This is just a **wrapper**.

It’s what’s **inside** that matters.
An **ISA** is just a wrapper – a tax efficient way to buy, hold and sell investments.

But like all wrappers, it’s what’s inside that counts.

Inside every Killik & Co ISA you can find an expertly balanced mix of investments, built by a dedicated adviser based on an in-depth understanding of you and your needs.

It’s what makes our service award winning.

Contact us today for a complimentary review of your investments at **ISA@killik.com**.

**Voted Wealth Manager of the Year 2019** by readers of the Financial Times and Investors Chronicle.
Entrepreneur relief change stirs backlash

HARRY ROBERTSON AND STEFAN BOSCIA
@harrygrobertson @Stefan_Boscia

A ROW broke out yesterday between the government and businesses over reported plans to scrap the entrepreneurs’ relief tax scheme, which small firms warned will “destroy retirements”.

Separately, a report out today said the use of the scheme is growing more than twice as fast in the north of the country than in London, questioning the new chancellor Rishi Sunak’s purported rationale for axing the relief.

Plans have been drawn up for Sunak to scrap entrepreneurs’ relief in the 11 March Budget, the Sunday Times reported, in a move that would give the UK’s coffers a £2.7bn annual boost and free up cash for spending.

The scheme, launched by then-Prime Minister Gordon Brown in 2008, cuts the amount of capital gains tax paid when business-owners sell their firms from the usual 20 per cent to 10 per cent on up to £10m of lifetime gains.

The Federation of Small Businesses’ chief Mike Cherry said getting rid of the relief would “make a mockery” of those who invest in businesses rather than other asset classes.

£ CONTINUES ON P3
Home Office chaos is looking none too Priti

HE PERPETUAL conflict between Eastasia, Oceania and Eurasia in Orwell’s 1984 is a warning, not a how-to. Yet Number 10 and Boris Johnson’s government seem to be creating their own version of permanent war, finding enemies real and imagined right across the ranks of the civil service, the backbenches and Britain’s oldest institutions. The latest extraordinary row broke came to a head this weekend, with Sir Philip Rutnam quitting as permanent secretary at the Home Office and suing the government for constructive dismissal after a vicious briefing war and what Rutnam alleges counts as “bullying” behaviour from home secretary Priti Patel, which she denies. Sir Philip is not beyond reproach and, in a sense, it is something of a surprise he was in the top job. He has been within touching distance of all sorts of government clangers, from the West Coast rail franchising debacle to the shocking treatment of the Windrush generation. In the future around the author, the new senior officials and the then-home secretary Amber Rudd all received the heave-ho; Rutnam sailed on regardless, and then memorably complained in a secret committee that it was frightfully rude of MPs not to tell him what they were going to ask in advance. In the private sector, rather than the pleasantly coddled world of the civil service, he’d have been lucky not to be out on his ear. Nonetheless, it is another day of the government having to clean up after a self-inflicted wound. We can add it to the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment of “weirdo” Andrew Sabisky, briefings that the licence fee was for the chop, the departure of a chancellor, the appointment...
Salary Finance lays ground for Neyber’s rescue

ANGHARAD CARRICK

THE GOLDMAN Sachs-backed lender Neyber is reported to be in talks with rival Salary Finance.

Neyber is expected to appoint administrators this week, according to Sky News. The broadcaster said yesterday that the consumer finance provider will offload its assets including its blue-chip customer contracts to Salary Finance.

Sky News sources said the deal was almost certain to happen in the coming days and would result in Goldman Sachs becoming a small shareholder in the business. The bank’s current shareholding is said to be less than five per cent.

Goldman Sachs backed Neyber via one of its private capital funds in 2017. The investment included a small amount of equity and £100m of debt drawn down by the Neyber vehicles that issue loans to consumers.

Neyber has been beset by issues in recent weeks as it sought options to stay afloat.

Last month it was reported that the lender was in talks with early-stage accounting firm BDO about a range of options, including a pre-pack sale.

If the takeover is completed the lender with more than 500 corporate partners, according to Sky News, including Asda, BT, the Cooperative Group, Dixons Carphone and Virgin Active.

It will also create a customer base of nearly 3m people.

Salary Finance offers a raft of “financial wellness” programmes including loans and financial education, while Neyber allows employees to borrow against their salaries.

Salary Finance may end up paying just a six-figure sum for Neyber’s assets, according to Sky News sources. Goldman Sachs, Salary Finance and BDO declined to comment. Neyber could not be reached for comment.

Last month it was reported that the lender was in talks with early-stage accounting firm BDO about a range of options, including a pre-pack sale.

If the takeover is completed the lender with more than 500 corporate partners, according to Sky News, including Asda, BT, the Cooperative Group, Dixons Carphone and Virgin Active.

It will also create a customer base of nearly 3m people.

Salary Finance offers a raft of “financial wellness” programmes including loans and financial education, while Neyber allows employees to borrow against their salaries.

Salary Finance may end up paying just a six-figure sum for Neyber’s assets, according to Sky News sources. Goldman Sachs, Salary Finance and BDO declined to comment. Neyber could not be reached for comment.
New John Lewis boss Sharon White to unveil strategic review this week

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

STRUGGLING department store chain John Lewis is expected to launch a strategic review in a bid to rescue the business as it announces its full-year results later this week.

Former Ofcom boss Sharon White, who took over as chairman of John Lewis and Waitrose last month, and newly appointed strategy and commercial development director Nina Bhatia are preparing to unveil the review on Thursday, according to reports.

In January the partnership said full-year profit will be “substantially down” on last year and indicated that it could scrap its employee bonus. The strategic review is expected to probe the retailer’s Never Knowingly Undersold pledge and its store portfolio.

The retailer is set to announce write-downs on the value of its properties on Thursday, according to the Sunday Times.

The newspaper also reported that White is in talks with several consultancies, including McKinsey. A strategic plan to closer align the John Lewis and Waitrose businesses is already underway after being launched by White’s predecessor Sir Charlie Mayfield.

Debenhams insists lenders back critical debt restructuring plans

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

DEBENHAMS yesterday denied that the commitment of its lenders to a debt for equity swap is wavering, as the beleaguered retailer responded to reports that securing a debt restructuring is dependent on landlords granting steep rent cuts.

Any additional closures are not expected to happen until at least 2021 over a two- to three-year period, and numbers are still expected to be in line with the original guidance of 50 stores.

The Sunday Times reported that the department store has warned landlords that its lenders may refuse to back a debt restructuring plan unless rent reductions can be agreed. However the retailer said lenders’ commitment to the debt for equity swap is “not in question”.

Private equity firms race to bid for stake in Asda

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

PRIVATE equity firms are vying to buy a majority stake in Asda after its US owner Walmart began exploring an offload of the supermarket.

The potential sale follows the competition watchdog’s decision to block Asda’s merger with Sainsbury’s last year.

US buyout firm Lone Star has reportedly made an offer for a stake in the grocer, with private equity firms Apollo and TDR also in the running.

Lone Star is interested in Asda’s property portfolio, as the grocer owns 75 per cent of the freeholds to its supermarkets, the Sunday Times reported.

It is unlikely that a sale to a private equity firm would attract a valuation as high as the £7.3bn price tag under the failed Sainsbury’s merger.

TDR and Apollo declined to comment. Lone Star did not respond to a request for comment.

Last week Walmart said it was in early-stage talks about selling a controlling stake in the UK supermarket.
Most successful people are quick thinkers, it’s a mindset we share. They want to achieve success not only through the money they have in the bank, but by their enthusiasm for living and working on their terms. Amen to that. If you like this approach, maybe we should talk.
Tech firm Thought Machine rakes in $83m funding led by Draper Esprit

ANGHARAD CARRICK
@angharadcarrick
TECHNOLOGY company Thought Machine has today raised $83m (£64.74m) in series B funding led by listed fund Draper Esprit.
The venture capital firm, which has invested in a number of fintech businesses, contributed £26.5m to the funding for Thought Machine, a technology company that builds cloud-native technology for banks. Thought Machine’s banking platform Vault counts Lloyds Banking Group, Standard Chartered, SEB and Atom Bank as clients.
All of Thought Machine’s existing investors – Lloyds Banking Group, IQ Capital, Backed and Playfair Capital – participated in the round.
IQ Capital contributed £15m from its new scaleup fund.
Max Bautin, founding partner of the firm, said: “We first backed Thought Machine at seed stage in 2016 and have seen it grow from a startup to a 300 person-strong global scaleup with a global customer base and potential to become one of the most valuable European fintech companies.”
The technology firm said that the funding will be used to drive its expansion into the Asia Pacific region.

Freeze your card.
Easy as.
Can’t find your Visa debit card?
Control it with the Halifax mobile app.

NMC Health hires Moelis bank to advise on its debt restructuring

ANGHARAD CARRICK
@angharadcarrick
NMC HEALTH has hired investment bank Moelis to advise on a debt restructuring, in the latest turn of events for the embattled healthcare operator.
Three sources familiar with the matter said NMC had hired the bank in relation to its ability to meet debt obligations, Reuters reported.
Last week the Financial Conduct Authority announced it was launching an investigation into NMC just hours after trading in its shares was suspended.
The company’s shares have lost more than half of their value since the end of last year when shortseller Muddy Waters questioned its financial statements.
News of the probe came just after the hospital operator fired its chief executive and placed its finance chief on extended sick leave, following an ongoing investigation of its finances.
Shares rose 6.6 per cent to 1.000p last Friday.

RAISING A RUCK-US Terrestrial joint bid for Six Nations could be sent to the sin bin

SKY IS said to be closing in on a £300m deal for Six Nations broadcast rights in a move that could wipe the tournament from terrestrial TV. The BBC and ITV will not be allowed to launch another joint bid for the rights, the Rugby Paper reported.

