple extended its gains, rising two per cent after an increase in services and wearables more than offset a drop in iPhone sales. Humana advanced 4.3 per cent after the health insurer beat analysts’ second-quarter earnings estimates and hiked its 2019 forecast.

Video game maker Electronic Arts reported a 13 per cent jump in quarterly revenue, driven by continued success of its battle royale game Apex Legends, sending its stock up 4.4 per cent.

Among losers, shares of General Electric dipped 0.7 per cent after the conglomerate posted a quarterly loss and announced the retirement of its chief financial officer Jaime Miller. Chipmaker Advanced Micro Devices slumped 10.1 per cent after its disappointing third-quarter revenue forecast, dragging the Philadelphia Semiconductor index down 3.2 per cent.

Molson Coors Brewing dropped 5.1 per cent after missing quarterly profit expectations and announcing the retirement of chief executive Mark Hunter.

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Energy giant BP reported a seven per cent increase in oil and gas production in its second-quarter results on Tuesday, countering this year’s fall in oil prices. Profit in the quarter was $2.8bn ($2.3bn), above expectations of $2.5bn. BP chief executive Bob Dudley said the firm was “right on track”. Analysts at Jefferies said BP has delivered solid operational performance and has made good headway in achieving the targets set out in its five-year plan, published in 2017. Jefferies upgraded BP to “buy” from “hold” and increased the target price to $62.5p from $59.5p.

Box office revenue in the US is down around seven per cent compared with last year due to a weaker film release schedule, which could be highlighted in Cineworld’s interim results next week. However, the cinema operator launched a US subscription offer on Monday in a bid to drive higher attendance rates. Full-year industry revenue is expected to be flat to slightly up, with a stronger range of films in the pipeline. Brokers at Peel Hunt changed their recommendation from “sell” to “buy” and lowered their target price to 300p.

CITY MOVES WHO’S SWITCHING JOBS

JBP National communications consultancy JBP has appointed three new directors. Julie Williams, originally joined JBP’s Bristol office more than 20 years ago and has helped to transform the company’s financial function. As operations director, she leads the accounts, HR and operations departments. James Hinchcliffe is a former external communications manager for Bath & North East Somerset Council and communications manager at NHS England. He has over 17 years of strategic communications, local public affairs and team leadership experience. He leads on the development of high-level tenders and is a strategic engagement director at JBP. Chris Hayward chairs the Planning and Transportation Committee of the City Corporation and has been a senior counsel at JBP for several years. He has business experience in property, infrastructure, and planning and strategic communication. He will also take office as sheriff of the City of London later this year. Julie and James have been appointed with immediate effect, while Chris will join the board in September. Steve Anderson Dixon, chief executive of JBP, said: “We have decided to change the dynamic of the board to bring about a different perspective.”

MULLENLOWE GROUP

Marketing communications network Mullenlowe Group UK has appointed Siobhan Brunwin as people director. She will be responsible for building on Mullenlowe Group’s culture and ensuring that the agency remains a top destination for talent and creativity. Siobhan joins Mullenlowe Group UK from MSL where she was the people and culture director. Prior to that, she worked for MEC UK and Groupon as head of learning and development and talent development consultant EMEA respectively. In 2018, Siobhan was named Campaign’s Talent Management Person/Team of the year. Siobhan said: “After too wonderful years at MSL... I can’t wait to start building on the fantastic culture at Mullenlowe Group.”

FUTURE THINKING

Data driven innovation company Future Thinking has appointed Steven Forrest as group chief financial officer (CFO). Steven has joined from Start, a global design consultancy. Before this he was finance director at Landor and Associates in Advertising Limited. Jim Stevenson, Group CEO of Future Thinking, said: “Steven brings a wealth of experience as CFO from a range of media and design businesses, with a proven track record at a global level. This will prove invaluable as we identify strategic growth opportunities to ensure the group remains at the forefront of digital transformation within our industry.” Steven said: “I am looking forward to the challenge of developing our financial reporting processes and infrastructure.”
Email is stuck in the inbox, but it belongs in the trash

This traditional method of communication in the workplace is no longer fit for purpose

Email has become a ubiquitous form of communication since it was invented in 1972. Its ability to connect people and facilitate digital conversations has been an innovation like no other. However, almost 50 years since its inception, electronic mail is no longer fit for purpose as the main communication tool in today’s enterprise. A combination of outdated security, as well as a lack of efficient workplace collaboration, has meant that this once great bastion of universal communication has finally had its day.

