BACKLASH OVER STATE AID GAMBLE

ALEX DANIEL
@alexmdaniel

THE GOVERNMENT has found itself embroiled in a row over state aid, after its decision to save struggling regional airline Flybe sparked a series of complaints from rival carriers.

British Airways (BA) owner International Airlines Group (IAG) yesterday filed an official complaint to the European Commission, after its boss Willie Walsh castigated the government for deferring Flybe’s tax bill as part of a rescue package.

The deal is also thought to include a £100m loan, as well as up to £30m in contributions from its shareholders. IAG said this contravened EU state aid rules because taxpayers would be subsidising an airline that competes directly on BA routes. One of Flybe’s biggest investors is Virgin Atlantic, a major BA rival.

In a letter to transport secretary Grant Shapps on Tuesday, Walsh wrote that Flybe’s owners “want the taxpayer to pick up the tab for their mismanagement of the airline”.

“This is a blatant misuse of public funds,” he said.

Walsh was joined by Ryanair and Easyjet in opposing the plan. A Ryanair spokesperson said: “We have already called for more robust and frequent stress tests on financially weak airlines so the taxpayer does not have to bail them out.”

A number of complaints from rival carriers have committed “fraudulent” under-reporting of earnings, breach of trust and misappropriation of company funds, which he denies.

Speaking to Reuters, he declined to clarify the details of his escape following media speculation that he fled inside a musical instrument case. However he proffered a token of wisdom: “The first rule of when you want to do something like this is no one in the family should be aware.”

Ghosn also claimed the French ambassador warned him against his former company just before his November 2018 arrest.

“Frankly, I was shocked by the arrest and the first thing I asked ‘is make sure Nissan knows so they can send me a lawyer.” he said.

“And the second day, 24 hours from this, I received a visit from the French ambassador who told me: ‘Nissan is turning against you’. And this is where I realized that the whole thing was a plot.”

“...and this is where I realized that the whole thing was a plot.”

HARRY ROBERTSON
@harrygrobertson

ROUSK’s prime minister and its entire cabinet quit their posts yesterday after President Vladimir Putin said he will hold a referendum on sweeping constitutional changes which could allow him to keep power when his term ends in 2024.

The resigning prime minister Dmitry Medvedev said he wanted to give Putin room to make “all the necessary decisions” before the changes come into effect.

Since coming to power Putin has moved between the posts of President and prime minister, meaning his 20-year grip on Russian politics is longer than Stalin’s. He is legally required to step down as President in four years time, having now served two consecutive terms.

Under Putin’s plans, presidential power would be weakened and the powers of the prime minister, parliament and the advisory State Council would be beefed up.

The changes would let Putin, who is 67, either become prime minister once again or head of the State Council, keeping his grip on Russia.

CONTINUES ON P4

Secrets and flies: Ghosn says not even his family knew of his escape plan

ALEX DANIEL
@alexmdaniel

FORMER Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn has given advice to would-be fugitives, as part of an interview in which he also accused the car giant of planting against him.

Ghosn fled Japan last month while awaiting trial on charges of mismanagement of the airline. “And the second day, 24 hours from this, I received a visit from the French ambassador who told me: ‘Nissan is turning against you’. And this is where I realized that the whole thing was a plot.”

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DOW ▲ 29,030.22 +90.55

NASDAQ ▲ 9,258.70 +7.37

E/$ ▲ 1.303 +0.001

E/€ ▲ 1.167 -0.002

£/$ ▲ 1.160 +0.003

LATEST SPORTS TECH

RACE FOR GOLD WITH THE LATEST SPORTS TECH P20

SPLIT UP? HOW TO HANDLE THE INS AND OUTS OF DIVORCE P18–19
Flybe bailout reveals Johnson's priorities

During the election campaign, Labour claimed that a Tory victory would unleash "Thatcherism on steroids". Now, just weeks into the new Boris Johnson era, corporate bailouts are on the agenda. Hardly the rampant free-market dogma we were warned about. The troubled airline Flybe has received a £100m temporary tax break, plus the promise of a review into air passenger duty, which hit the domestic carter hard. The airline's owners were presented with the perfect political opportunity to make their case to government. Ever since his election victory, Johnson has talked about infrastructure spending, regional investment and the importance of connectivity. Flybe's owner Connect Airways — the consortium founded by Virgin Atlantic, Stobart Aviation and Cyrus Capital — must have viewed ministers as a soft touch. Would they really let 2,500 jobs disappear? Would they shrug at the hit to regional airports? Not likely. One wonders how much of a fight the government put up. It's hard to picture the business secretary on the phone to Richard Branson, saying: "You bought the damn thing, you can prop it up." It's not like the billionaire couldn't afford the bill. Besides, his own biggest shareholder is Delta — one of the most profitable carriers in the world.

Given all this, one can hardly blame Willie Walsh for reacting with fury. Granted, his rivalry with Branson is intense and goes back decades, but he's not wrong to point out that the government shouldn't be in the business of bunging the rules to save a failing company while viable competitors watch from the wings. It isn't only IAG and EasyJet complaining about the government's apparent distortion of the market. EU competition officials will assess their complaint but elsewhere in Brussels the role of state aid and a commitment to a level playing-field are at the heart of the EU's demands for a future UK-EU trade deal. The European Commission's most recent document outlining its red lines makes clear that it intends "to prevent unfair competitive advantage[s] that the UK could enjoy through undercutting of levels of protection with respect to... competition and state aid". The government says it's confident their package for Flybe doesn't fall foul of state aid rules, but even if the EU rules in their favour it's clear that Johnson's government isn't squeamish about intervening to prop up failing companies. The coming negotiations will reveal the extent to which it's prepared to fight for its right to do it again.

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SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED US and China sign long-awaited phase one trade agreement, pausing damaging global trade war

US President Donald Trump and Chinese vice premier Liu He yesterday signed a "phase one" trade deal in Washington that puts in place a fragile peace in the long-running tariff war between the world's two biggest economies. Trump and Liu put pen to paper in the White House after months of negotiations. Trump heralded the deal as a "momentous step" forward for the pair.

Rate cut on horizon as UK inflation falls to fresh low

Sterling fell as much as 0.25 per cent against the dollar to $1.2985 follow-
ting the unexpected drop in inflation. It later regained some ground, and was sitting just above $1.30 last night. Bloomberg data on swaps trading showed market odds of a quarter point rate reduction have hit 62 per cent, compared to less than five per cent last week. British government bond prices also shot up following the reading, with traders taking the drop as a sign the Bank would move to cut rates. Outgoing BOE governor Mark Car

REBACKI struck a dovish tone in a speech last week, indicating that the central bank could cut rates if economic weakness persisted. Fellow MPC committee members Gertjan Vlieghe and Silvana Tenreyro have recently both suggested they would back rate cuts if the Conserva-
tives' decisive December election victo-
ry does not boost the economy. Ratesetter Michael Saunders — who voted in favour of cutting rates in December — restated his support for the policy in a speech in Northern Ire-
land yesterday. "This gives the Bank of England all the excuse it needs to cut later this month," said Markets.com chief ana-
lyst Neil Wilson. "Coming off the back of those weaker GDP and industrial produc-
tion numbers, it does not look as though the economy was firing on all cylinders at the tail end of last year. While there may well be a Boris Bounce in the offing, I rather think the die is cast in favour of a rate cut."

The cost of overnight hotel stays pro-
vided downward pressure on infla-
tion in December, with prices dropping 7.5 per cent. Clothing and footwear also provided pressure amid the increased competition faced by high street stores. Women's clothing saw the most significant price cuts, with 15 per cent of items reduced as opposed to 11 per cent a year earlier.
HARRY ROBERTSON
@harrygroberton

GOLDMAN Sachs suffered a fall in profit in the final quarter of the year as high litigation provisions and investment banking weakness dented the Wall Street giant’s bottom line, its results revealed yesterday.

Net earnings fell 26 per cent year on year to $1.72bn (£1.32bn). The fall in profit took earnings per share to $4.69 in the fourth quarter from $6.04 a year earlier, falling well below analysts’ expectations of $5.47.

The lender did not give precise details of the litigation provisions, but it is likely they cover for the costs of the 1MDB money-laundering scandal.

Revenue at the investment banking arm fell six per cent to $2.06bn in the final quarter, as mergers and acquisitions and corporate lending cooled.