Activist Elliott in stake bid to oust Twitter founder

JAMES WARRINGTON
@j_a_warrington
ACTIVIST Elliott Management has built up a stake in Twitter in a bid to oust the social media site’s founder Jack Dorsey as chief executive.
The New York-based hedge fund, founded by billionaire Paul Singer, has nominated four directors to Twitter’s board, Bloomberg first reported.
Elliott is also said to be plotting the removal of Dorsey, to be replaced by a more dedicated chief executive.
Dorsey has come under scrutiny for his dual role as chief executive of Square, the payments company he co-founded in 2010.
It is not clear exactly how large Elliott’s stake is, nor who it has nominated to the board. Twitter declined to comment. Elliott did not respond to a request for comment.
Dorsey, who holds a two per cent stake in Twitter, returned to Twitter in 2015 after boss Dick Costolo stepped down. He is one of the only people to run two public companies at the same time.
Shares in the social media platform slumped by a fifth in the third quarter after it missed expectations for both profit and revenue due to bugs in its advertising technology. But the company last month bounced back, posting more than $1bn (£780m) in quarterly revenue for the first time.
Dorsey raised eyebrows last year when he revealed plans to spend as much as six months in Africa in 2020, as the firm tries to be more global.
Elliott, which has a track record of clashing with some of the world’s largest companies, has recently taken a three per cent stake in Softbank.
Twitter shares have fallen almost 21 per cent in the last six months.
UK firms would accept tax rise if rules simplified

HARRY ROBERTSON
@harrygrobertson

TWO-THIRDS of UK businesses would accept a tax rise in exchange for a simpler tax system, a survey from law firm BDO has found.

The survey comes ahead of the 11 March Budget, in which new chancellor Rishi Sunak is expected to increase spending and cut entrepreneurs’ tax relief, a tax rise equivalent to £2.7bn a year.

It showed that the UK’s businesses want the tax system to be simpler and less cumbersome. A significant majority — 66 per cent — of respondents indicated they would accept a rise in taxes in exchange for a simplification programme, a rise of 18 per cent since the 2018 Budget.

Only 12 per cent of the more than 600 respondents to the survey said they did not find tax cumbersome, BDO said.

Paul Falvey, tax partner at BDO, said: “It is promising that businesses are looking to the future and appear to support our view that tax simplification is needed to help organisations tackle the challenging landscape.”

“Now is the time for the government to make business easier by simplifying tax. It requires progressive steps to be taken and an end to back door tax increases engineered by changing the rules for tax reliefs and allowances,” he added.

The survey also showed that businesses are divided over how to boost investment, which has suffered during the Brexit impasse.

Almost a third of businesses suggested making equity investment tax deductible for individuals, whilst just over a quarter believed that up-front income tax relief could encourage business investment.

Falvey said: “Businesses are looking for the government to show that it will deliver on its promises to make the economy prosper post-Brexit.”

German car industry in line for tough time amid virus spread

JACK RICHARDSON
@JackRich93

THE GERMAN car industry will face serious challenges over the coming months, according to a new report.

The Ifo Business Climate Survey demand index fell to minus 11.8 for February, down from minus 2.1 in January and export expectations fell from minus 5.2 from minus 15.4 in the same period. The personnel planning index also fell from minus 31.9 to minus 41.8 over the period.

Car production has traditionally been one of Germany’s strongest industries but it is now facing challenges including supply chain disruption from coronavirus and the need to avoid tariffs with the UK.

“Now is the time for the government to make business easier by simplifying tax. It requires progressive steps to be taken and an end to back door tax increases engineered by changing the rules for tax reliefs and allowances,” he added.

The survey also showed that businesses are divided over how to boost investment, which has suffered during the Brexit impasse.

Almost a third of businesses suggested making equity investment tax deductible for individuals, whilst just over a quarter believed that up-front income tax relief could encourage business investment.

Falvey said: “Businesses are looking for the government to show that it will deliver on its promises to make the economy prosper post-Brexit.”

“Now is the time for the government to make business easier by simplifying tax. It requires progressive steps to be taken and an end to back door tax increases engineered by changing the rules for tax reliefs and allowances,” he added.

The survey also showed that businesses are divided over how to boost investment, which has suffered during the Brexit impasse.

Almost a third of businesses suggested making equity investment tax deductible for individuals, whilst just over a quarter believed that up-front income tax relief could encourage business investment.

Falvey said: “Businesses are looking for the government to show that it will deliver on its promises to make the economy prosper post-Brexit.”

Private sector fails to recover after election

JACK RICHARDSON
@JackRich93

ACTIVITY in the private sector fell again in the quarter to February, new figures have shown.

Research by the CBI published today demonstrated the 16th consecutive quarter of falling business volumes in the UK. However, it pointed to variation across different sectors and some cause for business optimism.

The report, based on a survey of 631 businesses, showed a fall in private sector activity of seven per cent. This was an improvement on the previous month, however, where it fell by 16 per cent.

Total services went down by nine per cent and consumer services by 17 per cent, against previous falls of 12 and five respectively.

“The decline in private sector activity is slowly easing, but we’re not seeing a more substantial bounce. Nonetheless, businesses are hopeful of growth returning over the coming quarter,” said CBI lead economist Alpesh Paleja.

The fall in business and professional services was six per cent, compared to a previous drop of 14 per cent.
RANGE ROVER VELAR R-DYNAMIC BLACK

INCREASED PRESENCE.
REDUCED FIGURE.

FROM £499 PER MONTH PLUS DEPOSIT AND OPTIONAL FINAL PAYMENT

The limited edition Range Rover Velar R-Dynamic Black* takes the undeniable presence of Velar even further. Available in Santorini Black and Eiger Grey with Ebony Perforated Grained Leather seats, it offers an array of enhanced features as standard, including an Exterior Black Pack and gloss black 21” alloy wheels, for an extra touch of drama. Not to mention Privacy Glass for a layer of seclusion between you and the outside world, and a Fixed Panoramic Roof, which enhances the airy, spacious feeling.

From £499 per month, the Range Rover Velar R-Dynamic Black looks just as good on paper. Contact your local Retailer for more information.

Range Rover Velar R-Dynamic Black PCP Representative Example*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the Road Price</td>
<td>£56,995.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Deposit Allowance (FDA)</td>
<td>£2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Deposit</td>
<td>£13,791.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Amount of Credit</td>
<td>£41,204.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Fee (included in final payment)</td>
<td>£10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 Monthly Payments</td>
<td>£499.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Final Payment</td>
<td>£23,643.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Amount Payable (inc. FDA)</td>
<td>£63,386.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Agreement</td>
<td>49 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative APR</td>
<td>4.9% APR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Rate (Fixed)</td>
<td>4.79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Representative Example relates to a Range Rover Velar R-Dynamic Black. 4.9% APR Representative available on Range Rover Velar 2.0 MY registered between 1st January 2020 and 31st March 2020 at participating Retailers only. With Land Rover Personal Contract Purchase you have the option at the end of the agreement to: (1) return the vehicle and not pay the Optional Final Payment. If the vehicle has exceeded the maximum agreed mileage a charge per excess mile will apply. In this example if the vehicle has exceeded 40,833 miles, a charge of £1.96 per mile (including VAT at 20%) will apply per excess mile. If the vehicle is in good condition (fair wear and tear accepted) and has not exceeded 40,833 miles you will have nothing further to pay; (2) pay the Optional Final Payment to own the vehicle or (3) part exchange the vehicle subject to settlement of your existing credit agreement; new credit agreements are subject to status. Representative Example is based upon an annual mileage of 10,000 miles. Credit is subject to status and only available to UK residents, aged 18 and over. This credit offer is only available through Black Horse Limited trading as Land Rover Financial Services, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Truro, TR1 3RF. We can introduce you to Land Rover Financial Services to provide funding for your vehicle. We may receive commission or other benefits for introducing you to the Lender. *Limited edition Range Rover Velar R-Dynamic Black available now. Limited availability whilst stocks last at participating UK Land Rover Retailers. Please contact your local Retailer to confirm vehicle availability.

Official WLTP Fuel Consumption for the Range Rover Velar range in mpg (l/100km): Combined 23.0-42.0 (12.3-6.7), NEDCeq CO₂ Emissions 270-152 g/km. The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer’s tests in accordance with EU legislation. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ. CO₂ and fuel economy figures may vary according to factors such as driving styles, environmental conditions, load and accessories.
UK’s consulting market slows its growth in 2019

LIAM ROCHE

GROWTH in the UK consulting market almost halved in the three years between the 2016 EU referendum and 2019, a new report has shown.

Britain’s consultancy growth slowed from 7.5 per cent in 2016 to four per cent in 2019, according to a study by Source Global Market Research.

Similar growth rates are expected in 2020 as the industry will benefit from some Brexit changes, but this is likely to come into full effect in 2021, once the UK and the EU have settle a deal.

The largest markets — public sector and financial services — both endured challenging years, with the latter’s growth of seven per cent in 2016 falling to 4.1 per cent last year.

“Regulatory-driven work in the UK’s financial services sector — for so long a foundation of the UK’s consulting market — is on the wane as clients try to use internal resources to do the work that’s needed,” the report said.

The volume of public sector consulting work grew by only one per cent in 2019, down from 4.5 per cent in 2018, as uncertainty caused by the Brexit vote caused upheaval and delays to decision making around policies.

However, clarity brought about by Iloris Johnson’s Brexit stance could foster an environment for investment, allowing the consulting industry to recover, according to Zoe Stump from Source Global Research.

“At face value, the UK consulting market looks set to bounce back from the paralysis that affected some parts of the market in 2019. Hoping that the country will now ‘Get Brexit Done’, there’s a willingness to invest... especially in areas where digital technology can transform productivity”

UK consulting received a boost in the UK’s financial services sector — for so long a foundation of the UK’s consulting market — is on the wane as clients try to use internal resources to do the work that’s needed,” the report said.

The volume of public sector consulting work grew by only one per cent in 2019, down from 4.5 per cent in 2018, as uncertainty caused by the Brexit vote caused upheaval and delays to decision making around policies.

However, clarity brought about by Iloris Johnson’s Brexit stance could foster an environment for investment, allowing the consulting industry to recover, according to Zoe Stump from Source Global Research.

“At face value, the UK consulting market looks set to bounce back from the paralysis that affected some parts of the market in 2019. Hoping that the country will now ‘Get Brexit Done’, there’s a willingness to invest... especially in areas where digital technology can transform productivity.”

The UK consulting market looks set to bounce back from the paralysis that affected some parts of the market in 2019. Hoping that the country will now ‘Get Brexit Done’, there’s a willingness to invest... especially in areas where digital technology can transform productivity.

Lloyds Banking Group faces fresh police probe following new fraud allegations

ANGHARAD CARRICK

@angharadcarrick

LLOYDS Bank is said to be facing a fresh police investigation over allegations of fraud against small businesses.

The Sunday Telegraph first reported that Avon and Somerset Police are investigating allegations made against the bank by property investor Kashif Shabir. Shabir lost his business after Lloyds foreclosed on his loans and appointed a receiver to sell his assets in 2009.