Email has become cumbersome, outdated, and is inhibiting productivity. We’ve all cursed when trying to trawl back through lengthy email exchanges in an effort to find that one crucial piece of information which, without fail, is always buried somewhere obscure in a seemingly never-ending thread of messages.

What’s more, according to research by FireEye, less than a third of contemporary email traffic is classed as “clean” and actually finds its way into an inbox.

Clearly, email is coming to the end of its life cycle. In security terms, it’s the equivalent of leaving the house with all the windows and doors left wide open. Thanks to research by Cofense, the cyber security vulnerabilities of email were laid bare when it was revealed that 91 per cent of cyber attacks began with a phishing email.

Meanwhile, from a collaboration perspective, email is about as effective as a telegram – perhaps even worse. At least workers of days gone by didn’t receive in excess of 100 telegrams a day, with the expectation that they would need to reply to each and every one.

Considering email’s importance to contemporary workplace collaboration, it is concerning to weigh up the amount of time wasted when only one in three emails is actually clean of malware and other cyber threats. Conversely, just think of the collective productivity benefits if communication between employees could be efficiently tightened up.

As email’s faults become more recognised, collaboration platforms that include instant messaging, document sharing, project work and video calls are all growing increasingly popular. But if these platforms are to become truly ubiquitous, they must adhere to the very highest levels of security possible.

As it stands, however, because the area of “secure collaboration” is relatively new, enormous disparities in security exist between the kind of platforms on offer.

Nevertheless, not only would ditching email for good save enterprises billions of dollars due to the decreased risk of cyber breaches, but a reduction in spam and unread messages will generate a significant boost in business productivity through more and better real-time collaboration.

Currently, we’re at the tipping point of embracing a far safer, more practical and modern form of communication. Yet in order to offset that balance and move away from email, first we must accept that it is officially a relic of the past.

Hopefully, in years to come, we will one day look back and laugh at the time when email was universally used in the workplace, while also question why we clung onto it for so long.

Morten Brøgger is chief executive of Wire.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Cyber Security News

Free

Brian in accounting clicked on a dodgy email, and now every computer in the office is asking for 10,000 bitcoins if you want to use it. While you wait for IT to fix the problem, keep up to date on the latest ransomware, malware, and other cyber threats using this app. It filters and collects stories from dozens of news sources to help you stay one step ahead of the hackers.

91 per cent of cyber attacks began with a phishing email.

Morten Brøgger
THERE’S BEEN great to see the new government’s hands on the tiller, running, and even better to see it focus on a hugely important aspect of the country’s finances: tax. The penal tax regime has been beating the drum for: incentivising business investment.

Britain likes to think of itself as a business-friendly country. We have slashed corporation tax. We have a world-class record in attracting foreign investment. We have made it commendably easy to start your own business – as thousands of people do every year.

But our record on business investment – the amount of money that those companies spend on improving, expanding, and adopting new technologies – is awful. Between 1995 and 2015, we had the lowest rates of business investment across the entire OECD. And this underperformance has barely improved since. This, of course, plays into our Achilles’ heel of the British economy.

As the new Prime Minister said on the day of announcement, he wants to “change the tax rules to provide extra incentives to invest in capital expenditure”. This is something that our think tank has strongly argued for, both in the UK and in conversations in Whitehall and Westminster. It would, we argue, provide a more cost-effective boost to GDP than just cutting the headline rate of corporation tax further, because the extra money would solely incentivise new investment – and it could well be more politically appealing.

But what might such measures look like? The most obvious model is America, where “full expensing” – allowing firms to write off capital expenses immediately, rather than spreading the cost over a number of years – was at the heart of Donald Trump’s tax reforms.