Goldman shares ended the day 0.2 per cent lower at $245.21.

Despite the slip in net earnings, revenue rose 23 per cent in the final three months of 2019 to $29.96bn, beating expectations.

Goldman’s revenue was boosted by the sale of its entire stake in Uber in the fourth quarter, according to CNBC, which likely netted the early investor a healthy profit. It was also boosted by a 63 per cent surge in fixed income revenue.

Yesterday’s results were the first Goldman has published under a new structure that more clearly states the size of its consumer business, which includes its online bank Marcus.

Chief executive David Solomon has focused on beefing up the lender’s consumer arm due to fears that the investment business is too much at the mercy of swings in the market.

Revenue at the nascent consumer business jumped 23 per cent year on year to hit $228m in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Solomon said: “We aim to drive higher returns in the future.”

Bank of America earnings take tumble on low US interest rates

EDWARD THICKNESSE
@edthicknesse

BANK of America’s (BoA) profit fell four per cent in yesterday’s fourth-quarter results, with the firm announcing $7bn (£5.4bn) in net income, down from $7.3bn last year.

The small decline is due to lower interest rates squeezing the US lender’s ability to earn more from its loans. Net revenue also saw a one per cent drop, falling to $22.3bn.

However, the banking giant still exceeded analysts’ expectations, with earnings per share of 75 cents, ahead of forecasts of 68 cents.

BoA is the most vulnerable of the large US banks to fluctuating interest rates due to its large deposit stock.

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Solomon said: “We aim to drive higher returns in the future.”
Putin appoints new prime minister as Russian government step down

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

He said in his annual state of the union address that the plans would be put to a “people’s vote.”

“Putin doesn’t want power to leave his hands,” said Nikolai Petrov, senior Russia research fellow at Chatham House. “In my view it looks now like Putin is eager to keep in his hands his hands,” said Nikolai Petrov, senior Russia research fellow at Chatham House. “In my view it looks now like Putin is eager to keep in his hands his hands”

Kremlin’s security council, a newly created role. Putin installed Medvedev as President from 2008 to 2012 and then took the job back again, all while maintaining the real power in Russia. Putin announced yesterday that the little-known head of Russia’s tax service, Mikhail Mishustin, would become prime minister. Medvedev will become deputy head of the Kremlin’s security council, a newly created role. Mishustin, who shares a passion for ice hockey with Putin, will be seen as a good bet for the next President. However, under Putin’s plans that role could be much less powerful.

There had long been speculation over whether Putin would step down over whether Putin would step down in 2024, as he is legally obliged to. Opposition politician Leonid Volkov said the move showed Putin plotting to ensure he maintained power in Russia, even after relinquishing the presidency.

Firms urged to help workers get settled UK status

CATHERINE NEILAN

BUSINESSES are being urged to ensure their employees apply for settled status as soon as possible, or risk losing up to a fifth of their workforce, with more than a million Europeans still yet to do so.

A third of UK-based EU nationals, of which the vast majority are in employment, have failed to secure their status, with experts claiming they are being put off from applying because of confusion over salary threshold.

The UK government is being urged to consider whether the deadline for applying for settled status in the UK. However, if the deadline is missed by lower-paid EU workers, it is predicted they may not be permitted to settle in the UK ever again, “which could be catastrophic for business and these individuals”, experts warned.

Matthew Evans, director at the Aire Centre, said: “The future salary threshold for EU nationals coming to work in post-Brexit Britain has been well publicised at a possible £30,000. For many, their income will fall below this level and understandably, they are worried about completing their applications for fear of being rejected,” he added.

It came as the British government yesterday agreed to give the Northern Irish Executive an extra £1bn to support a proposed Stormont deal.

Firms urged to help workers get settled UK status

Retail and manufacturing will be particularly hurt, with 50 per cent of all EU nationals working in the sector. There is currently no salary threshold to apply for settled status in the UK. However, if the deadline is missed by lower-paid EU workers, it is predicted they may not be permitted to settle in the UK ever again, “which could be catastrophic for business and these individuals”, experts warned.

Matthew Evans, director at the Aire Centre, said: “The future salary threshold for EU nationals coming to work in post-Brexit Britain has been well publicised at a possible £30,000. For many, their income will fall below this level and understandably, they are worried about completing their applications for fear of being rejected,” he added.

It came as the British government yesterday agreed to give the Northern Irish Executive an extra £1bn to support a proposed Stormont deal.
London housing market picks up after Boris’ win

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

LONDON’S property market has enjoyed a so-called Boris bounce following the result of last month’s General Election, as the capital saw a sharp increase in buyer interest and sales prospects.

In December, 31 per cent of chartered surveyors saw a rise rather than a fall in enquiries from new buyers, up from minus 12 in November, in a sign that the property market could be picking up due to the clarity offered by the Conservative election win.

The number of agreed sales in London increased to a 22 per cent net balance, which is the first time since April 2018 that the number of agreed sales in the city has shown a positive result.

In total 49 per cent of respondents to Rics’ residential market survey predicted that transactions will rise over the next three months, marking the highest reading in the capital for nearly six years.

Over the next 12 months, 69 per cent of respondents said they anticipate that sales will rise.

Rics chief economist Simon Rubensohn said: “The signals from the latest Rics survey provide further evidence that the housing market is seeing some benefit from the greater clarity provided by the decisive election outcome.

“Whether the improvement in sentiment can be sustained remains to be seen given that there is so much work to be done over the course of this year in determining the nature of the eventual deal.

“However, the sales expectations indicators clearly point to the prospect of a more upbeat trend in transactions emerging with potential purchasers being more comfortable in following through on initial enquiries.”

Meanwhile, figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that average UK house prices were up 2.2 per cent in November last year, compared to a 1.3 per cent jump in the year to October.

In the capital house prices rose 0.2 per cent, an improvement on the 0.5 per cent drop reported in October.

However, the number of first time buyer mortgages dropped 10.5 per cent in November last year, following a surge in house purchase activity in the same month of 2018.

Vistry’s Bovis Homes to beat profit record as Persimmon’s sales slump

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

VISTRY Group has reported that Bovis Homes is set to deliver record profit despite political uncertainty putting pressure on prices last year.

The housebuilder said yesterday that it expects its Bovis operation to report pre-exceptional profit before tax for 2019 to be above an analyst consensus of £181.6m.

The company completed the £1.1bn purchase of two Galliford Try businesses earlier this year, acquiring Linden Homes and Galliford’s partnerships and regeneration business.

The merged group changed its name to Vistry as part of the integration.

Rival development firm Persimmon also updated the market yesterday, reporting a slump in revenue and housing completions, which the housebuilder blamed on a decision to “put customers before volume”.

The FTSE 100 firm said total group revenue last year was £3.65bn, a 2.4 per cent dip compared to the previous year as it took action to improve quality and customer service following complaints over poor build quality.

PREMIER SPOT Aviva Investors scoop up Docklands hotel development for £106m

AVIVA Investors has bought a £106m hotel development site near Canary Wharf. The asset manager has acquired the freehold interest in the site next to Westferry DLR station, where developer Rockwell will build a 30-storey Premier Inn Hotel.
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ANNA MENIN
BLACKROCK yesterday reported a 40.3 per cent rise in quarterly profit and its strongest ever inflows as investors poured more money into the investment titan’s exchange-traded funds (ETFs) amid concerns over slowing global growth.

Net income at the world’s largest asset manager jumped to $1.3bn (£999m) in the three months ending 31 December, up from $927m a year earlier.

Blackrock ended the quarter with $7.43 trillion in assets under management, up from $5.98 trillion at the end of 2018.

“Blackrock’s 2019 results confirm the uniqueness of our globally integrated, asset management and technology platform,” said founder and chief executive Larry Fink.

The investment titan racked up a record $429bn total net inflows for 2019, $129bn of which were during the fourth quarter, representing seven per cent organic asset growth and five per cent organic base fee growth over the year.

Blackrock said this rise was driven by the strong performance of its fixed income offerings, as well as cash flows and record activity in its illiquid alternative market.

The inflows outpaced Vanguard, Blackrock’s index fund competitor and the world’s second largest fund manager, which reported total net inflows of $268bn in 2019.

“Today’s results reflect the systematic investments we’ve made to build broader and deeper client relationships and meet their evolving needs,” said Fink.