Lloyds has dismissed claims of misconduct at its unit in Bristol made by Shabir and others over a decade, who have claimed the bank had their businesses revalued downwards, forced into receivership and then sold.

Lloyds reportedly believed it had no alternative but to repossess Shabir’s property after he failed to make repayments and that the revaluation reflected the decline of the property market.

A spokesman for Lloyds said that the allegations have been reviewed and have “been found to be completely baseless”.

“Concerns in relation to a Bristol unit have been raised by third parties in the past. In each instance these concerns have been thoroughly investigated and we have not found any evidence to support them,” they added.

Lloyds boss Antonio Horta-Osorio said he had personally looked into the claims.
Steven Levy’s Facebook tome offers unparalleled insight into the social media giant’s rise, but fails to hold Zuckerberg to account

**Tech**

**Facebook: The Inside Story**

By Steven Levy

In the past four years, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg’s world has been turned upside down. From a simple social media platform that he created while studying at Harvard University first blossomed a networking supersite, that later became a megamind. Levy, having previously written computer projects to the head of a global empire, Levy, having previously written one of the most definitive books on Google, was given unprecedented levels of access to Zuckerberg and senior company executives over three years to achieve this goal.

We follow Zuckerberg and the team as he almost gets expelled from Harvard for stripping its servers for college student data to create Facebook’s earlier brother, Facemash. Later, we see a more human side to Zuckerberg as he gets upset at having to turn down a favoured investor.

But the narrative that runs through the entire work is one of a tech founder’s lust for control, having fallen in love with strategy computer games such as Civilization as a teenager and developing an awe of the (questionable) empire tactics of Roman leader Augustus. The young entrepreneur regularly shouted “Dominion!” at the end of company meetings at Facebook, as the tech firm absorbed smaller rivals such as Instagram and ignored the warning signs of misusing the personal data of billions.

Attempts to remind the reader of the consequences of Facebook’s power are briefly passed over, in favour of depicting Zuckerberg as a teenager with good intentions who was awarded too much power at an early age with no one to hold him accountable. Be careful not to come away from Levy’s writing with a sense of pity for the man for whom it all seemingly accidentally happened, rather than tech’s next calculating megamind.

Zuckerberg’s desire for empire led to Facebook data of billions. Facebook: The Inside Story provides unparalleled insight into one of the world’s most prominent tech companies, and is required reading for anyone seeking to understand Facebook or its infamous founder. But the exposure to Facebook’s top players given to Levy in the writing of this book has ultimately forged a saccharine view of the social network’s transformation into a company for which scandals have become the norm.

**Book Reviews: What to Read This Month**

**Go Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists**

By Julia Ebner

Most of Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists plays out online. Assuming a variety of identities, Julia Ebner reports from the front line of far right messageboards, jihadi forums and anti-feminist communities, in a thorough and shocking exploration of how the internet has facilitated the spread of extremism.

However, the book is the most unsettling when Ebner shows the physical manifestation of online extremism. Ebner, who by day is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, visits a neo-Nazi music festival and goes undercover at a far-right meeting in a London pub. If those events are unsettling, then more harrowing is when Ebner’s research demonstrates how online extremism can transform into real world violence that readers will recognise from recent news headlines. Ebner depicts the vast and rapid spread of online extremism, and the challenge we face in fighting it.

**Uncanny Valley**

By Anna Wiener

As a disillusioned twenty-something, Anna Wiener abandoned her publishing job in New York, swapping silk blouses for hoodies and high-tops as she headed for the newly-mobilising oasis of Silicon Valley. Wiener managed to land jobs at a string of startups and gently winged her way into a world of coding and customer support. The result is a wry and intelligent reality check for startup culture written from an outsider’s perspective. As much a critique of millennial consumerism as the tech world, Wiener paints Silicon Valley as the male version of smoothies and yoga. With a fine balance of comedy and caution, she prises open a world where sexism is rife — where women are discouraged from asking for a raise and encouraged to “trust karma”. Uncanny Valley is a fable for the digital age. Though brilliantly sardonic, it ultimately serves as an interrogation of a world teetering on the edge of illegality — a world whose consequences we are only just starting to feel.

**SAMSUNG**

Galaxy S20 | S20+ 5G

The new Galaxy S20 and S20+
Pre-order now

Prices are based on when you trade-in. Unlimited data. Speed and coverage may vary by country or carrier. To experience 5G, your mobile device and TV must both be unlocked. 5G speeds subject to local 5G network conditions. UK’s best mobile data network. Based on Everything in 5G performance from June 2019 to August 2019. Vodafone was awarded “Best UK Mobile Internet Performance in 5G, Q2 & Q3”. Based on EE. Both packets consumed in the UK using no other operator’s SIM. Non-personalised network. Data and terms.

**BOOK REVIEWS: WHAT TO READ THIS MONTH**

**Go Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists**

By Julia Ebner

Most of Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists plays out online. Assuming a variety of identities, Julia Ebner reports from the front line of far right messageboards, jihadi forums and anti-feminist communities, in a thorough and shocking exploration of how the internet has facilitated the spread of extremism. However, the book is the most unsettling when Ebner shows the physical manifestation of online extremism. Ebner, who by day is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, visits a neo-Nazi music festival and goes undercover at a far-right meeting in a London pub. If those events are unsettling, then more harrowing is when Ebner’s research demonstrates how online extremism can transform into real world violence that readers will recognise from recent news headlines. Ebner depicts the vast and rapid spread of online extremism, and the challenge we face in fighting it.

**Uncanny Valley**

By Anna Wiener

As a disillusioned twenty-something, Anna Wiener abandoned her publishing job in New York, swapping silk blouses for hoodies and high-tops as she headed for the newly-mobilising oasis of Silicon Valley. Wiener managed to land jobs at a string of startups and gently winged her way into a world of coding and customer support. The result is a wry and intelligent reality check for startup culture written from an outsider’s perspective. As much a critique of millennial consumerism as the tech world, Wiener paints Silicon Valley as the male version of smoothies and yoga. With a fine balance of comedy and caution, she prises open a world where sexism is rife — where women are discouraged from asking for a raise and encouraged to “trust karma”. Uncanny Valley is a fable for the digital age. Though brilliantly sardonic, it ultimately serves as an interrogation of a world teetering on the edge of illegality — a world whose consequences we are only just starting to feel.

**SAMSUNG**

Galaxy S20 | S20+ 5G

The new Galaxy S20 and S20+
Pre-order now

Prices are based on when you trade-in. Unlimited data. Speed and coverage may vary by country or carrier. To experience 5G, your mobile device and TV must both be unlocked. 5G speeds subject to local 5G network conditions. UK’s best mobile data network. Based on Everything in 5G performance from June 2019 to August 2019. Vodafone was awarded “Best UK Mobile Internet Performance in 5G, Q2 & Q3”. Based on EE. Both packets consumed in the UK using no other operator’s SIM. Non-personalised network. Data and terms.

**BOOK REVIEWS: WHAT TO READ THIS MONTH**

**Go Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists**

By Julia Ebner

Most of Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists plays out online. Assuming a variety of identities, Julia Ebner reports from the front line of far right messageboards, jihadi forums and anti-feminist communities, in a thorough and shocking exploration of how the internet has facilitated the spread of extremism. However, the book is the most unsettling when Ebner shows the physical manifestation of online extremism. Ebner, who by day is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, visits a neo-Nazi music festival and goes undercover at a far-right meeting in a London pub. If those events are unsettling, then more harrowing is when Ebner’s research demonstrates how online extremism can transform into real world violence that readers will recognise from recent news headlines. Ebner depicts the vast and rapid spread of online extremism, and the challenge we face in fighting it.

**Uncanny Valley**

By Anna Wiener

As a disillusioned twenty-something, Anna Wiener abandoned her publishing job in New York, swapping silk blouses for hoodies and high-tops as she headed for the newly-mobilising oasis of Silicon Valley. Wiener managed to land jobs at a string of startups and gently winged her way into a world of coding and customer support. The result is a wry and intelligent reality check for startup culture written from an outsider’s perspective. As much a critique of millennial consumerism as the tech world, Wiener paints Silicon Valley as the male version of smoothies and yoga. With a fine balance of comedy and caution, she prises open a world where sexism is rife — where women are discouraged from asking for a raise and encouraged to “trust karma”. Uncanny Valley is a fable for the digital age. Though brilliantly sardonic, it ultimately serves as an interrogation of a world teetering on the edge of illegality — a world whose consequences we are only just starting to feel.

**SAMSUNG**

Galaxy S20 | S20+ 5G

The new Galaxy S20 and S20+
Pre-order now

Prices are based on when you trade-in. Unlimited data. Speed and coverage may vary by country or carrier. To experience 5G, your mobile device and TV must both be unlocked. 5G speeds subject to local 5G network conditions. UK’s best mobile data network. Based on Everything in 5G performance from June 2019 to August 2019. Vodafone was awarded “Best UK Mobile Internet Performance in 5G, Q2 & Q3”. Based on EE. Both packets consumed in the UK using no other operator’s SIM. Non-personalised network. Data and terms.
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. Find out more about Amazon and its Fulfilment Centres at aboutamazon.co.uk
Switzerland files criminal complaint over alleged use of company by CIA

JACK RICHARDSON
@JackRich93

THE SWISS government has filed a criminal complaint over US spies allegedly using a Swiss crypto firm to gain information on foreign governments. The complaint is against unnamed persons for alleged breaches of the law governing export controls, Reuters reported.

Swiss company Crypto AG was secretly owned by US and German spy agencies and allowed them to use its software. The attorney general’s office confirmed it had received a complaint from the branch of the Economy Ministry which oversees sensitive exports. The latter confirmed the complaint but would not comment further. Last month’s revelations by US, German and Swiss media, claimed the technology, sold to governments under the name Operation Rubicon, had flaws for the spy agencies to exploit.

The Swiss government has appointed a former Supreme Court judge to investigate and his report is due at the end of June, while pressure is building in the Swiss parliament for its own investigation into the matter.

American Airlines waives fees as US braces disruption

DAVID SHEPARDSON

AMERICAN Airlines said late last night it was waiving change fees on all newly purchased tickets amid declining air travel demand because of the new coronavirus outbreak.

The largest US airline said it would waive change fees up to 14 days before travel for customers who purchase tickets from now until 16 March.

Jet Blue Airways said last week it would suspend change and cancellation fees for new flight bookings between 27 February and 11 March.

American Airlines shares have fallen 37 per cent since 13 February.