And with good reason: the US states that adopted full expensing saw business investment rise by 1.75 per cent compared with states that didn’t, with significantly higher employment and growth than in those other countries in Europe. Although the sales tax rate in the US is only a temporary measure – and business is the Achilles’ heel of the British economy.

Reforming the write-off regime and introducing full expensing is the best way to get it growing – and Britain along with it.

Robert Colville is director of Centre for Policy Studies think tank.
WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

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The PM must change his mind on Heathrow – just like we did

Boris Johnson has had a busy first week, jetting off around different parts of the country, but closer to his home seat of Uxbridge and South Ruislip, people in our constituencies in west London are hoping that the new Prime Minister will change his mind and listen when it comes to one controversial issue: his opposition to Heathrow expansion.

Boris famously said that he was willing to “lie down in front of the bulldozers” to stop a new Heathrow runway. While he is unlikely to get himself muddy anytime soon, the Prime Minister could put at risk a project that will create 40,000 new local jobs and 5,000 new apprenticeships, and which is supported by most local people.

A survey from June found that in Ealing, the area near Heathrow that we represent, 69 per cent of residents are in favour of a new runway. The huge local support for this project reflects the enormous benefits that will come to the communities near the airport, and this is part of the reason why we have changed our minds and now support Heathrow expansion.

We understand the concerns. In fact, when a new Heathrow runway was mooted in 2009, we both opposed the plans – partly for environmental reasons, partly because not enough was being done to mitigate against noise, and partly because the airport wasn’t offering substantial benefits to local communities.

Since then, Heathrow has improved its proposals. As well as creating tens of thousands of new jobs, Heathrow has committed to investing in skills for the next generation of young people in our community.

The airport has also listened to local concerns over noise by agreeing to a night-time ban on flights and guaranteeing periods of respite. Local people will also benefit from improved public transport links, including Crossrail and upgrades to the Piccadilly Line.

Heathrow has to take the environmental concerns seriously, which is why we’re pleased that the airport is introducing higher landing costs for the most polluting aircraft and has agreed that no additional capacity will be released until it is on course to comply with EU emission limits.

And there is an opportunity for the airport to use the expansion to further its decarbonisation agenda. Additional capacity can create more competition, incentivising airlines to grow sustainably by innovating and investing in new generation aircraft, such as electric planes which can significantly reduce carbon emissions.

The huge local support for a new runway reflects the enormous benefits.

We’ve changed our minds on Heathrow expansion because we can see the clear benefits to our constituents in west London, and how this project will improve their lives in the future. As Prime Minister, we can only hope that Boris is also able to change his, not least because of how a new runway will help him achieve some of his own political priorities.

Boris has spoken of creating a “Global Britain” that will help UK businesses reach new markets; something that will be enabled when freight capacity is doubled at an expanded Heathrow.

As the UK’s only hub airport and our gateway to the world, Heathrow is vital to Britain’s post-Brexit future – boosting exports, increasing economic growth, and delivering up to £17bn to the UK economy.

But we can do more to make the most of this unique opportunity; most notably by reforming the process for allocating new take-off and landing slots at the new runway so that passengers can benefit from lower fares, more choice over connections, and increased competition.

The Prime Minister has had to hit the ground running, with so many domestic and foreign policy challenges to tackle. But while he will undoubtedly want to make his mark in a host of areas, his most significant and forward-thinking intervention could be to listen to local residents, trade unions, communities, business groups, Labour MPs, and the previous government – and allow Heathrow to expand.

Virendra Sharma is Labour MP for Ealing, Southall, and Stephen Pound is Labour MP for Ealing North.

DEBATE

As parents struggle, should the long summer school holiday be shortened?

One week into the summer holiday and I need a break, let alone my daughter. It’s argued that long holidays are needed so children can rest. But trying to fill her weeks while my husband and I are at work is not at all relaxing for her, while the anxiety about the change in circumstances is making her sleep less well.

I also worry about the good progress she’s made at school receding. Children need to constantly refresh their memories by going over their work, and long study breaks are not helpful. I’ll try to keep up her studies, but I’m a poor substitute for her fantastic teachers.