On Tuesday Blackrock announced an overhaul of its investment strategy, taking a tougher stance on climate change and an increased focus on sustainability following sustained pressure from campaigners.

GOING GLOBAL BBC unveils ambition to double worldwide audience to 1bn by 2030

THE BBC yesterday announced plans to double its global audience to reach 1bn people per week by the end of the decade. Director general Tony Hall added that the BBC will aim to pull in more overseas revenue from content such as the Planet series.

KRR RAISES $2.2BN FOR ITS SECOND TECH GROWTH FUND

Investment firm KKR yesterday closed its second Next Generation Technology Growth fund at $2.2bn (£1.7bn) — over three times the size of its predecessor. The fund will be dedicated to technology growth equity investment opportunities in Europe, North America and Israel, KKR said. The firm said it will invest over $265m of capital into the fund alongside investors including pension funds, insurance firms, and family offices.

ASHMORE ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT NEAR $100BN

Positive investor sentiment towards emerging markets has helped boost specialist asset manager Ashmore close to the $100bn (£77bn) assets under management (AUM) milestone. In an update to the stock exchange yesterday, Ashmore reported a 7.1 per cent increase in AUM, which jumped $6.5bn in the three months to 31 December to $98.4bn.

PROVIDENT SHARES CLIMB AFTER CREDIT CARD SUCCESS

Shares in Provident Financial rose yesterday after the subprime lender said its credit card business Vanquis Bank performed “modestly above expectations” in the fourth quarter. Shares rose 5.3 per cent to 444.3p yesterday after the lender said its performance for the three months to 31 December was in line with internal plans, and will report full-year results in line with market expectations. It has focused on growing its customer numbers since fending off a takeover bid by rival Non-Standard Finance.

US prosecutors recommend no jail time for Britain’s flash crash trader

JAMES WARRINGTON

US PROSECUTORS have said that the British trader linked to the so-called flash crash in 2010 should not receive any additional jail time.

Navinder Singh Sarao pleaded guilty to spoofing and wire fraud in 2016 for his role in the crash of 6 May 2010, when markets dropped five per cent in five minutes.

But in a court memo filed late on Tuesday, the US government said Sarao should not serve more jail time due to his “extraordinary cooperation” with its crackdown on market abuse.

Prosecutors also cited Sarao’s autism diagnosis, as well as the fact that he lost the majority of his £45m gains to fraudsters.

Sarao, who earned the nickname of the flash crash trader, served four months in jail in London after he was first arrested for spoofing US futures markets over a five-year period. Spoofing is a form of market manipulation where traders place large bids on the market with no intention of executing the trade.

Since his guilty plea, the disgraced Brit has cooperated with US authorities, including by testifying against his former partner-in-crime Jitesh Thakkar, who was acquitted.
HARRY ROBERTSON
@harrygrobertson

The UK government should focus on raising the pay of the poorest in Britain and encouraging greater worker representation to tackle the country’s long-running productivity crisis, according to a new study published by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA).

Increasing productivity — the amount produced per hour worked — is vital to the long-term growth of an economy. But it has barely grown in Britain since the financial crisis, worrying policymakers.

Although the jobs market has boomed in recent years, average incomes have stagnated since 2008 and millions are battling in-work poverty. Research published today by the Carnegie UK Trust and RSA said the problems can be tackled together.

The findings, from Chris Warhurst and Derek Bosworth of Warwick University, said that a focus on improving working conditions and pay in sectors where “bad work” is prominent seems to deliver the highest productivity gains.

The study said a pay-focused approach would be more effective than trying to improve productivity across all forms of work.

The findings came in a Carnegie UK Trust and RSA collection of research introduced by Bank of England chief economist Andy Haldane.

“Working out how to address this crisis is the biggest challenge facing UK economic policy makers today,” Haldane said.

“Improving work quality, on issues such as security, training, progression and engagement, offers one potential route to overcoming this challenge.” RSA chief executive Matthew Taylor, said the research was particularly relevant after the Tories’ General Election victory in which they picked up seats in many struggling towns.

JAMES BOOTH
@Jamesbooth

SHARES in listed legal business Ince Group plunged nearly 50 per cent yesterday after the firm raised £12m via a share placing.

Ince’s share price plunged 47 per cent to 46.5p yesterday after the new shares were offered at 45p.

Ince — formerly Gordon Dadds — last year bought the UK arm of the much larger firm Ince & Co.

Chief executive Adrian Biles said yesterday’s fundraising “marks the completion of the Ince merger”.

Biles said the low offer price was “an unfortunate feature of the current market conditions”. Ince’s share price has fallen 65 per cent since August last year.

EMILY NICOLLE
@emilyjnicolle

CAR MAKING giants Hyundai and Kia have injected €100m (£85.6m) in London-headquartered electric vehicle firm Arrival.

The move will mark the beginning of a strategic partnership between the trio which will see Hyundai and Kia use the scaleup’s technology to develop mobility solutions and electrify their vehicles.

Arrival, which has more than 800 employees in five countries, has not publicly raised funds before today.

The firm said the injection makes it one of the UK’s largest unicorns, but declined to give further details on its investor base or valuation.
STICKY SITUATION  Consultant at centre of Lekoil scandal accused of unfair trading

THE CONSULTANCY at the centre of a scandal embroiling oil giant Lekoil has been accused of unfairly trading on the name of a separate business that it failed to get a deal with.

Seawave Invest, which was approached by Lekoil about a potential partnership several years ago, but nothing materialised, Seawave caused a storm this week after Aim-listed Lekoil claimed it paid the consultant £600,000 (£400,000) for arranging a non-existent loan worth £164m.

Hochschild beats guidance on back of record production at Peru sites

EDWARD THICKNESSE
@edthicknesse

RECORD production at two of its Peruvian mines saw Hochschild beat its guidance for 2019, boosting shares more than two per cent yesterday.

Total silver production at the company hit 38.7m equivalent ounces, comfortably surpassing forecasts of 37.5m ounces.

A 10 per cent increase in output at San Jose, which contributed 15.4m ounces of silver, helped push the London-listed firm beyond its targets. The Inmaculada mine in southern Peru produced 206.2m equivalent ounces of gold, up from 244.4m ounces last year.

The FTSE 250 firm also announced that it had secured two permits for deposits at Pablo Sur and Cochaloma, with drilling set to start in the first quarter of 2020.

Tullow Oil takes $1.5bn hit amid oil forecast cuts

JOE CURTIS
@joe_r_curtis

TULLOW Oil’s share price slipped nearly 16 per cent yesterday after the firm sounded the alarm on oil prices, booking a $1.5bn (£1.15bn) writedown on its outlook after lowering its long-term oil price outlook.

The energy firm slashed its prediction for oil prices by $10 to $65 a barrel, with underwhelming well exploration and a reduction in Ghanaian reserves also contributing to the writedown.

"Tullow expects to report pretax impairments and exploration writeoffs of circa $1.5bn ($1.3bn post-tax),” the company said.

"Write-offs include Jethro, Joe and Carapa well costs in Guyana as a result of drilling results and Kenya Block 12A, Mauritania C3, PEL37 Namibia and Jamaica licence costs due to the levels of planned future activity or licence exits."

In a bid to guard itself from oil price fluctuations Tullow Oil has hedged 45,000 barrels per day of its 2020 output with an average floor price of $57.28. For next year, it has hedged 22,000 barrels per day at $52.80 each.

It expects to generate cash flow of at least $150m from 75,000 barrels per day at $60.

Tullow is still searching for a new chief executive after its share price plunged 70 per cent in December following the resignation of Pat McDade on the back of the business’ poor performance.

His resignation, alongside that of exploration director Angus McCoss, wiped £1.2bn off the exploration-focused firm’s value.

Australian miner Resolute sells Queensland gold pit for £159m

EDWARD THICKNESSE
@edthicknesse

AUSTRALIAN miner Resolute has sold its Ravenswood gold pit in Queensland to a consortium of buyers for AU$300m (£159m).

The dual-listed firm said the consortium, which is made up of EMR Capital and Golden Energy and Resources, was committed to the development of the mine, which has produced nearly 2m ounces of gold since 2004.

The sale of the mine fits with Resolute’s aim of switching its attention to becoming a low-cost, multi-mine African-focused gold producer.