United Airlines chief Oscar Munoz told employees the US airline would likely need to cut additional flights in the wake of sagging demand because of the coronavirus outbreak, the airline confirmed yesterday. In an email late on Saturday to employees, Munoz noted the carrier had cut flights to Asia and suspended service to mainland China and Hong Kong through 30 April.

“Based on current trends, it is likely that additional schedule reductions will be necessary,” Munoz said.

On Friday, United cancelled its investor day that was set for 5 March, saying it is not “practical to expect that it can have a productive conversation focused on its long-term strategy next week.” It will reschedule for September.

Chicago-based United already withdrew its 2020 guidance last week because of uncertainty over the duration and spread of the virus.

Reuters
The world as you know it relies on energy and the demand is ever-growing. To meet these expectations we’ve pushed our on-time delivery to 99.9%, so that, whether it’s driving economies, powering communities or simply printing this publication, the world can rely on us.

THIS IS REAL ENERGY. THIS IS ARAMCO.
LISTENING IN DEMAND

The City may be on the brink of realising the true value of the British podcast industry, writes James Warrington

W ith podcasts steadily capitalising on their position as a mainstay of the modern media landscape, many distributors have been biding their time.

But now Aim-listed podcast platform Audioboom seems ready to cash in on the booming popularity of on-demand listening. Last month the Nicky Candy-backed audio firm, which distributes podcasts including media fave No Such Thing As A Fish and Sue Perkins: An Hour Or So With..., said it had hired Raine Advisers to explore a sale.

Yet for some in the industry, podcasting remains undervalued compared to the more mature US market. Despite successive quarters of sharp revenue growth, Audioboom’s shares have suffered turbulent trading. After a spike on takeover talks, the firm is now valued at roughly £30m.

Howard Kosky, chief executive of podcast consultancy 4DC, says this falls short of Audioboom’s true value.

“It’s a business where revenue was booming and yet its value was not moving where it should do,” he says.

“They had to do something to realise the value.” This value, Kosky suggests, is at least £30m.

Among the media giants mooted for a possible takeover are Talksport owner News UK and Global, which runs stations such as Capital and LBC. But as the majority of Audioboom’s revenue comes from the US, Texas-based iHeartMedia or New York-listed Spotify may be a more suitable fit.

Spotify splashed out at least $300m last year on three podcast startups, and recently snapped up sports-based network The Ringer. The incentives are clear. Insatiable demand means there are now an estimated 500,000 podcasts worldwide. In the fourth quarter, Spotify’s podcast listening hours rose almost 200 per cent.

But as US media groups pour time and money into podcasts, the UK market is also skewered by the BBC, which does not run ads on its shows domestically. “That’s a sizeable chunk of podcast listeners — 100m plays of podcasts or listen again audio on BBC’s Sounds app alone last quarter — without ads,” says McGowan Stuart.

Despite these barriers, a bumper takeover deal for Audioboom could spark a rethink of the British podcasting industry’s valuation, and for major players such as Global — and even the BBC — this can only be a good thing.

ENTREPRENEURS

Natalia Bowes on her successful range of biyo-yogurts

PAGE 22
ITALY will this week introduce measures worth €3.6bn (£2.9bn) to help the economy withstand the largest outbreak of coronavirus in Europe, the country’s economy minister Roberto Gualtieri said yesterday.

In an interview with La Repubblica newspaper, Gualtieri said this amounted to 0.2 per cent of GDP and would come on top of an aid-package worth €900m that was unveiled last Friday for the worst-affected areas.

Gualtieri said the new bill would include tax credits for companies that reported a 25 per cent drop in revenues, tax cuts and additional funds for the health service.

Italy has registered more than 1,100 confirmed cases of coronavirus since the contagion came to light in wealthy northern regions on 20 February and at least 29 people have died.

The economy minister said he was confident the EU would approve the necessary hike in Italy’s official deficit target, adding eurogroup ministers would talk mid-week by telephone about the situation.

Italy has the biggest debt pile in the Eurozone after Greece, but Gualtieri said public finances were solid and predicted the 2019 budget deficit would be released today. Italy had forecast a deficit of 2.2 per cent for this year, based on the assumption the economy would grow 0.6 per cent in 2020.

It came as Germany made a similar announcement over the potential effects of the coronavirus over the weekend. Finance minister Olaf Scholz yesterday said Germany would be in a position to enact a fiscal stimulus package should the coronavirus spark a global economic crisis.

In Germany there have been 66 confirmed cases, and a government crisis committee last Friday widened cross-border travel guidelines and cancelled major international events.

“Should it come to major turmoil in the global economy because world markets and production centres become affected, we have all the means to act fast and decisively,” Scholz told Welt am Sonntag newspaper. “Our fiscal policy is built on a solid footing so that we can deal with a major economic crisis with full force.”

Italian government sources said the revised budget deficit for 2020 would be released today. Italy had forecast a deficit of 2.2 per cent, an original target of 2.4 per cent and 1.7 per cent of GDP against a forecast of 2.5 per cent.

“Italy will this week introduce measures worth €3.6bn (£2.9bn) to help the economy withstand the largest out-break of coronavirus in Europe,” Gualtieri said yesterday.

In an interview with La Repubblica newspaper, Gualtieri said this amounted to 0.2 per cent of GDP and would come on top of an aid-package worth €900m that was unveiled last Friday for the worst-affected areas.

Gualtieri said the new bill would include tax credits for companies that reported a 25 per cent drop in revenues, tax cuts and additional funds for the health service.

Italy has registered more than 1,100 confirmed cases of coronavirus since the contagion came to light in wealthy northern regions on 20 February and at least 29 people have died.

The economy minister said he was confident the EU would approve the necessary hike in Italy’s official deficit target, adding eurogroup ministers would talk mid-week by telephone about the situation.

Italy has the biggest debt pile in the Eurozone after Greece, but Gualtieri said public finances were solid and predicted the 2019 budget deficit would be released today. Italy had forecast a deficit of 2.2 per cent for this year, based on the assumption the economy would grow 0.6 per cent in 2020.

It came as Germany made a similar announcement over the potential effects of the coronavirus over the weekend. Finance minister Olaf Scholz yesterday said Germany would be in a position to enact a fiscal stimulus package should the coronavirus spark a global economic crisis.

In Germany there have been 66 confirmed cases, and a government crisis committee last Friday widened cross-border travel guidelines and cancelled major international events.

“Should it come to major turmoil in the global economy because world markets and production centres become affected, we have all the means to act fast and decisively,” Scholz told Welt am Sonntag newspaper. “Our fiscal policy is built on a solid footing so that we can deal with a major economic crisis with full force.”

Increasing numbers of migrants have crossed the Aegean from Turkey to the Greek island of Lesbos in recent days.

HUNDREDS of migrants have entered Greece as Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan relaxed restrictions on movement between the two nations in an act of defiance against the EU.

At least 600 people arrived by boat on three Greek islands within a few hours yesterday morning, joining upwards of 40,000 already there, living in overcrowded camps.

The Turkish government announced it would no longer prevent hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers within its borders from crossing over to Europe, reneging on a deal reached with the EU in 2016. The declaration resulted in a rush to the border, where the International Organization for Migration estimated 13,000 people have gathered.

Athens is maintaining a firm stance, firing tear gas at migrants seeking entry and sending automated text messages to phones in the northern region warning of maximum security measures.

Greek deputy defence minister Alkiviadis Stefanis said Turkey was engaging in a deliberate strategy to assist migrants in crossing. “Not only are they not stopping them, but they are helping them,” Stefanis told Skai.

The deal was agreed between the EU and Turkey in the aftermath of the migrant crisis in 2015, whereby the number of migrants entering Europe would be controlled by Turkey in exchange for funds from the EU and its member states.

Turkey’s rebellion could pose Greece’s toughest test since the Eurozone crisis and draws attention to the ongoing tensions between the two neighbours.
Ex-Barclays bankers are cleared of £4bn Qatari fraud after SFO inquiry

EDWARD THICKNESSE

A JURY last Friday cleared three former Barclays executives of committing financial crises-era fraud to save the bank from a bailout.

Roger Jenkins, Thomas Kalaris and Richard Boath were all acquitted of charges of conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation in connection with the 2008 Qatar fundraisings. They had all denied the charges, which the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) brought against the bankers in October.

The SFO had alleged that the three used phoney advisory services agreements to hide undeclared payments made to Qatar to induce two investments in the bank.

The Qatari's made an investment of £1.9bn into Barclays in June 2008 and a second of £2.05bn in November 2008 as the bank sought to avoid a government bailout.

The prosecution alleged that the trio cooked up the two advisory services agreements (ASAs), which were worth £322m, to funnel the extra fees to Qatar.

Jenkins denied that the ASAs with Qatar were shams, describing them as a "tremendous boost" to the bank.

The decision is a severe blow for the SFO, which has been investigating the financiers for over seven years. A spokesperson for the SFO said: "Our prosecution decisions are always based on the evidence that is available, and we are determined to bring perpetrators of serious financial crime to justice. Wherever our evidential and public interests tests are met, we will always endeavour to bring this before a court."

Sir Keir Starmer is leading current polling for the Labour leadership contest

STEFAN BOSCAI

Sir Keir Starmer has been accused of being complicit in the bullying of local party members.

A complaint has been made by the Holborn and St Pancras Constituency Labour Party (CLP) to party general secretary Jennie Formby, claiming Starmer’s allies had subjected left-faction members to “hostility and abuse”. The 31 Corbyhnists complained Starmer “has not tried to foster unity within our CLP” and had shut out the left-faction members, according to the Sunday Telegraph.

Allies of the shadow Brexit secretary said the letter is an attempt to undermine Starmer and prop up the left’s preferred candidate – Corbyn ally Rebecca Long-Bailey.

Car import pricing cartel will face UK class action

JACK RICHARDSON

The EU's longest-standing cartel case affecting UK consumers has finally been referred to the Competition Appeal Tribunal.

A group of car retailers have won a high court battle to proceed with their £2bn class action against five major car manufacturers.

The claim automatically means all affected motorists and businesses in the UK are included in the claim automatically.

Consumers must have purchased or leased their vehicle between October 2006 and September 2015 in order to take part in the action.

When UK consumers and businesses purchased or leased a new car, they paid more for the delivery of that car than they should have done, as a result of a long-running cartel by five of the world’s leading maritime shipping companies,” said the class action’s representative Mark McClaren.

McClaren worked at consumer rights publisher Which for nine years and is supported by an advisory committee comprising a former court of appeal judge and executives from across industry.