I am fortunate that I can afford proper childcare, but a lot of working parents also lack the resources, especially for such prolonged periods. Many parents want to go back to work after having children, but financially it doesn’t make sense for them to do so.

These extended holidays are a big part of that, and are detrimental for both parents and children.

Jenny Alia is a privacy lawyer and partner at Schillings. She is on the Children’s Commissioner’s Digital Task Force.

Holidays are to school as sleep is to being awake: the latter without enough of the former is unhealthy, unproductive, and damaging.

Substantial holidays are critical in children’s development, just as education is. Extended time to bond and explore with peers, outside the confines of the school day, is vital for personal growth. Long holidays also provide unique opportunities for family units to knit and bond, enhancing the cohesion and relationships that are critical to a child’s future.

The opportunity to navigate real and challenging outdoor environments – something almost no school could provide – helps develop motor-skills, spatial awareness, and problem-solving. Not to mention that the holidays provide an opportunity to find new intellectual passions, or catch up on subjects that kids are worried about. Going back to school for extended school holidays benefit education, allowing children time to renew, to rest, and to grow.

Daniel Senn is chief executive and founder of Pazo, the app that helps children to read through play.
Sheela Mackintosh-Stewart reveals the financial mistakes that you may be making in your relationship

**FOR BETTER, for worse, for richer, for poor, for sickness and in health do us part.** Sadly, with money fights being the second leading cause of divorce behind infidelity, many of us do not adhere to this marriage vow.

Few individuals consider financial compatibility before they tie the knot, so when the time comes to combine their finances, it can trigger massive differences of opinion and even wreak marital havoc if not dealt with wisely. This problem is all the more significant when there are substantial assets at play, including businesses, real estate, investments, and large family inheritances and gifts.

So what are the top financial mistakes that you should avoid making in your marriage?

**NOT TALKING ABOUT MONEY AT THE START**
A lot of fights about money involve a clash of financial attitudes, behaviours and beliefs.

Most couples fail to clearly discuss financial planning and goals with their partner at the beginning of a marriage, often resulting in unresolved disagreements on savings, debt, assets, retirement, and other financial obligations further down the line.

To avoid this type of unnecessary conflict, work together on key areas of financial vulnerability and try to understand each other’s psychological financial drivers.

**MERGING BANK ACCOUNTS TOO QUICKLY**
Although joint accounts are necessary for essential household bills and enable equal access to money in the account, they can cause problems when one spouse goes “rogue” and deceitfully drains it away.

So, if your partner is a big spender, it would be advisable to keep a separate personal account to store some of your hard-earned money and avoid it being unnecessarily siphoned away.

Joint account holders have every right to withdraw money and close the account without the other’s consent, which can leave that person penniless. They also tend to make breaking up more complicated, because it can be messy, lengthy, costly and problematic to separate and untangle the funds in a joint account.

To avoid this, make sure that your relationship has long-term potential before you open one.

**FAILING TO CONSIDER MARITAL CONTRACTS, LIKE PRENUPTIALS, BEFORE MARRIAGE**
When parents (particularly women) leave work to raise a family, they often abdicate their financial independence to their spouses as they find that managing finances is a tedious chore. This can shift the balance of power in the breadwinner’s favour and trigger an unhealthy dependence cycle, prejudicing them in the long run.

One toxic trait includes high net worth individuals providing their wives with expensive gifts rather than handing out cash for them to buy items themselves, as a form of control. These women tend to be left vulnerable upon divorce too, because they have not set up independent financial provisions of their own to weather marital storms.

Many blindly assume that their partner will do right by them financially if they part company. They often go into massive meltdown when that is not the case, and have no access to money to maintain their lifestyles.

I strongly advise wives not to stop working completely if possible. Always find ways to maintain employability and job-ready skills to ensure that there is available income if needed.

**NO EMERGENCY FUNDS**
Everyone should set aside funds for life’s financial thunderstorms. Not having the money to fix a broken roof or to pay unexpected debts can put a huge strain on a marriage and result in a spending blame game.