On Monday Resolute had confirmed it was in negotiations with EMR Capital over the sale of the mine.

The mining firm described EMR as a “leading” resources-focused private equity company with “outstanding” credentials.

Yesterday, chief executive John Welborn said: “The sale of our Ravenswood gold mine on the terms announced today provides the opportunity for exceptional value for Resolute shareholders.”
New cinemas and indie films help
Everyman draw record customers

JOE CURTIS
@joe_r_curts
A RAIPID expansion and the success of
breakout indie movies like Rian
Johnson’s Knives Out pushed
Everyman to a record £65m in sales in
2019, the cinema chain revealed
yesterday.

The record sales, a 25 per cent jump
on the previous year, were
underpinned by the opening of seven
new venues to take Everyman to a
total of 33 cinemas across the UK.

A drop in footfall at Quiz stores and
connecions saw revenue at bricks and
mortar stores fall seven per cent.

Quiz chief executive Tarak Ramzan
said: “Whilst the trading backdrop
has remained challenging, it is disappoin-
ting to report a decline in rev-
ues in the period... With our cash
position, we remain confident that
we can improve our financial per-
formance and grow revenues.”

JOE CURTIS
@joe_r_curts
The transaction with Aprirose is
expected to complete in March, and
will cost the group less than £3m
per year.

The closures and
entertainment experience ideas.

Rob Pitcher told
City A.M.
that Aprirose will be
“excited” to work with
the former Tapeter chair who
resigned over the Sir Philip Green allegations.

BARONESS Karren Brady said she quit her role in the face of claims against
Green. Asked how she was able to
square her feminist views with some
of the allegations made against
Green, Brady told Sky News: “I didn’t
square them then because I resigned so I
think that says all it needs to say.”

JOE CURTIS
@joe_r_curts
The bar chain will
make venues
out areas move
to become a “concept site”, where
various towns the going
Year’s Eve were four per cent higher than last year.
Shares in the bar chain rose 5.4 per cent yesterday to 89.1p on the
announcements.

The bar chain reported
yesterday that it hit
record sales over the
festive period, as like-for-
like sales in the four weeks
up to and including New
Year’s Eve were four per cent
higher than last year.

The closure and rent
 reductions will improve the firm’s
full-year operational cash
flows by around £1.2m
per year.

The transaction with Aprirose is
expected to complete in March, and
will cost the group less that three
times the annual trading losses of the
five lease surrenders.

Revolution expects to be in a
position to make further acquisitions
in around 12 months time, Pitcher
added.

Ten said profit will likely be in line with market expectations.

Revolution Bars secures deal to cut
rents and close some of its venues

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno
JESS CLARK
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You have an interview in three days and this notebook is just what you need to look like the ultimate professional. But what about the people who sent it to you? It’s important everyone gets the chance to move up the ladder, right?

Of course. That’s why after one year in our Fulfilment Centres, employees can retrain in all sorts of subjects, from marketing to engineering. Plus, Amazon pays for 95% of their tuition, up to £8000 over four years.

It’s just one of the things we do to create a great place to work. See for yourself by booking a tour today at www.amazon.co.uk/fctours
This month, more people than ever before are taking part in ‘Veganuary’, kickstarting another year of growth for the vegan market.

Almost half of all vegans in the UK only made the change in 2018, demonstrating the speed at which consumers are shunning products made from animals or their by-products, and this will only accelerate this year. Rapid adoption of vegan alternatives to meat has primarily been driven down to the reception they have received from meat-eaters. When hype was at its peak, vegetarianism was polarising: you either ate meat or you didn’t, and if you enjoyed meat then vegetarian alternatives were off the menu. But veganism, partly because of how it links to climate change and because of growing awareness of the possible health benefits, is more fluid. In fact, the vast majority of people that are consuming meat alternatives are not strictly vegan but simply trying to reduce their meat intake, often referred to as ‘flexitarians’ or ‘reducetarians’. The Vegan Society claims non-vegans in the UK account for over 90% of meat alternative sales.

The fact vegan products now appeal to non-vegans means businesses have been more motivated to move with the times and able to cater to a larger market rather than a niche one. All types of businesses have eagerly started to cater for the growing demand for vegan products. Fast food firms like McDonald’s,Greggs, supermarkets including Tesco and Morrisons, and consumer goods giants like Nestle and Unilever have all introduced new vegan product ranges – and sales are booming. Even Tesla, not a prime candidate to disrupt, had revealed a slew of new ‘on-trend ingredients needed to make plant-based staples like grains, oilseeds and sugar, or firms like Ingredion that turns those materials into ingredients such as starches, sweeteners and gums.

Big players such as US firm Archer Daniels Midland, or ADM, recently unveiled a slew of new ‘on-trend ingredients’, including new plant-based proteins and non-dairy frozen treats, demonstrating it is aware of how consumer diets are changing. Similarly, in Europe, Scandinavian outfit AAK, the world’s leading producer of specialty and semi-specialty vegetable oils and fats, has also launched a new portfolio with tailor-made solutions for food manufacturers developing plant-based alternatives within the meat, dairy and ice cream segments. Investors can take a broader and less-risky approach with the US Vegan Climate Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF), which tracks the performance of large-cap US stocks that follow ‘vegan and climate-conscious principles’. With the ETF claiming to only contain stocks that don’t harm animals, the environment or human health, its holdings may come as a surprise to many. While it does offer exposure to firms like Beyond Meat, its largest holdings are in big tech firms like Apple, Microsoft, Facebook and Mastercard. The main benefit is that this ETF allows you to spread risk while upholding an ethical, socially-responsible investment strategy. This is only the start for veganism. US management consulting firm AT Kearney predicts that only 40% of the global population will still be consuming meat by 2040. Although several newer businesses like Beyond Meat have made a name for themselves, they will have to fight to maintain their early lead as more traditional players enter the market, such as giants in the meat market like Tyson Foods, Smithfield and Perdue & Hormel. Plus, they will have to spend big on developing new products to ensure they aren’t left behind by new innovations like lab-grown meat, which is expected to be a much bigger opportunity than the plant-based alternatives currently flying off the shelves.

Now, it is time for investors to think of some early bets. They are not short on choice, but they must ensure they make the right one for the long-term rather than get caught-up in the short-term success of new entrants.
Greggs picks Just Eat over Deliveroo for its nationwide delivery rollout

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

GREGGS has chosen to partner with Just Eat as it expands its food delivery option nationwide, in a boost for the takeaway app over rival Deliveroo.

The high street bakery chain was weighing up both food delivery companies following successful trials in several cities last year. Yesterday Greggs said it had opted to work exclusively with Just Eat and will begin to roll out delivery this week, launching first in Bristol and Birmingham.

Delivery will then launch in Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Nottingham in the spring, and the bakery is targeting national coverage by the end of the year.

The service is already available in London, Newcastle and Glasgow, where Greggs and Just Eat had trialled delivery last year.

Greggs chief executive Roger Whiteside said: “We know from the trials we have carried out, that our customers love the idea that they can get Greggs delivered directly to their door and we’re delighted to now be working with Just Eat to provide that service to our customers across the UK by the end of this year.”

Just last week Whiteside told City A.M. that Greggs is also planning to extend the operating hours of more of its branches as it seeks to capture the popular 6pm to 9pm market.

Just Eat managing director Andrew Kenny said the deal was “an exciting exclusive partnership for Just Eat”.

City Hall’s 300 per cent rise in spend queried

STEFAN BOSCA
@Stefan_Bosca

A THREEFOLD increase in City Hall office spending under Sadiq Khan has come under question, with one London Assembly member suggesting it could be “uncontrolled”.

The assembly’s Budget Committee yesterday released its first response to the mayor’s 2020/21 budget, which details £17bn of public expenditure.

The report noted that Greater London Authority (GLA) office spending under Khan had dramatically increased from £240m in 2016/17 to £767m in 2020/21 — a 320 per cent rise.

Deputy committee chair Len Duvall said the committee was aware Khan has increased responsibilities compared to the previous mayor, but added it was “seeking assurances... that any uplift in spend is done with true awareness of the cost borne”.

A source on the committee told City A.M. the massive increase in office and staff costs needed to be scrutinised. “It is true there are more GLA responsibilities now, but the growth in budgets looks a little bit uncontrolled,” they said. “We have been asked to find efficiencies in the assembly secretariat, so we think it is only fair to give that lots of scrutiny and avoid waste.”