The cartel affected several passenger cars and light commercial vehicles from well-known brands including Ford, Volkswagen, Peugeot and Toyota.

Specialist law firm Scott & Scott will act on the case.

“We are pleased to have this opportunity to act on behalf of UK consumers – both individuals and businesses – to help them recoup the losses they have suffered as a result of this long running cartel,” said David Scott, of Scott & Scott.

The claims have been filed to the UK’s Competition Appeal Tribunal under the terms of the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

US agrees Afghanistan peace agreement with the Taliban to bring end to 18 years of conflict

MICHAEL SEARLES

The US signed an agreement with the Taliban over the weekend in an effort to bring peace to Afghanistan following 18 years of conflict.

The agreement will see the US withdraw its troops from the country within 14 months if militants uphold the deal. The signing in Doha, Qatar, was attended by Taliban leaders and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Pompeo was in attendance as a witness as US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar signed the agreement.

The agreement means the militants are not allowed al-Qaeda or other extremist groups to operate in the areas they control. It will see the withdrawal of around 12,000 US troops still stationed in Afghanistan.

However, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani yesterday rejected a Taliban demand for the release of 5,000 prisoners as a condition for talks with Afghanistan’s government and civilians.

"The government of Afghanistan has made no commitment to free 5,000 Taliban prisoners,” Ghani told reporters in Kabul, a day after the deal was signed in Qatar to start a political settlement aimed at ending the US’s longest war.

The US initially invaded the country in 2001 following the 9/11 terror attacks in New York by al-Qaeda.

"The road ahead will not be easy. Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan will require patience and compromise among all parties,” said Pompeo.

He said the US would continue to support the Afghan government.
From product to product, with spirits producers charged £28.74 per litre of pure alcohol. Spirits duty has been frozen three times since 2014, leading to tax revenues from these products increasing by £734m – a 23 per cent rise. However, Boris Johnson’s General Election manifesto pledged to cut the rate even further.
Among those calling for a reduction in the current rate of spirits duty is Mason’s Yorkshire Gin, which is located in Sunak’s Richmond constituency in North Yorkshire.

Mason’s founder Karl Mason said: ‘Mr Sunak recently visited our distillery and was keen to hear how we managed to rebuild our business after a devastating fire destroyed the old distillery last year.

‘To allow us to further invest and grow, we urge the new chancellor to cut our excessively high duty rates at the Budget.’

Tory backbencher Tim Loughton also urged Sunak to get behind the tax cut.

Perhaps because of our trade links, Hungary has sought to be a pragmatic partner in the Brexit process.
LONDON’s FTSE 100 dropped to its lowest level since June 2016 last Friday as investor fears that the coronavirus outbreak could spark a global recession intensified.

The blue-chip FTSE 100 fell 3.4 per cent, while the mid-cap index shed 2.1 per cent. Both marked their worst week since the 2008 financial crisis.

British Airways owner IAG fell nine per cent to a four-month low after it said it would cut flights to Italy, Singapore and South Korea, reflecting a drop in passenger numbers.

The fall pushed the stock to the bottom of the FTSE 100 and led the broader travel and leisure index down 3.3 per cent to its lowest level since 2016.

World stocks were hammered across the board last week, with theMSCI world index losing about $6 trillion ($4.68 trillion) in value, as widespread disruptions to the supply chain prompted analysts to cut their forecasts for economic growth and corporate earnings in 2020.

On Friday, City Group predicted the corporate sector would see no earnings growth at all this year, while ratings agency Moody’s said a pandemic would trigger a global recession in the first half of the year.

“It really does look like we have further tough times ahead of us, growth wise,” said Chris Beaucamp, chief market analyst at IG.

Bank of England governor Mark Carney said that it was likely the economy would take a hit. Traders are betting on the US Federal Reserve to cut interest rates next month to prop up growth.

London’s main index has lost about 13 per cent from a peak hit on 12 February, as the coronavirus continues to spread outside China, the epicentre of the outbreak.

British aerospace engineer Rolls-Royce HLG was among a handful of stocks in the black on the main index, rising more than three per cent as its chief executive said the company was looking forward to 2020 with some degree of conviction and confidence.

Biotecology firm Novacyt soared 30 per cent after signing its first major distribution agreement to supply its coronavirus test.

Online property platform Rightmove has suffered a decline in membership numbers, falling by a further 400 users in the second half of last year with additional losses expected in the first six months of 2020.

However, average revenue per advertiser (Arpa) was up and is expected to continue to grow following investment in new digital tools. Peel Hunt analysts said Rightmove is a “fabulous brand with a commanding position in the industry it serves” and issued a “reduce” recommendation with a 510p target price.

London shares dented by fears of virus impact

S&P suffers its worst weekly dip since 2008

LONDON shares fell 3.4 per cent on Friday, as the coronavirus outbreak triggered a global recession in the first half of the year.

“It really does look like we have further tough times ahead of us, growth wise,” said Chris Beaucamp, chief market analyst at IG.

Bank of England governor Mark Carney said that it was likely the economy would take a hit. Traders are betting on the US Federal Reserve to cut interest rates next month to prop up growth.

London’s main index has lost about 13 per cent from a peak hit on 12 February, as the coronavirus continues to spread outside China, the epicentre of the outbreak.

British aerospace engineer Rolls-Royce HLG was among a handful of stocks in the black on the main index, rising more than three per cent as its chief executive said the company was looking forward to 2020 with some degree of conviction and confidence.

Biotecology firm Novacyt soared 30 per cent after signing its first major distribution agreement to supply its coronavirus test.

Online property platform Rightmove has suffered a decline in membership numbers, falling by a further 400 users in the second half of last year with additional losses expected in the first six months of 2020. However, average revenue per advertiser (Arpa) was up and is expected to continue to grow following investment in new digital tools. Peel Hunt analysts said Rightmove is a “fabulous brand with a commanding position in the industry it serves” and issued a “reduce” recommendation with a 510p target price.

Rolls-Royce climbed after posting a strong 2020 forecast

Investors were spooked by the S&P 500’s worst weekly performance since the 2008 global financial crisis on growing fears that the fast-spread coronavirus could push the economy into recession.

The Dow and the Nasdaq also recorded their deepest weekly percentage losses since October 2008. The Nasdaq managed to eke out a 0.01 per cent gain after plunging as much as 3.5 per cent during the session. After falling as much as 4.2 per cent – more than 1,000 points – the Dow ended the day down 1.4 per cent.

Equities found some support after US Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell said the fundamentals of the American economy remained strong and that the central bank would act as appropriate to provide support.

But investors had spent most of the day dumping equities for the safety of US Treasuries, pushing 10-year yields to their fourth record low last week.

The virus spread further on Friday, with the World Health Organization raising its impact risk alert to “very high”.

Some investors voiced concerns about heading into a weekend where they could not trade on new reports about the virus.

“To get an all-clear sign, the market needs evidence it’s under control, no new flare-ups in other countries and that we don’t get a significant outbreak in the United States,” said Jack Janasiewicz, chief portfolio strategist at Natixis Investment Managers.

Janasiewicz saw the spread of the virus as a prompt to reduce exposure to riskier assets, and said the next milestone for further risk cuts would be a US outbreak.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 357.28 points, or 1.39 per cent, to 25,409.36; the S&P 500 lost 24.54 points, or 0.82 per cent, to 2,954.22; and the Nasdaq Composite added 0.89 point, or 0.01 per cent, to 8,567.37.

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

London shares dented by fears of virus impact

S&P suffers its worst weekly dip since 2008

London shares fell 3.4 per cent on Friday, as the coronavirus outbreak triggered a global recession in the first half of the year.

“It really does look like we have further tough times ahead of us, growth wise,” said Chris Beaucamp, chief market analyst at IG.

Bank of England governor Mark Carney said that it was likely the economy would take a hit. Traders are betting on the US Federal Reserve to cut interest rates next month to prop up growth.

London’s main index has lost about 13 per cent from a peak hit on 12 February, as the coronavirus continues to spread outside China, the epicentre of the outbreak.

British aerospace engineer Rolls-Royce HLG was among a handful of stocks in the black on the main index, rising more than three per cent as its chief executive said the company was looking forward to 2020 with some degree of conviction and confidence.

Biotecology firm Novacyt soared 30 per cent after signing its first major distribution agreement to supply its coronavirus test.

Online property platform Rightmove has suffered a decline in membership numbers, falling by a further 400 users in the second half of last year with additional losses expected in the first six months of 2020. However, average revenue per advertiser (Arpa) was up and is expected to continue to grow following investment in new digital tools. Peel Hunt analysts said Rightmove is a “fabulous brand with a commanding position in the industry it serves” and issued a “reduce” recommendation with a 510p target price.
### FTSE 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5680.61</td>
<td>215.79</td>
<td>6580.61</td>
<td>3160.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FTSE 250

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19330.92</td>
<td>452.53</td>
<td>3763.04</td>
<td>1763.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FTSE ALL SHARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25409.36</td>
<td>3572.80</td>
<td>25409.36</td>
<td>20409.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NASDAQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8567.37</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>8567.37</td>
<td>8567.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### S&P 500

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2954.22</td>
<td>24.54</td>
<td>2954.22</td>
<td>2754.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EURO SHARES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>1.168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MARKETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closes</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1392.10</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>1392.10</td>
<td>1392.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### COMMODITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOURIST RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WORLD INDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CRYPTO A.M. DAILY

**Powered by BEQUANT**

After a week of cautious, Bitcoin attempted to stabilize over the weekend, albeit still below the key $20600 area and around mid-January 2020 support zone. The bulls will be keen to point out that despite some market commentators warning against chasing the rally, the digital evolution of the blockchain has yet to confirm this. In fact, even though the recent mining difficulty adjustment was so to the downside, the current expectation for the next adjustment stands at -5.39%.

Last week it was reported that Beijing's mining giant Bitmain launched its latest AntMiner S19 and S19 Pro models, boosting computing power as high as 130 terahash per second (TH/s). The two models are currently the most profitable bitcoin mining devices. This together with the fact that the highly publicized block reward halving is quickly looming suggests that retail and long only will be keen to make the move of the recent sell-off to re-establish longs.