To avoid this, always have a rainy day fund set aside together in case of emergency scenarios. I have seen many couples caught out by a sudden unexpected crisis, which can lead to marital destruction as they become financial competitors instead of collaborators.

**FINANCIAL INFIDELITY**
When you are married, the burdens are shared, to ensure that the lines of communication are always open and honest. Many individuals try to hide expenses from their partner, relying too easily and heavily on plastic and taking out credit card loans, assuming that they can pay them off before their spouse finds out, but then struggling to do so.

Concealing expenditures and uncontrolled spending can pave the way for greater deceit and mistrust down the line, and if left unaddressed can backfire and lead to a ruinous marriage.

**NOT REGISTERING OWNERSHIP OF YOUR MATRIMONIAL HOME**
Where possible, register both your names on the matrimonial house title deeds to avoid arguments of ownership in the event of divorce. If it is only registered in one spouse’s name, the non-owning partner should register a notice against the matrimonial home to protect their rights of occupation.

**Not having the money to pay unexpected debts can put a huge strain on a marriage**
It also prevents the owner spouse from selling the home from under the other’s nose.

Joint mortgages are also advisable, because although both spouses are equally liable for making repayments, it alerts one partner of any threat of repossession from the mortgage lender if the other leaves or stops paying the mortgage.

**NOT SAFEGUARDING FAMILY INHERITANCES AND GIFTS**
Many couples are unhappy that family inheritances and gifts received during marriage can sometimes be used to fund divorce settlements for the other partner.

With couples now marrying later in life compared to a decade ago, spouses today bring in materially greater pre-marital wealth, often in the form of gifts and inheritance. Some of it will be used to purchase a family home or business assets, inevitably becoming mixed and mingled with marital assets.

Although there is no absolute guarantee of protecting and ring-fencing these pre-marital assets from being shared in the event of divorce, it is advisable to get professional advice on keeping pre-marital wealth separate if you wish it to be so.

Finally, if you want to explore any of these options, seek professional advice. A marriage may be a partnership, but you need to look out for yourself if you want to be “for richer” and avoid becoming “for poorer”.

© Sheela Mackintosh-Stewart is a matrimonial consultant, relationship guru, and founder of Familiesuk.com.
Beat the heat with our pick of the coolest festival, camping and outdoor gadgets

WATER
LARQ WATER BOTTLE
£95, LIVELARQ.COM
The LARQ is a self-cleaning water bottle with a battery powered cap that blasts the bottle’s contents and insides with purifying UV-C light for 60 seconds every two hours, killing 99.9999 per cent of harmful and odour-causing bacteria and viruses. That means no more trying to scrub around the corners of the neck, and no more grotty bottle stink. It’s the same sterilising light used to disinfect hospitals, and the insides are made of an especially reflective stainless steel to ensure the bacteria disintegrating beams reach all the nooks. At £95 however, you’d need to be an especially flush germaphobe to splash out.

VISION
BENQ GV1
£299, BENQ.EU
A battery-powered and super-compact projector that connects wirelessly to your iOS or Android devices, the BenQ GV1 is ideal for when you want to get away from the festival crowds to watch Homes Under The Hammer on the side of your tent. It also looks like a friendly little robot, which is good fun.

SOUND
RUARK R1 MK3
£220, RUARKAUDIO.COM
Almost certain to be the only item in your backpack with a rich walnut veneer finish, the stylishly designed Ruark R1 is a bluetooth speaker and DAB radio in one. Coupled with the optional battery pack (an additional £30), it can soundtrack your camping trip for hours on end, ensuring that you never miss an episode of The Archers.

INTERNET
SKYROAM SOLIS
$149, SKYROAM.COM
There’s nothing quite so awful as being momentarily without an internet connection, forced to speak to other people, with all of their ridiculous opinions and personalities. Skyroam Solis helps prevent this scenario by putting the internet in your pocket as you travel, providing unlimited global wi-fi across 130 countries for $9 per day, and avoiding roaming charges.