A mayor of London spokesperson said the extra spending was necessary, after Khan was given more powers over housing, skills, education and health. They cited his Violence Reduction Unit, adult skills programmes and house-building initiatives as examples of this in practice.

“The mayor makes no apologies whatsoever for putting the resources in place to ensure he can continue delivering real results in all of these priority areas,” they said.

The committee also asked for improved transparency on the future viability of major transport projects.

Duvall said Transport for London (TfL) needed to be “much clearer” about projects that are at risk of not going ahead in the next four years.

Several high-profile transport projects — such as Crossrail 2, the Bakerloo line extension and a signalling upgrade on the Piccadilly line — are under a cloud, with no funding yet acquired from central government.

Khan’s spokesperson said TfL had “comprehensive monitoring” in place to assess the risks of future projects.

London tops European cities for the most two-hour commutes

STEFAN BOSCA
@Stefan_Bosca

LONDONERS have more two-hour commutes than anywhere else in Europe and second in the world, new research has shown.

The survey found that the average trip time for Londoners was 45 minutes, putting it just ahead of Birmingham and Manchester, with 44 and 43 minutes respectively.

Richard Freeston-Clough, from advocacy group London Travelwatch, said the results were indicative of an affordable housing shortage in the capital.

“I think the main reason for the long commutes is that the high cost of housing forces people working in London further out into commuter towns where costs are often lower,” he said.

Gregg’s popularity has soared recently after launching its vegan sausage roll

Delta smash Delta Air Lines on Tuesday reported a fourth-quarter profit that beat estimates, boosted in part by customers it gained from rival airlines’ 737 Max cancellations and growing air travel demand.

Net income climbed eight per cent to $1.1bn (£840m) in the quarter through 31 December from a year earlier.

Airlines that own Boeing’s 737 Max are cancelling flights without the Max into early June, in anticipation of extra simulator training requirements for pilots once regulators finally approve the jet to fly again.

Delta has not picked up premium revenues from rivals over the Max but chief executive Ed Bastian said the carrier would continue to see a marginal benefit while the jet remains grounded.

“There’s no question that we’re picking up new customers, but that’s not the main driver of our performance,” he said.

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GREEN CONCRETE Barbican road set to be Britain’s first 24/7 zero-emissions street

The CITY’s lord mayor will tonight announce that Beech Street, which runs through the Square Mile’s Barbican Centre, will be the spring be off limits to emission-emitting vehicles, making it the UK’s first 24/7 zero-emissions road.

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ONondon’s main share index rose slightly yesterday, hours before the sealing of an initial US-China trade deal, although sentiment was tempered when the US said tariffs on Chinese goods would not be rolled back immediately.

The FTSE 100 rose 0.3 per cent on a third day of gains, supported by a host of so-called defensive stocks including pharmaceutical giants Astrazeneca and GSK, which rose nearly two per cent and consumer goods companies. The FTSE 250 ended 0.2 per cent lower, with a 15.5 per cent plunge in yellow Oil weighing the most.

Banks suffered across the board as weak inflation data further spurred hopes that the Bank of England will cut interest rates in its January meeting. Provident Financial jumped even per cent after its key credit card business had a strong fourth quarter.

Astrazeneca of so-called defensive stocks including would not be rolled back immediately. The US said tariffs on Chinese goods over a baseline of $186bn in purchases in 2017. Trump said he would remove all US tariffs on Chinese imports once the two countries sign the phase two trade agreement, on which talks will start soon.

The three main stock indexes gave up earlier intraday record highs, with disappointment mounting from reports from Bank of America pushing the S&P financial index down 0.55 per cent.

BROWN RUDNICK International law firm Brown Rudnick has announced the appointment of Ravi Nayer as a partner in the firm’s litigation and arbitration practice in London. He joins the firm from Pinsent Masons, where he served as a partner. His considerable experience includes creating joint defence and novel litigation cooperation agreements for peer institutions in some of the UK’s largest class actions, including the recent RBS Rights Issue litigation. Commenting on his new appointment, Ravi said: “I am thrilled to be joining such an experienced and dynamic team of litigators. Brown Rudnick’s enviable track record of delivering success for clients involved in some of the most challenging financial and commercial disputes, is a testament to the intellect, creativity and determination at the heart of the firm’s culture.”

TOGETHER UK specialist mortgage provider Together Financial Services has announced the appointment of John Hooper as a non-executive director of the firm’s personal finance division. John brings over 35 years of experience in mortgage finance and risk experience to the role. Previously, John was chief operating officer of Clydesdale Bank and a member of the National Australia Group Europe board, together with Cynelard Bank. He also held a number of senior executive roles at National Australia Bank. John is currently chairman of the Cumberland Building Society and former chair of the society’s risk committee, and is also a non-executive director and chair of VTB Capital’s risk committee. Richard Gregory, chairman of Together Personal Finance, commented: “We are delighted to welcome John to the board of our personal finance business. He brings extensive experience... and will be a valuable addition.”

STACK OVERFLOW Online development firm Stack Overflow has announced the appointment of Teresa Dietrich as chief product officer. With over 20 years of experience, Teresa has a successful track record of solving complex problems within large, medium, and startup companies. She joins Stack Overflow from McKinsey New Ventures, where she served as global head of product and engineering. Prior to that, Teresa was chief technology officer at Namely, and held several leadership roles at Web MD and AOL. Prashanth Chandrasekar, chief executive of Stack Overflow, commented: “I’m thrilled that Teresa is joining our team. Her excellent execution skills and understanding of the developer workflow make her a great fit for our organization.”

BENEFICIAL stocks buoyed FTSE ahead of US-China deal

LONDON REPORT

Average British employee does not achieve career satisfaction until 45

ANNEH CARRICK
@annahdorrick

THE AVERAGE British worker will not be satisfied with their job until they reach the age of 45, according to research released today.

A survey commissioned by global job site Indeed found that by this point in their career employees will be satisfied with their job until they achieve career satisfaction until 45

ANNA MENIN
@cornamelin

THE CO-CHIEF investment officer of the world’s biggest hedge fund has said gold could surge to a record high above $2,000 an ounce as global political uncertainties increase.

“THERE is so much boiling conflict,” Greg Jensen, who helps oversee over $150bn at Connecticut-based Bridgewater Associates, told the Financial Times. Jensen cited growing income inequality in the US and rising tensions with China and Iran as some of the uncertainties that could prompt investors to look to so-called safe haven assets. “People should be prepared for a much wider range of potential more volatile, set of circumstances than we are mostly accustomed to,” he said.

Jensen also told the paper he believed the US Federal Reserve would let inflation run hot for a while, creating the circumstances for higher gold prices as investors turn to the precious metal to hedge inflationary forces.

“There will no longer be an attempt by any of the developed world’s major central banks to normalise interest rates. That’s a big deal,” he said.
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<th>Financials</th>
<th>FTSE 100</th>
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**FTSE 100**:
- **EPS**: $10.67
- **P/E Ratio**: 18.90

**FTSE 250**:
- **EPS**: $12.45
- **P/E Ratio**: 15.90

**FTSE ALL SHARE**:
- **EPS**: $13.67
- **P/E Ratio**: 17.90

**DOW JONES**:
- **EPS**: $15.29
- **P/E Ratio**: 19.50

**NASDAQ**:
- **EPS**: $17.89
- **P/E Ratio**: 20.60

**S&P 500**:
- **EPS**: $19.90
- **P/E Ratio**: 21.70

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**EU SHARES**

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**THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2020**

**MARKETS**

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Trump proved the doubters wrong and got it right on Iran

WHEN the Middle East was last in the news, it was for the birth of a new power, the overthrow of Mubarak and the start of the Arab Spring. Many expected the pro-democracy protests to lead to lasting change, but this was always unlikely, because for the west to see it happen, there would need to be a change in Iran's leadership. The west retains the threat of sanctions to hit 52 targets in case of an Iranian nuclear strike and Trump's threat to hit on Iran's terrorist-in-chief, Soleimani. But this was just one part of the population that Iran's authorities wanted the world to see.

So far, the west has been listening, by chemical warfare, to Iran's claims, the west retains the threat of sanctions to hit 52 targets in case of an Iranian nuclear strike and Trump's threat to hit on Iran's terrorist-in-chief, Soleimani. But this was just one part of the population that Iran's authorities wanted the world to see.