Elsewhere, the most recent CMS Commitments of Traders (COT) report shows how the top 100 most leveraged category of commercials are well-established across all maturities, with the exception of the 3-months rising at all time high, while during the rally in Q2 2019, this category was not short.
**Forum**

Edited by Rachel Cunliffe

**Will France soon find a German dance partner for EU reform?**

**S**Spare a thought for the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. It is the latest, the supremely confident Jimmuel Macron, in his usual attempt to reform a floundering Europe. Following the great recession of 2008, the lion’s share of European leaders failed to fix the economic roof while the sun shone, eschewing the difficulties of structural economic reform in favour of the easier policy of middling through. Not so Macron, who has seen that Europe stands precariously on the edge of another recession.

Aware that French fiscal policies have been the perennial obstacle for German avoidance of European-wide reform, Macron bravely set about altering this prejudice by changing the facts on the ground. He would be open to an effort; a reformist failure could not. Remarkably and uniquely in the history of the French Fifth Republic, he succeeded in passing serious reform legislation.

It seemed that, as long as the doing nothing Merkel government remained in power, there was bound to remain frustrated – and Europe’s dying hopes for reform would remain smashed. That is, until the shock of October’s election in the German state of Thuringia.

The outcome of this obscure local contest saw an increasingly embattled Merkel lose control of the local Christian Democratic Party (CDU), of which she was the national head. Ignoring her flaccid entreaties, the local CDU chose to vote alongside the heretofore anathema far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Facing this manoeuvre, Merkel’s third candidate for the Thuringia state leadership.

Merkel was forced to condemn both the local Thuringian CDU party for casting its lot with the AfD, as well as her ineffectual acolyte AKK for not preventing the mess in the first place. This scolding proved to be the final nail in AKK’s coffin. She dramatically resigned the national head of the CDU and with it, scuppered Merkel’s plans for a stable succession. Two very different candidates have since sprung up, contesting the party leadership contest, which will be held on 25 April.

Armin Laschet, regional leader of the popular Christian Democrats (CDU) in Western Germany, has emerged as the compromise candidate, tacitly blessed by both Merkel and the CDU party establishment. A victory for Laschet would signal more of the same, with the CDU hewing to a centrist course domestically, and little hope for German support for European reform.

However, the favourite (and long-time Merkel nemesis) Friedrich Merz is a man cut from an entirely different cloth. Long the standard-bearer of the right wing of the CDU, Merz would amount to a replication of Merkelism. Not only would he take the party back to its rightwards home (hopefully hoovering up AfD voters, much as Boris Johnson amalgamated Nigel Farage’s support), but he would open to be a hard-headed deal on Europe with Macron. At last, then, there is a glimmer (and that’s all it is) of hope for Macron’s ambitious and necessary European reform agenda.

It is true that, before the Elysee crop the champagne corks, a number of cavets are necessary. In moving to the right, Merz would have to be mindful of betraying the concerns of some of his new eurosceptic constituents.

After all, importantly, German governments are habitually coalitions. Who the CDU enters into coalitions for September’s event, will determine its European policy. A deal with the surging centre-left Greens is in the best interests of the CDU, but they are a bewildering array of other possible coalition outcomes, almost any of which lead to further deadlocks over European reform.

However, even with this necessaries, one thing is surely clear. The longsuffering German giant is at last awakening. What comes next will determine whether Macron’s dream of European reform is to be a lasting opportunity to avoid absolute decline – has a fighting chance.

Dr John C. Hulsman is a senior columnist at City A.M., a life member of the Council of Foreign Relations, and president of John C. Hulsman Enterprises. He can be reached for corporate speaking and private briefings on www.charlesweitkemper.com.

Brunello Rosa is chief executive at Rosa & Rubini Associates, a visiting professor at Bocconi University, a visiting lecturer at London Business School, and a research associate at the Systemic Risk Centre of the LSE.

---

**If Britain is to hit net-zero, we need the City to step up its green finance ambitions**

By John Hulsman and Bruno Rosa

John Hulsman and Bruno Rosa are co-authors of ‘Reinvigorating Green Finance: How the City Can Help the UK Achieve Net Zero’.

I am a good food advocate and member of the Systemic Risk Centre of the LSE. I have a fighting chance.

Fortunately, the City has form in adapting to overcome the biggest challenges. A new chapter that is distinctly greener needs to be added to our long history of innovation. Green finance places climate concerns at the heart of financial decision-making. It allows us to mitigate risks and capture the abundant opportunities that a green future presents.

And there is evidence of that already. The London Stock Exchange is home to 218 sustainable bonds, which have raised over €40bn. Last year, London came top in the Z/Yen green finance global rankings.

Conversations on green finance are happening here simply not are not taking place. We need to be addressing the public and private sectors. But we know that City firms are highly engaged and taking the first step in their green journey. That is why the City Corporation and Green Finance Institute are working tirelessly across government and industry to advance the role of finance in it.

The stark truth is that unprecedented climate events are happening right now. Long gone are the days when climate change was merely a scientific assessment. Today, it is an increasingly evident reality.

The stakes have never been higher, but the City’s mission is clear: to mobilise capital with pace and at scale, financing the domestic and global transition to a net-zero future.

Catherine McGuinness is policy chair at the City of London Corporation.

---

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**A load of junk**

(re: The T.I.L. junk food ad was blanked for good for health)

It’s a shame that Saqib Qureshi didn’t do some fact-checking before writing his article. The T.I.L. advert that relates to junk food carries some major errors. Among them, far from costing the taxpayer £13m, Transport for London (TfL) confirmed that its advertising revenue has increased by £13m over the last year.

Further, Qureshi criticises the mayor of London for conducting no meaningful consultation. But in fact, extensive public consultation took place in 2018, including polling, online surveys, discussion forums and focus groups, which found that 82 per cent of Londoners support the policy to ban adverts for junk food. And TfL’s fund-raising team has been appointed to review and measure the scheme.

I am a good food advocate and member of the London Food Board, but most importantly, a parent. As a result of this policy, businesses are replacing adverts for fatty, sugar-filled products with healthier alternatives while generating a big piece of the puzzle that needs to be found for our transition to net-zero. London is already leading the way and making a healthy food choice, rather than making food a constant battleground. It’s a win-win for everybody.

Let’s not forget, London has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in Europe. Our mayor and our city are taking a range of bold steps to turn the tide on junk food and sugary drinks. Let’s all support children’s health first.

Kath Dalmeny, chief executive, Sustain

---

**BEST OF TWITTER**

@JohnTone @CityAmpic @cfin @the Conversation @The City Am

It’s less surprising that 39% of Americans said they wouldn’t buy Corona beer “under any circumstances” because of the coronavirus, according to a recent survey. Just to be abundantly clear: There is no link between the virus and the beverage.

@InOtherNews

Crazy. As every homeopath knows, even though “Corona beer” wouldn’t be enough to protect you from the coronavirus.

@OhNoSheTwitnt

Corona beer company reports £132m loss costing the virus outbreak.

@independent

Well this is what happens when you branch out from making beer into killing people on a global scale.

@JimMFelton
First Homes is a flawed solution to three very different problems

The government needs to focus on the basic economic principle of supply and demand

Ben Ramanauskas

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

E: theforum@cityam.com
COMMENT AT: cityam.com/forum

DEBATE

Is there a solid case for the proposed boost to the UK’s defence spending?

YES

CHRIS ROSS

With a population of just 66m, it is a fantasy to believe that the UK can ever compete militarily with Russia, the US, India and China. Britannia no longer rules the waves — and spending more on defence would be little more than an expensive PR exercise.

This does not mean retreating from the international stage. Today, the biggest threat to our survival is not hostile neighbours, but climate breakdown. The UK gave birth to the first industrial revolution, and an economic system based on the burning of fossil fuels. Rather than wasting money on imperial delusions, Britain could demonstrate genuine leadership by leading a global green industrial revolution.

Cutting wasteful defence expenditure and reallocating funds towards the zero-carbon transition, at home and abroad, would be a good place to start.

Will they thank us for buying more bombs to impress Donald Trump?

NO

LAURIE MACFARLANE

An increase in defence spending is crucial in order to prepare our armed forces for the inevitable threats posed by the rise of digital warfare, as well as maintaining our traditional security capabilities. Key to this is increasing training so that cyber skills can be harnessed to tackle new threats, without leaving us vulnerable on land, at sea, or in the digital realm.

Ben Ramanauskas is a research economist at Oxford University.
HOW DO YOU CONVINCE THE BRITISH PUBLIC TO TRY A WHOLE NEW FOOD CATEGORY, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT DOESN’T SOUND VERY APPEALING AT FIRST GLANCE?

That was the challenge facing the Russian-born entrepreneur Natasha Bowes when she decided to try to start selling kefir in the UK.

Kefir is a type of fermented milk drink made from grains. It has a tart, slightly sour flavour. Nutritionists do recommend it for its probiotic health properties — it contains more than 40 types of beneficial gut-friendly bacteria — as well as being loaded with protein, vitamins and calcium — but it is certainly an acquired taste.

While very popular in eastern Europe and Russia, kefir is barely known in the UK. Or at least, it wasn’t before 2012, when Bowes launched her Biotiful Dairy brand and started introducing kefir to the Brits.

Eight years on, Biotiful Dairy is the leading brand in the kefir space, with a 70 per cent market share of a category predicted to be worth £62m in retail sales value by the end of 2020. The brand kindly sent a box of its products to the City AM office, which were quickly snapped up and proved popular with our journalists.

MILKING IT
Prior to setting up the company, Bowes had a long career in finance, first at KPMG in Moscow, then moving to Dublin and later London. After a spot of investment banking with Barclays and running a financial business, she decided to do something different.

“I had an opportunity after my daughter was born just under 10 years ago to really think about what I wanted to do, and where I could make a positive difference,” she recalls.

“I thought about what I was passionate about. I grew up in Moscow on kefir, a fermented, natural dairy product, and I’ve missed it here — I left Moscow over 20 years ago now.”

Switching from the high-powered world of finance to effectively selling milk might seem like an extreme change, but Bowes disagrees.

“It’s not that unusual, I’ve found. Particularly in the post-financial crisis years, there were people in finance with various interests who have gone in very different directions.”

Bowes started this new journey by focusing on learning how to make the product, ordering Russian textbooks and taking courses. She worked with a consultant with 25 years of experience in the dairy industry and set up production in Sussex. Biotiful Dairy sources its milk from British dairies focused on animal welfare, and imports the fermented kefir culture from Russia, where its producers have been making it for centuries.

“The pilot stage was when I was making, selling and marketing the product all by myself,” she recalls. “I’m a bit of a do-er — and it’s really taken off.”