COMMUNICATION
NOKIA 220
£39, NOKIA.COM
It’s a sad inevitability of any festival that you’ll drop your expensive phone into a portaloo and be faced with the agonising decision over whether or not to attempt to fish it back out. With the Nokia 220 you can walk out of that toilet with your dignity intact, because at £39 it’s a phone you won’t think twice about abandoning in a dark hole filled with the septic effluvia of strangers. It’s also got 4G.

INADVISABLE STUNTS
GOPRO HERO7 BLACK
£379, GOPRO.COM
There’s hardly any point going outside if you’re not filming everything in silky smooth, hyper-stabilised, 60 frames per second 4K video. The GoPro Hero7 Black is the class leading compact camera, and a must-have for any adventurers planning on going viral after being mauled by a wild animal.

THE ESSENTIAL FESTIVAL TECH
Beat the heat with our pick of the coolest festival, camping and outdoor gadgets
Here isn’t a race I have been looking forward to more all week than this afternoon’s Qatar Nassau Stakes (2.25pm).

When the entries first came out my eyes were immediately drawn to dual 1000 Guineas winner HERMOSA who finally steps up to the trip she has seemingly been crying out for.

The daughter of Galileo proved that she Newmarket success was no fluke by following up in even more emphatic fashion at the Curragh.

However, it was in the Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot last time where she looked worth upping in distance.

She appeared to be tapped for toe by eventual winner Watch Me before running on well to grab second.

Today’s 1m2f looks the ideal trip and she will have plenty of supporters at 15/8 with Coral.

My decision to take her on is purely on grounds of price as she is undoubtedly a very smart filly.

William Haggas’ MAQSAD surged towards the top of the Investec Oaks betting when bolting up in the Pretty Polly Stakes over this trip at the Guineas meeting.

She then travelled like the best filly for much of the race over 1m4f at Epsom before her stamina gave way in the final two furlongs.

Connections opted to bypass a trip to Royal Ascot to come here fresh and their patience may well be rewarded at 7/1 in a place.

The drop back to this trip looks bang up her street and she has the potential to give the favourite a real fright.

Another filly unable to show her best at Epsom was John Gosden’s MEHDAAYIH who was sent off the 11/4 favourite.

She couldn’t have found a more troubled passage if she tried and that was one of those runs you simply have to put a line through.

Prior to that she was incredibly impressive when landing the Cheshire Oaks by four and a half lengths and since then she has won a Group Two at Saint-Cloud in comfortable fashion.

She also has the added bonus of man of the moment Frankie Dettori in the saddle, who is showing no signs whatsoever of getting bored of winning these Group Ones week in week out.

The French filly Channel is another who needs a mention following her gutsy win in the French Oaks last month.

That was a big step up on what she had achieved previously in her career, but there was no arguing about the way she did it.

This track will seem slightly strange to her, though, and as a daughter of Nathaniel she won’t want the ground to dry out too much.

The Classic generation have won six of the last seven renewals and that is no major surprise with the older fillies and mares having to concede 8lbs to their younger rivals.

That is a tough ask at this time of year and it would be a shock to me if there wasn’t another three-year-old winner.

Sir Michael Stoute’s pair, Rawdaa and Sun Maiden, are the most likely contenders from the older generation and of the two, I would definitely favour the former.

She ran well to be second in the Duke Of Cambridge Stakes at Royal Ascot and will relish the return to 1m2f here, but I still think she has her work cut out.

Another all-female race of the day is the Magnolia Cup charity race, where there’s an exciting group of amateur lady riders taking part.

There’s an incredible story this year as Khadijah Mellah, an 18-year-old British Muslim student from Peckham who learnt to ride at the charity Ebony Horse Club in Brixton, lines up against the likes of Olympian Victoria Pendleton and model Vogue Williams.

Khadijah’s journey is being captured in a documentary called Riding a Dream, which is being jointly funded by Great British Racing, Goodwood Racecourse and The Racing Foundation.

It promises to be a day to remember for Khadijah and I’m sure everyone will be cheering her on.
Home advantage favours England but I can see Aussies holding onto the urn

CRICKET COMMENT

Chris Tremlett

OTH England and Australia come into the Ashes today on the back of a summer packed full of one-day internationals and far from ideal warm-up games.