The only real question was therefore whether the US would rise to its own policies. The west maintains to disrupt the JCPOA, commonly called the Iran Deal, regulating the country's nuclear programme.

Iran has been cheating on the JCPOA terms ever since the American withdrew from it in 2018. But the west retains the threat of sanctions to hit 52 targets in case of an Iranian nuclear strike and Trump's threat to hit on Iran's terrorist-in-chief, Soleimani. But this was just one part of the population that Iran's authorities wanted the world to see.

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WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

Don’t let corporate governance turn into a box-ticking exercise

Edwin Morgan

AST week, some of the UK’s biggest businesses received a rap on the knuckles, as the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) published its annual review of how well companies lived up to the Corporate Governance Code. Some FTSE firms, the accounting and governance regulator argued, were simply “paying lip service to the spirit of the Code”, which sets out the principles and best practice for the boards of directors of listed companies. FRC chief Sir Jon Thompson bemoaned the fact that a “box-ticking compliance” approach could end up harming both shareholders and the public.

The regulator’s chief has put his finger on a real problem. Good governance is not about following a predetermined set of procedures and thinking that this constitutes success in its own right. Checklists can be reassuring, but they can also end up replacing rather than complementing critical thinking and careful strategy.

So why does the UK appear to be moving towards a much more rigid system that could promote exactly the box-ticking approach we want to avoid?

At present, corporate governance is regulated under a “soft law” approach. Under this method, the FRC works with firms to set out best practice for their board of directors through the Corporate Governance Code.

At the heart of this model is the “comply or explain” principle. This body will be underpinned by stronger statutory powers, with a bigger arsenal of penalties at its disposal and a fresh new enforcement team — led by Sir Jon himself, formerly of HMRC — to wield them.

The change has been prompted by the numerous perceived failings in the audit sector. Critics have argued that the current regulatory set-up has produced a lacklustre response to a list of corporate scandals, most notably the collapse of Carillion.

Few would dispute that auditing needs a regulator with teeth. But whereas audit oversight — which IoD members agree needs beefing up — might benefit from a set of steadfast rules, this simply isn’t the case with corporate governance.

With new powers and a mandate to use them, Arga is expected to take few prisoners when it comes to auditing and accounting failures. It’s difficult not to see corporate governance being caught in the crossfire.

The regulator's chief has put his finger on a real problem.

The government’s rescue package for Flybe flies in the face of its own promises to make the UK the “cleanest, greenest” country on Earth. Domestic flights are the most polluting way to travel — for every kilometre travelled, domestic flights produce more than three times the emissions of rail, or 22 times the emissions of the Eurostar. Any cut to air passenger duty would boost demand for these polluting flights.

Other airlines and rail companies are asking why Flybe should get a special bailout. Domestic air travel already benefits from no taxes on fuel, and the zero-rating of tickets for VAT.

Meanwhile, other countries are moving in the opposite direction: France is even considering banning all domestic flights where a train journey could be made in under five hours.

To maintain our global reputation, Britain must avoid the temptation of a heavy-handed approach.

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THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2020

OPINION

CITY A.M. NESTERLERS

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DEBATE

Was the government right to sign off a bailout for the airline Flybe?

Sitting in London, it is easy to think that Flybe should be allowed to fail. Sit in the departure hall at Exeter Airport, or Southampton, or one of the other regional hubs where Flybe represents over 75 per cent of traffic, and you may see it differently.

If the airline goes, the airports go. Easyjet, Ryanair and Jet2 have no interest in operating 78-seat Dash 8 aircraft. Eastern and Loganair are too small and financially weak to pick up the slack.

Changing the air passenger duty rules to exempt the return leg of domestic flights would help Flybe get back on its feet, although of course the Virgin consortium cannot have a free ride. Freed from PLC pressures to show constant growth, it is taking an axe to unprofitable routes, and its few large jet aircraft are leaving the fleet. The Virgin rebrand, connecting traffic from Virgin Atlantic and integration into Virgin Flying Club should generate new revenue.

Real progress needs to be seen this summer, but it is right to give the airline time now.

Rob Burgess is editor of headforpoints.com, the UK’s biggest frequent flyer website.

Carys Roberts is chief economist at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

CARYS ROBERTS

NO

ROB BURGESS

YES
CHRISTMAS is meant to be a relaxing time, but for many people it’s also a period of stress, tension, and tribulations — especially for married couples.

The financial burden of the holidays plus the pressure to have a “perfect Christmas” and the familiar strain of dealing with in-laws can lead to squabbles and even full-blown arguments. It should be no wonder then that the first working Monday back after the festive break has been branded “Divorce Day”, as men and women who’ve finally had enough look into legal separation.

In fact, online searches for “I want a divorce” rose by 230 per cent in the first week of January 2020 compared to December 2019, according to Richard Nelson solicitors.

If you are considering filing for a divorce, you need to go into it with a clear head — and armed with knowledge. To help you prepare, City A.M. asked John Oxley, divorce and family law barrister at Vardags, for his expert advice.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC FINANCIAL ISSUES PEOPLE SHOULD LOOK INTO WHEN CONSIDERING DIVORCE?

Divorce will involve an assessment of your entire finances. You need to have a firm grip on what is available — both income and assets — to each party, and what each are likely to need for a reasonable standard of living afterwards.

In most cases, one spouse will have a much higher earning capacity, and so is likely to leave the marriage with less capital — and perhaps ongoing obligations to the other. It is important to consider things such as mortgage capacity too. Both parties will need to be housed afterwards, and often this can be the hardest need to meet.

People should also be aware of how best to manage a settlement — especially when it comes to the tax impact of dealing with properties or businesses in certain ways. Both parties should leave the marriage with a stable financial future ahead of them, with a real sense of how their new needs are going to be catered for.

It is of course crucial to think about financial maintenance for children. There is a set formula for maintenance where the non-resident parent earns under £150,000 per year, but maintenance beyond that — and issues such as school fees — may have to be resolved separately.

HOW LONG DOES A DIVORCE TAKE, AND HOW MUCH CAN IT COST?

If proceedings aren’t contested and negotiations are straightforward, the whole matter can be wrapped up in around four months. Where matters are more contentious or complex, up to 18 months is about average.

Fees will vary in line with the complexity of the case, and the quality of the lawyers involved. Fees are charged on hourly rates, but a good
WHAT SHOULD HIGH NET WORTH INDIVIDUALS OR COUPLES BE AWARE OF?

For the very wealthy, the complexities are magnified. Their circumstances are likely to be unique, requiring bespoke advice around valuation and division of assets.

The most important thing is to realise what is at stake. For the wealthy party, this could be about half of the wealth they have built up. For the homemaker, getting it wrong could see them go from a life of luxury to one of penury. If one party tries to hide or undervalue assets, it can be very hard to counter it.

The most important thing is to act quickly and get specialist advice from the outset. Failure to deal with complexities such as jurisdiction straight away can have costly consequences. These sorts of cases are multi-million pound pieces of litigation, so it is vital to see them as such and to engage the experts.

WHAT AREAS DO PEOPLE TEND TO OVERLOOK WHEN GETTING DIVORCED?

Pensions are regularly neglected. These can be a massive asset, but it is often a case of “out of sight, out of mind”. Generally, any pension assets built up during the marriage should be shared equally between the spouses. Failure to do this can make a big difference to retirement incomes, especially where one spouse has been out of the workforce. Due to the way that returns are likely to accrue, failure to get your fair share of pension wealth could mean leaving a big portion of the marital pot behind.

Equally, where one party has received deferred compensation from work, such as share options, that should also not be neglected. Leaving these things off the balance sheet can lead to cases being reopened for non-disclosure in the future.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST ADVICE FOR KEEPING THINGS CIVIL?

It is important not to get bogged down in the past, and instead focus on the future that you are trying to build. Some couples use proceedings as a way of raking over everything bad that has ever happened between them, a recipe for strife and costs.

Ultimately, try to keep the legal side as separate as possible from the emotional fallout of the divorce. Of course, that can be difficult, but staying rational and focused on life beyond divorce is often the best way through it.

ARE DIVORCE LAWS SET TO CHANGE IN THE FUTURE?

The new parliament is expected to finally push through the move to “no-fault” divorce. This will allow couples to separate without going through the process of apportioning blame, and should make the process quicker and easier.