CREAM OF THE CROP
Soon after launching, Bowes was able to get her drink sold in high-end stockists, including Selfridges, Harrods and Fortnum & Mason. Fast-forward to today, and it now transcends social class and is available in retailers such as Sainsbury’s, Tesco and Asda.

I GROW UP IN MOSCOW ON KEFIR, A FERMENTED, NATURAL DAIRY PRODUCT, AND I’VE MISSED IT HERE

The product range has also expanded, with various drink flavours as well as yoghurt-style snacks and products aimed at kids. It’s fairly priced: a 500ml bottle of Biotiful Dairy kefir costs £1.75 from Sainsbury’s, while the brand’s tub of kefir with blackberry compote will set you back £1.

Bowes describes kefir as a new food category, sitting between milk and yoghurt. But how do you market something new to the UK consumer, effectively telling them that they’ve been drinking milk wrong for centuries?

“It takes time — unless you have multi-million pound budgets to invest in marketing. You lead with the product, you talk to people — word of mouth is significant, as well as social — offering lots and lots of tastings, and participating in the right trade and consumer events,” she says, adding that it takes “a lot of tenacity.”

And finally, “after a long time, the big retailers start to listen to you and trial the products.”

Another factor is that consumers in the UK are often quite willing to try new things. Living in a globalised, multicultural society, the British public are more than keen to adopt and assimilate products from different cultures — as long as they’re tasty.

The obvious evidence is the plethora of Indian and Chinese takeaways on the average high street, but more recent examples include our national obsession with the avocado (a rare sight on supermarket shelves a few decades ago), and even the fermented-tea drink kombucha (a product I, personally, cannot stand) which originally came from Asia.

THE WHITE STUFF
The UK dairy industry is massive, with 13,000 farmers producing over 1bn litres of milk each year, worth around £8.8bn at wholesale level. As such, there’s clearly room for growth within this massive category for alternative products.

On the other hand, there are hurdles. Concerns about climate change and animal welfare, as well as the growing veganism movement, mean that dairy alternatives like soya, almond, and coconut milk are increasingly popular. These headwinds risk souring kefir’s place on the supermarket shelf.

And yet Bowes has no intention of standing still. Her plans for the future include expanding the product range, possibly including a cheese range and a frozen dessert.

“We’re expanding beyond liquid kefir, and innovating with flavours. Our consumers are saying that they want more occasions and more formats to be met by our gut-friendly, healthy products.”

HEALTHY BONES
If globalisation has encouraged people to try new things from around the world, the ongoing health trend has pushed consumers towards becoming more conscious about what they put into their bodies, and how it’s made.

I ask if Biotiful Dairy has benefited from this healthier eating trend?

“Yes and no, because I believe natural health is more than a trend within food, it’s just that the way food is moving overall,” Bowes argues.

“As far as the gut health is concerned — which is the biggest trend within the health movement in dairy — we started way before anybody was talking about it, and were kind of running ahead of the curve. We never really follow trends, we’re trying to create them.”

I FIND OUT HOW BIOTIFUL DAIRY MANAGED TO SELL A TOTALLY NEW FOOD CATEGORY TO THE GREAT BRITISH PUBLIC

Luke Graham

FROM RUSSIA WITH KEFIR

Above: Natasha Bowes launched Biotiful Dairy in 2012 to bring kefir to the UK

Left: A bottle of the brand’s flagship fermented probiotic dairy product

The obvious evidence is the plethora of Indian and Chinese takeaways on the average high street, but more recent examples include our national obsession with the avocado (a rare sight on supermarket shelves a few decades ago), and even the fermented-tea drink kombucha (a product I, personally, cannot stand) which originally came from Asia.
The marketing landscape has never been more dynamic and complex from unexpected directions. Firms like Accenture and the consultancy arms of PwC, IBM, and Deloitte have muscled in, using their data analytics capabilities to solve business problems which traditional advertising cannot. With combined revenue stretching well into the tens of billions, the companies have also extended their offerings to include creative services and content marketing — setting up an almighty turf war between them and the agencies. Moreover, the Big Six are getting a reputation of being oversized for what they are able to offer.

In some cases, the smaller scale and platform-specific expertise of boutique agencies has allowed挑战ers to experiment with new ways of running campaigns. “Many are able to serve clients flexibly,” says Christian Polman, chief strategy officer of agency Ebiqity, “which is giving rise to hybrid models where brands own some elements of marketing-in-house while agencies focus on the pieces they can do well.” Polman does admit that there is still significant merit to the holding company model. “Boutique agencies cannot as easily scale their operations in the same way the network agencies can, nor do they offer the same range of capabilities.”

This is a view shared by Fergus Hay, chief executive of agency Leagas Delaney, who adds: “If the big networks can re-align their interests to that of their clients and keep on innovating, then they have incredible horse-power at their fingertips.”

This cache which the Big Six hold onto is also evident in the fact that, despite the buzz, consultancies are not poaching their biggest clients — yet. Thomas Singlehurst, an analyst at Citi, says that so far, Accenture and co have had a “pronounced lack of success” in winning large accounts held by ad agencies.

Nevertheless consultancy revenue “appears to be growing fast while the agencies’ growth has struggled”, he adds. The challenge is palpable enough that WPP’s Read admitted last week that the industry “has never been more dynamic and complex.” However, clients need advertising expertise “more than ever,” he maintained. That may be so — but whether that expertise will continue to come from the traditional ad agencies is another matter entirely.

Yorkshire Tea unwittingly found itself in the middle of a Twitter storm last week, when the new chancellor Rishi Sunak published a seemingly innocuous image of himself “making tea for the teams”. The photo featured the brand like a poorly orchestrated influencer marketing campaign. Soon after, the company was facing a torrent of abuse as the chancellor’s unexpected photo endorsement threatened to boil over. A number of trolls took to social media to level their abuse at Yorkshire Tea, under the false impression that Sunak’s tweet was sponsored content. Where other brands may have reasonably chosen to bury their heads in the sand, Yorkshire Tea took a calculated risk and responded to the criticism.

“When Friday, the chancellor shared a photo of our tea,” it tweeted. “Politicians do that sometimes [Jeremy Corbyn did it in 2017]. We weren’t asked or involved — and we said so the same day. Lots of people got angry with us all the same.”

Its social media response walked a precarious political tightrope, carefully steering clear of falling onto one side or the other. The brand maintained this balance by highlighting Corby’s past self-affiliation with the brand under similar circumstances. Crucially, the tone of its communications and its management of a tricky situation rang true with the company’s ethos, and aligned well with the brand’s family business image and consumer-facing identity.

Its reaction resulted in widespread positive media coverage. Although probably unplanned, this was a great example of a company making the best of a bad situation, driven by the brand simply being human about it. Shortly after, it followed up: “For anyone about to vent their rage online, even to a company — please remember there’s a human on the other end of it, and try to be kind.”

This subsequent message was a likely reference to the mental health campaign #mekind, which became widely publicised following the suicide of Caroline Flack last month, and served as a timely reminder that even corporate Twitter accounts are manned by people with thoughts and feelings.

Of course, while well-intended, this may not have gone down well with everyone. Some might feel that the message only came too soon after Flack’s death. Brands have often been accused of adopting a more corporate or human profile online when it suits them most — and Yorkshire Tea’s response may have seen opportunistic to some.

In addition, these tactics may not have been received as warmly had they come from a business with a more corporate profile than Yorkshire Tea.

Overall, however, reaction was largely positive. The tweets drew on a deep knowledge of the brand’s identity and audience, and were executed consideredly. Obviously, the ultimate measure of success in any crisis depends on how the brand’s long-term image and bottom line are affected — something which remains to be seen for Yorkshire Tea.

But while the response may not have won back all of the keyboard warriors, Yorkshire Tea has almost certainly earned itself some new fans — regardless of their political allegiance.

© Neil McLeod is director of strategic communications at the PHA Group.
A ny island resort staffer can say “welcome to paradise”, but when it comes from a seaplane pilot with no shoes on it feels more like a religious ritual than a tired cliché. It’s contagious, as the staff at Maldivian island resort Vakkaru can vouch for, guests – certainly me – ditch the footwear in the first hours of their stay. But there is something more engrossing outside the window than assessing the pilot’s laissez-faire approach to uniforms as we glide above the Baa Atoll. From the seaplane, we see the contrast of the inky blue Indian Ocean and the electric turquoise rings of coral which pepper mark its surface. The ever-present overwater villas – the unofficial logo of the Maldives – spread like tentacles from the islands below, each stretching further out into the ocean than its neighbouring rival.

Our own version of the Maldivian cliche is jaw-dropping: perched at the end of the pier, with its interiors designed by Danish firm O.T Design, it’s Scandi-mets-sandy with a colour palette of oatmeal, white and mustard. It boasts all mod-cons at the touch of an iPad or a call to our butler, Buddy. Despite the high-tech interior I’m always drawn outside, be it by the outdoor shower, the lapping lagoon, or the balcony that houses daybeds to sprawl on, and two net hammocks jutting out over the coral.

Most overwater villas have their own pools, for those times when you just can’t be bothered descending the dozen steps to the ocean below. With all these options for slothfulness, the only stressful thing was figuring out precisely what to relax in.

Newly opened Vakkaru has 59 overwater villas, with the remainder of its 113 suites ringing the island’s beach, but with 2,000 palms dotting the small island (it used to be a coconut farm) it never felt busy. Crucially, the relative isolation of Vakkaru’s island means that the views from your seat, whether perched at one of its restaurants or your own balcony, is never obstructed by a rival resort.

“It’s this far-flung and understated luxury that recently lured Madonna and her troupe of children to spend a week enjoying Vakkaru, following in my footsteps (as always). And while Madge chartered a yacht to explore the surroundings, my low-key yet enduring memory will be watching the late afternoon light change from my hammock over the Indian Ocean.”

We dive down below, only to be met by the creature swooping up towards the surface, her mouth ajar.

Josh Martin grabs his snorkel and heads out in search of the stars of the Maldivian seas.
Frederika Whitehead discovers a gentler side to this stag city

THE WEEKEND:
Tell your friends that you are going to Prague and their reaction is likely to be determined by their age. In my 20s Prague was the go-to destination for friends on boozy stag dos. With my drinking days long since past, a four-year-old in tow, and a massive pregnancy bump I was pleased to discover that Prague is every bit as much fun stone cold sober. And it’s easy to fill a weekend strolling along its picturesque medieval lanes, shopping, eating and visiting the sites with out a beer bike or a man in drag handcuffed to an inflatable doll in sight.