England’s World Cup win was followed by the shock of the crazy Test against Ireland which highlighted their inconsistencies, while Australia played out a wicket-filled warm-up game among themselves.

After such a short and topsy-turvy period of preparation, the first few sessions at Edgbaston will be crucial. The opening of the conditions make them vivid.

The questions are: who can adjust the quickest to the demands of Test cricket, the difference in conditions to the quickest to the demands of Test cricket, the difference in conditions to the quickest to the demands of Test cricket, the difference in conditions to the quickest to the demands of Test cricket, the difference in conditions to the quickest to the demands of Test cricket, the difference in conditions.

Their masters of the morning can calm their nerves, set the tone for the series and build valuable momentum.

The periods speak for themselves. Anderson is simply the best with a moving ball, while there is nobody better than Broad when he’s on a roll – he’s a match-winner and has a happy knack of producing in the Ashes.

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He more things change, the more they stay the same. England start another Ashes series against Australia at Edgbaston this morning with different names at the top of the batting order, but names who are grappling with the age-old problem of scoring runs.

Since Andrew Strauss retired in August 2012 England have used 18 different players as openers in Test matches. Just one – the man who partnered Strauss for the final years of his career and inherited his captaincy, Alastair Cook – can be considered an unqualified success.

Cook, who himself retired from international cricket last year to exacerbate the problem, is one of just three others, some have slid down the averages by virtue of a miraculous 92 as nightwatchman against Ireland in last week’s one-off Test match. Some have been given longer runs than others, some have slid down the order and found success, and a few might still come good. But each of the other 15 names has endured familiar failings. The Ashes represents an opportunity, albeit a difficult one, for Surrey’s Rory Burns and Jason Roy to buck the trend and break the curse.

**IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

Burns was deservedly picked following a run of remarkable consistency in the County Championship which saw him put up 500 runs for five successive reasons, but like many before him he has struggled with the step up. The unorthodox left-hander averages just 22.28 from 14 innings so far and has been perpetually out of form recently, going 15 first-class innings without passing 50 – a sequence which includes his brace of sixes against Ireland.

Roy, meanwhile, followed an insipid start at Lord’s last week with a fluent 72 at No3 in the second innings to offer hope he can translate his one-day international prowess into the longest format.

England’s all-rounder-heavy middle order is certainly a strength, but when you consider Joe Denly’s uncertain position now at No4, instead of No5 – England simply need improvements at the top. The hosts’ perennial issue is an area which will not have gone unnoticed by Australia’s battery of six pacemen, says former Australia fast bowler Glenn McGrath.

“Australia will look to target that top order,” he told City A.M. “If they can get on top of them early in the series then that can have a massive impact in keeping them down.

“I think this series is not going to be won by the bowlers, but by the batsmen. Whichever team fares best against the quality bowling attacks will win it.”

**FULLER LENGTH**

While the batting line-ups of both sides are struggling with inconsistencies, the fast bowling looks strong across the board, with England’s prize assets Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad facing off against Australia’s array which includes Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and James Pattinson. It is all about using the conditions, according to McGrath, who took 563 wickets in 124 Tests for Australia.

“In my first series over here in ’95 we bowled a little bit too short in the first Test at Edgbaston and England won convincingly by nine wickets,” he said.

“But then we spent two hours the next day off our long run bowling a fuller length – the right length in England – and then we were away [and won 3-2].

“You need to have a bit of experience and be able to adapt to it very quickly, because if you don’t and you bowl an Australian length over here you’re not going to be successful.”

Australia know all about the need to bowl fuller. Starc (18) and Hazlewood (16) took wickets in the 2015 Ashes in England, while Peter Siddle, with Essex, and Pattinson, at Nottinghamshire, have learned the ropes on the county circuit.

Even withstanding England’s top order woes, the tourists are going to be very difficult to dislodge. Even a bit of experience and be able to adapt to it very quickly, because if you don’t and you bowl an Australian length over here you’re not going to be successful.”

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**THE ULTIMATE**

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