Also, leaving the EU could have serious consequences for cross-border couples. Currently, it is EU law which decides in which court a cross-border dispute can be heard, while also providing for easier recognition and enforcement of judgments across countries. This will no longer apply to the UK, but it remains unclear what may end up in its place. This could be a real headache for couples with lives spread across multiple jurisdictions.

ANY FINAL ADVICE FOR COUPLES CONSIDERING SEPARATION THIS MONTH?

There is no doubt that divorce is a complex and demanding process. It is emotionally intense, and brings with it the complexities of litigation and making financial decisions.

Those who fare best after divorce are the ones who consider the future. The process is about laying the foundation for the rest of your life and securing your financial future. It should not be about recriminations for the past.

Most of all, remember that the person on the other side of the divorce is someone whom you cherished and with whom you built a family. Whatever has led to the end of the marriage, remaining civil and focused on the relationship you might rebuild afterwards — especially if children are involved — is a good way of moving through the process.
TECHNOLOGY

EDITED BY STEVE HOGARTY

BODY TRACKING

WITHINGS BODY+
£69, WITHINGS.COM
Step on to these smart bathroom scales and – by running an imperceptible electrical signal through the base of your feet – the scales will measure and beam all of your body’s essential stats to your phone. Weight, fat percentage, water content, even bone mass can be tracked and graphed over time, providing valuable insights into your fitness levels.

HEARTRATE MONITOR

MYZONE MZ-3
£130, MYZONE.ORG
Snap this to your abdomen before you run for more accurate heart rate monitoring than you’d get in a regular fitness watch. The MZ-3 transmits live data to your wrist or phone, and measures effort as well as overall fitness, making it ideal for novices and pros alike. It has built in memory too, so you’re free to leave you phone behind and upload your metrics afterwards.

WATCHES

WITHINGS MOVE ECG
£130, WITHINGS.COM
One of the first smart watches to feature an electrocardiogram – the type of heart rate monitor that produces that distinctive bleeping line you’ll recognise from Casualty – the Withings ECG can detect heart conditions such as arrhythmia and atrial fibrillation. AI-driven fitness tracking automatically kicks in whenever the device detects that a workout has begun. Unlike the Apple Watch, the ECG must be performed manually – as if you’re catheterised and the watch won’t ping you a notification. This is dabbing, but in its defence, it’s a stylish piece of kit that pairs with any outfit.

APPLE WATCH SERIES 5
FROM £399, APPLE.COM/UK
Apple’s latest iteration of its category-leading smartwatch features an always-on display, which will help you out when you’re legging it through the 20th mile of your marathon and can no longer lift your arms. If you’re having a particularly toiled time of it, you can even stop running and check you’re not having a heart attack using the electrocardiogram feature. Health concerns aside, it’s a brilliant all-round smartwatch with heaps of third-party apps, including dozens designed to help you run faster.

GARMIN FENIX 6
FROM £529, GARMIN.COM
This multisport monster does pretty much everything a fitness watch could feasibly do. It monitors your heart rate, your altitude, your pace, your gradient, your lactate threshold and your maximal oxygen uptake. It shows you animations of exercises to help you figure out new routines, it comes preloaded with maps of 41,000 golf courses and 2,000 ski resorts. The Fenix 6 is so overloaded with features and functions that it’s a wonder you can’t just take it off, place it on the ground and let it go running all by itself.

MARATHON READY

With just three months to go until the London Marathon, here’s our pick of the best running gadgets to keep you on top of your game.

HYDRATION

LARQ WATER BOTTLE
£95, LIVELARQ.COM
This high-tech bottle periodically blasts your water with the same ultraviolet light used to sterilise operating theatres, destroying the harmful bacteria that builds up in regular bottles and causes the dreaded bottle stink. It also keeps hot things hot and cold things cold, and has a special Adventure mode designed to tackle water taken from rivers and lakes.

HEADPHONES

BEATS POWERBEATS PRO
£220, BEATSBYDRE.COM
These sports-focused wireless earphones from Apple-owned Beats not only sound great but look the part too, with a discreet clip-on design that fits snugly and never comes loose, even when you’re really going for it. Jump over a fence, backflip off a bridge, cartwheel into a bush – these guys aren’t leaving your earholes.

AFTERSHOKZ AEROPEX
£150, AFTERSHOKZ.CO.UK
These wireless headphones use bone conduction technology to transmit audio directly into your skull by vibrating the bones in and around your ear, which isn’t even nearly as dangerous or frightening as it sounds. The effect is spooky, like hearing voices in your head, but leaves your ears open to surrounding environmental noise and so keeps you safer whenever you’re running near traffic or tiger enclosures.

SENHEISER CX SPORT
£119, SENHEISER.COM
Don’t let the pretty models on the brochures fool you, running is a sweaty business and you should look like absolute dog mess when you’re doing it. The CX Sport wireless earphones recognise this, and so are splash and sweat resistant. Drip as much of your human brine over these guys as you like, they’ll never give up. As well as being as hard as they’re the best sounding sports earphones you can buy at this price, thanks to Sennheiser’s class leading drivers.

AFTERSHOKZ TITAN PLUS
£240, AFTERSHOKZ.CO.UK
These headphones feature bone conduction technology, which means they sound like a beating heart, but are also totally wireless and only cost £240.

MARATHONREADY

LIFE&STYLE
A SIGNIFICANT challenge facing financial services is how to retain the talent that we have grown or recruited. With more transparency around gender pay gap reporting and targets for achieving greater gender balance at all levels of seniority, firms are under increasing pressure to identify, hire, and retain top female talent. It is a virtuous circle, where the greater your gender balance, the more attractive your firm is to female talent. But how do we get the ball rolling, when so many firms are starting from low rates of female representation, particularly at senior levels, as shown in the data published through the Women in Finance Charter?

I would like to suggest that the “gender maths” is fairly straightforward. But what is the formula for this, and how can we implement it?

We believe that it starts with recognising the talented people who are sitting next to us. Too often we look outside our organisations, instead of applying a “gender lens” to identify talent within our own firms. This would help us re-evaluate what we regard as talent and achievement, and move away from existing stereotypes. Each year in June, I have the pleasure of seeing the results of this exercise. It is inspiring to see the breadth and depth of talent identified within those hidden gems or iconic leaders who are nominated for, and are winners of, the Women in Banking and Finance (WIBF) Annual Achievement Awards.

Part of the success of this process is derived from peers nominating colleagues, rather than the traditional approach of consulting with HR and senior leaders to consider the “talent list”, which can be subject to conscious and unconscious bias. The next step is to celebrate talent through nomination for awards. We know the effect on an individual’s perception and impact within an organisation when they are recognised and celebrated for being shortlisted or winning an award – it is transformative. Recognition and celebration of talent can lead to improved retention, which in turn creates a strong gender profile for a firm, attracting more female talent. Clearly, the gender maths works.

Recognising the right people at the right time in their professional and personal journeys can be the catalyst for unlocking high-impact achievements, and that is in everyone’s best interest. When we highlight successes, we create role models and inspire everyone around them. Creating belief in the ability to change and succeed is a powerful tool for embedding a culture of inclusion and “can do” in an organisation.

Creating role models and leaders of change is not only good for women, but for all workers. As I have said before, the impact of having more women at the top of firms has a multiplier effect for the business we do and how we do it, as well as for diversity.

At WIBF, we understood this. For over two decades, we have been recognising and celebrating the talent in the financial services sector in our annual WIBF Awards for Achievement. Through five award categories, we celebrate career achievement, champions for women, future leaders, team diversity, and technology stars. Many of our award winners have leveraged their WIBF Award as a launchpad to be role models and leaders of change, which is transforming the business we do and how we do it. We have seen former award winners named in the annual honours list, and countless others go on to receive further accolades and awards.

Firms and recruiters often say that they struggle to find female top talent. To them I say: in 23 years we haven’t struggled. All modesty aside, we do seem to have an eye for spotting talent. This year’s awards will be particularly special, as WIBF is celebrating its fortieth year of inspiring and connecting people with talent and a passion for diversity.

I encourage firms and managers to consider who is your talent, and to call it out. It is important, and can make all the difference. So make sure that you nominate outstanding colleagues to the WIBF Awards for Achievement. The deadline for nominations is Friday 28 February 2020.

Vivienne Artz is president of WIBF.
Six Nations squad announcement.

Eddie Jones will no doubt go back through the squad to fill the back row with players who will not make it to France in 2023, and while England will not have to rebuild to the level of some countries, there are a few decisions for Jones to make ahead of his Six Nations squad announcement.

Jones will no doubt go back through the match in which they failed to lay a glove on South Africa with his team, yet he is likely to pick many of the same 31 players from the tournament given the youth the squad possessed.

As with any new World Cup cycle, there are players who will not make it to France in 2023, and while England will not have to rebuild to the level of some countries, there are a few decisions for Jones to make ahead of his Six Nations squad announcement.

**SCUM-HALF**

Starting in the clearest position where change looks set to be forced, both Ben Youngs, 30, and Willi Heinz, 33, would appear to be too old to be England’s starting No9 in three years time.

Long-time first choice Youngs, whose displays have ranged from excellent to underwhelming during Jones’s reign, will surely be in the squad, but if Jones is to take England through to France – something the Rugby Football Union is still to confirm – then he will have to start thinking about the likely successors for such a crucial role in the team.

England do not boast a standout candidate of the calibre of South Africa’s Faf de Klerk or New Zealand’s Aaron Smith, but Saracens’ Ben Spencer is the most obvious choice to come in, along with Dan Robson of Wasps, both 27.

Elsewhere, Bristol’s Harry Randall and Northampton’s Henry Taylor would present more left-field and possibly long-term options, while Sale back row Ben Curry is said to be seen by Jones as a potential No9.

**PROPS**

In Kyle Sinckler and Manu Vunipola there is little cause to question the starting props, but Dan Cole, 30, and Joe Marler, 29, who played significant roles at the World Cup, may also be too old to stay the distance this cycle.

Cole struggled when replacing Sinckler after just three minutes of the final as the Springboks dominated the scrum. A long, illustrious international career should not be remembered for that alone, but it may be time for new blood to step up.

Marler, meanwhile, only returned from international retirement last summer and there remain questions about whether he can commit to playing for his country over the next four years.

Ellis Genge is still a great option for Jones at loosehead, while Exeter’s Harry Williams and Alex Hepburn are liked by Jones and could come in at tighthead. Bath’s Beno Obano and Will Stuart – now coached by England scrum coach Neal Hatley – also deserve a mention.

**SECOND ROW**

Maro Itoje will remain one of the first names on the team sheet and went from strength to strength in 2019, commandeering George Kruis’s role as line-out caller.

With Kruis linked with a move to Japan at the end of this season amid speculation regarding Saracens’ efforts to stay within the salary cap, his reduced role with England and the fact he turns 30 next month, his international career may have reached its final innings.

Fellow lock Courtney Lawes is already 30, but has only seemed to improve with age. He has the potential to make France if given the chance and Jones is likely to abide. Alun Wyn Jones, 34, excelled at lock for Wales last year despite his age.

Wales’ Joe Launchbury, 28, and Bath’s Elliott Stooke, 26, are both slightly younger and strong candidates to come in as cover, if not step up in the long term, while Alex Moon has impressed this season for Northampton and, at 23, could be one for the future.

**BACK THREE**

Among the backs, England’s biggest concerns are injury-related. Bath trio Joe Cokanasiga, Raadiah McConnochie and Anthony Watson have all had injury issues to varying extents, but would otherwise be expected to be included in the squad.

Watson has continued his fine form for Bath since returning from Japan but was forced off last weekend with injury in the Champions Cup dead rubber defeat to Harlequins.

Elliot Daly, Jack Nowell and Jonny May remain the standout choices to fill the back three in their absence.

**THE PLAYERS FIGHTING FOR A PLACE**

**LIKELY SAFE**

Luke Cowan-Dickie

Tom Curry

Ellis Genge

Jamie George

Mario Ituțu

Joe Launchbury

Courtney Lawes

Lewis Ludlam

Kyle Sinckler

Jack Singleton

San Underhill

Billy Vunipola

Mako Vunipola

Elliot Daly

Owen Farrell

George Ford

Piers Francis

Jonathan Joseph

JohnsonMay

Jack Nowell

Anthony Watson

Ben Youngs

**IN CONTENTION**

HARRY WILLIAMS

ALEC HEPBURN

ELLIS GENGE

ELLIS GENGE

JAMIE GEORGE

AARON SMITH

LEWIS LUDLAM

KYLE SINCKLER

JACK SINGLETON

SAN UNDERHILL

BILLY VUNIPOLA

Mako Vunipola

ELLIOT DALY

OWEN FARRELL

GEORGE FORD

PIERS FRANCIS

JONATHAN JOSEPH

JOHN MAY

JACK NOWELL

ANTHONY WATSON

BEN YOUNGS

**UNDER THREAT**

Dan Cole

Mark Wilson

Willi Heinz

Joe Marler

George Kruis

RUADHí

McConnochie

Joe Cokanasiga

Henry Slade

Eddie Jones promised changes to his next England squad after the World Cup final defeat

Michael Searles assesses the options facing Eddie Jones ahead of England’s Six Nations squad announcement

Ben Curry, twin brother of Tom, is in contention for his first call-up

Elliot Daly, Sam Simmonds, and Joe Marler are seen by Jones as a potential No9.
**CRICKET COMMENT**

**Chris Tremlett**

IMMY Anderson’s broken rib has left England with a decision to make for the third Test match against South Africa, which starts in Port Elizabeth this morning.

Anderson took seven wickets in the 189-run win in Cape Town and will be a big miss, but his absence is an opportunity for one of Jofra Archer, Mark Wood and Chris Woakes. All three of the contenders are out of practice. Archer missed the last Test with an elbow injury, Wood hasn’t played since the World Cup final due to a side strain, while Woakes was one of many in the squad to be struck down by illness.

Archer is the man in possession, having taken eight wickets in the first Test at Centurion, but he has had a busy last 10 months and England must be cautious with him. If he is fully fit and raring to go then I would always like to see him play, but the suggestions from this week’s net sessions are that he isn’t. Archer needs looking after in the long term so that he can stay a 95mph bowler and not slip down to 85mph.

There is a bigger picture. Archer will play for England across all three formats for the rest of his career, so it is not worth gambling on his fitness. Maybe, with some more time, he could be ready to return for the fourth Test.

Woakes is England’s Steady Eddie: he’s a seasoned campaigner, who will bowl more overs in better areas than the other two. But for me Wood is a better fit into the pace bowling attack alongside Stuart Broad, Sam Curran and Ben Stokes.

Due to his action, which takes a lot out of him physically and has unfortunately given him ankle problems, we have only seen snips of what Wood can do at full throttle. However, he took 5-41 in his last Test – England’s win over the West Indies in February 2019 – and looked the part throughout the World Cup last summer, bowling quickly.

Wood is the most attacking option and if the Port Elizabeth pitch proves to be a flat one he offers a real point of difference due to his pace and ability with reverse swing.

**FIT-AGAIN WOOD THE WAY TO GO**

**YOUNG GUNS**

England should be coming into today’s game full of confidence. Their performance at Cape Town was brilliant and, although Ben Stokes once again took the headlines, there were lots of positives to take. Chief among them was the contribution of England’s young players, with five players under the age of 25 in the XI.

Stokes was almost embarrassed to accept the man of the match award ahead of Dom Bess, whose first Test century set the winning platform. Ollie Pope made a second Test half-century and is full of promise in the middle order. Zak Crawley took a few vital catches and Curran continued his knack of picking up big wickets.

I feel sorry for Matt Parkinson, who is yet to get a game despite Jack Leach’s struggles with illness, but I thought Dom Bess had a solid if unspectacular game. The off-spinner is perhaps under-used. Spinner Parkinson to being a front-line spinner and brought control to one end in the fourth innings.

For England, especially away from home, the question has always been about consistency. To win and take a 2-1 lead in the four-match series the young team now need to pick up where they left off in Cape Town.

Chris Tremlett is a former England fast bowler and a director at Source Property Investments. @ChrisTremlett33
European asset allocations can be complex — especially with the UK’s political future still uncertain. Join us this January as Francis Ellison and Felicity Long, Client Portfolio Managers at Columbia Threadneedle, share their positioning for 2020, thoughts on European equity capabilities, and market outlook.

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