Prague truly is a destination that fits every age and budget: it still has plenty of cheap options for debauched beer-swilling twenty-somethings but it also has a great selection of top-notch hotels, shops and restaurants for more discerning visitors. If you want to give your wallet a workout there is a long strip of high-end fashion outlets on Pařížská, just off the Old Town Square, where you can snap up the latest offerings from Gucci, Jimmy Choo, Dior, Louis Vuitton and Hublot among others.

THE HOTEL:
We stayed at Carlo IV, a luxurious choice that’s bang in the city centre and has a lovely 20m pool with sauna, steam room and multiple jacuzzis on the side. The colossal neoclassical structure has richly decorated high ceilings, alabaster columns and polished marble hallways. It was originally a bank, and then the headquarters of the Czech postal service, before it was converted into the luxurious spa it is today.

The rooms are spacious, with marble bathrooms. The roster of previous guests is not too shoddy either: the Dalai Lama stayed in our room before we did. It’s also a regular sight on the silver screen. Matt Damon sprinted down it’s checkered hotel corridors before leaping through the glass atrium roof in the first Bourne Identity film. It featured in The Zookeeper’s Wife alongside Jessica Chastain in 2017. And it was more recently on show again in Spider-man: Far From Home.

ASK ABOUT:
When the building was converted from Post Office to hotel, the architects decided to keep the huge steel vaults, and convert them into a bar, where you can taste some of the world’s rarest cognacs. There is a 70cl bottle of Martell Premier Voyage on the menu – one of only 300 produced, which can be yours for a mere £138,000. A single shot of Hennessy Paradis’s Special Cognac costs £20. Or you can take a wee dram of 18 year-old single malt for around £10. I couldn’t imbibe due to the big fat pregnancy bump, so I opted for a facial in the spa instead.

THE FOOD:
On the castle side of the Charles bridge, on the right hand side you will find a great pub called Lokal which serves really good Czech food: lots of braised or roasted meats, goulashes and schnitzel’s, and an okay, if limited, selection of vegetarian options.

It’s a great place to learn the local beer customs. I must have looked surprised when I saw a four-year-old girl being handed a pint, but her dad quickly reassured me: “It’s alcohol free. We make really good alcohol-free beer here.” You can also order a pint of millke or “milk” which is a glass with just one inch of beer filled to the top with foam. And if you are ready to hit the road, but wouldn’t mind just a little more, you can order a šnyt which is a glass with just one inch of beer filled to the top with foam. And if you are ready to hit the road, but wouldn’t mind just a little more, you can order a šnyt – a splash of beer which is just enough to see you on your journey.

Back at the hotel the food in the Inn Ox Lounge & Bar is every bit as good as you would expect in a hotel of its calibre. Another high-end option outside the hotel is the Obilaca restaurant at the top of the 216m high Zizkov television tower, which serves what it describes as ‘European’ food at around £10-20 per course.

AND AFTER THAT:
For an alternative walking tour, visit some of the Czech capital’s slightly bonkers public sculptures. At the time I visited Boris Johnson and Donald Trump were having their love-in in New York, and this gave David Cerny’s sculpture Piss a special resonance. Cerny’s artwork is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Prague and their reaction is likely to be unmentionable to the monkey’s over-sensitive index fingers. For an alternative walking tour, visit some of the Czech capital’s slightly bonkers public sculptures. At the time I visited Boris Johnson and Donald Trump were having their love-in in New York, and this gave David Cerny’s sculpture Piss a special resonance. Cerny’s artwork is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Prague and their reaction is likely to be unmentionable to the monkey’s over-sensitive index fingers.

TOP TIP:
○ The Dedica Anthology offers rooms at Carlo IV from £209/€297 per night based on two people sharing a double room with breakfast. Visit dahotels.com or call +44 0800 8099 8099. British Airways offers return flights to Prague from Heathrow from £178 per person.

NEED TO KNOW

Exsus Travel offers a 7-night stay at Vakkaru in a Beach Villa from £2,980pp based on two adults and return seaplane transfers. Complimentary Price includes return economy flights with Emirates travelling in May 2020 on a bed & breakfast basis.

NEED TO KNOW

Exsus Travel offers a 7-night stay at Vakkaru in a Beach Villa from £2,980pp based on two adults and return seaplane transfers. Complimentary Price includes return economy flights with Emirates travelling in May 2020 on a bed & breakfast basis.

Exsus Travel offers a 7-night stay at Vakkaru in a Beach Villa from £2,980pp based on two adults and return seaplane transfers. Complimentary Price includes return economy flights with Emirates travelling in May 2020 on a bed & breakfast basis.
It’s time to end the culture of silence when it comes to ‘women’s issues’ in the office

N JANUARY, House of Commons speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle finally overturned a 20-year-old ban on breastfeeding in the chamber, saying: “If it happens, it happens. I won’t be upset by it.”

It’s about time. I have just returned to work after having my second child, who I am still breastfeeding. As an employer myself, I find it staggering that, in 2020, breastfeeding at work is still an issue anywhere.

But if it’s still controversial in the centre of government, how can we hope for it to be normalised in workplaces across the country?

It is well-documented that breastfeeding-positive workplace policies reduce staff turnover, meaning less money spent hiring and training new employees, and boost job satisfaction and employee morale in general.

It’s good for new mothers, for businesses, and for the economy. According to the World Health Organisation, even a moderate increase in breastfeeding across the UK (where breastfeeding rates are among the world’s lowest) could save the NHS £50m each year, as it would cut the incidence of common childhood illnesses such as ear, chest and gut infections.

So why are so many employers dragging their heels? Why do new mothers still face major hurdles at work, with no provision of private rooms for expressing milk or fridges to safely store breastmilk in? Why is there still a lack of support from bosses and colleagues? The answer, sadly, is the lack of support for women at work, full stop — whether they’re new mums, or women over 50.

SILENT SISTERS

In fact, the menopause is as much a taboo topic in the workplace as breastfeeding. There are no laws to support menopausal women in UK workplaces — and no policies covering House of Commons staff.

There are currently 4.9m women over 50 in work — the fastest growing sector of the British workforce. But according to research released last year, they’re not comfortable disclosing menopause difficulties to their managers, particularly if those managers are younger than them or are male. Over half had not disclosed their symptoms to their manager, and 59 per cent said their work was being negatively impacted as a result.

This kind of silence is so often the case when it comes to what are still dismissed as “women’s issues” — and it needs to end.

WILL THIS DO?

I know first-hand the difference that well-considered female-centric policies can make. Where I work now, I express milk in a WeWork-style booth usually used for hangouts, which is booked for me to use twice a day. My company has always had a supportive culture for women, offering flexible working, return-to-work coaches, and free sanitary products in the loos.

But in my old job, after I’d first given birth, if I needed to express, I had to hide in a corner next to the stationery cupboard because the only other option was the unisex loo. This kind of “will this do?” attitude is still far too prevalent.

In the UK, 57 per cent of mums say that they would be happy to breastfeed at work, but just three per cent said they were provided with the resources they needed. Similarly, most menopausal women don’t feel supported in the workplace, and many consider leaving their jobs as a result.

The question we all need to be asking is: how much great female talent is being lost because of out-of-date office policies?

Embracing breastfeeding at work is a no-brainer — as is implementing other female-friendly strategies such as a menopause policy or flexible working. It won’t just boost women, it will boost your business too — whether that business is running the country or not.

Nicki Sprinz is managing director of digital creative agency ustwo.

WISH YOUR BABY WOULD SHUT UP AND LET YOU GET SOME SLEEP?

TRY WHITE NOISE BABY

The app features a range of ambient tracks — think water fountains, car rides, and waves against the rocks — to help your little one sleep. It also has a rattle mode, with fun sounds to distract your bawling babe when out and about.

© Nicki Sprinz is managing director of digital creative agency ustwo.
Portsmouth bask in their return to spotlight for right reasons

Resurgent Pompey set to host Arsenal in FA Cup tie, writes Michael Searles

WHEN Portsmouth welcome Arsenal to Fratton Park tonight there will be a release of emotions from the almost 20,000 Pompey fans present, many of whom are responsible for the club’s revival.

The fifth-round tie is the furthest the club have progressed in the FA Cup since the 2010 final and the match is symbolic of Portsmouth’s upturn, which is in large part down to the relentless work of supporters who have brought the club back from the brink. It is fitting, then, that this match is in the tournament where they experienced their biggest recent high – and against the competition’s most successful side.

Harry Redknapp led Portsmouth to a first major trophy in 58 years when they lifted the FA Cup in 2008. But despite returning to Wembley two years later, off-the-field financial issues and chronic mismanagement had already set in.

The club was forced to administrate in 2012, but was finally rescued by its supporters and later bought by former Chelsea and England star Michael Eissner, who in 2016 secured a new EFL licence for the club and prevented Pompey from being kicked out of League Two.

In the 12 years since Redknapp left the club and the 10 successive seasons of footballing futility that followed, Pompey have enjoyed just one play-off final – against Peterborough in League Two in 2015.

Portsmouth have since become League Two champions and gone off to an excellent start to their third consecutive promotion campaign.

Tonight’s FA Cup tie against Arsenal is the latest indication of the club’s revival, then, and an opportunity for the fans, who have worked tirelessly to get the club back to this point, to bask in their achievements.

AST year’s fourth-placed finish in the Premier League saw Pompey end one of the most turbulent decades in the team’s history on a high.

While it was a huge step forward – climbing from ninth and sixth in the previous two seasons – maintaining that trajectory this year looks all but inconceivable.

Mercedes, Red Bull and Ferrari are expected to continue their domination and, as a result, the Woking-based outfit already have one eye on 2021 when the sport's new regulations are set to take effect, according to chief executive Zak Brown.

"I’m very happy with last season, I think fourth was all we could have hoped for. Now we need to do it again." Brown tells City A.M.

"Closing the gap to the top three is going to be difficult, we aren’t going to take the same step forward again. We are balancing trying to do the best we can in 2020 while trying to be very prepared for 2021."

The majority of next year’s regulation changes are aimed at creating more competitive racing, particularly the implementation of a $175m per year cost cap, which is designed to help teams with smaller budgets compete against the current frontrunners and the sport’s big spenders.

But Brown, who is targeting McLaren’s return to the front of the grid in the new era, is sceptical about the current frontrunners and the sport’s big spenders.

"The Olympics is every four years, so if you have a grand prix every two years in some key markets, I think that works. It gives us calendar expansion without breaking the work demands that go into 24/25 races. But ultimately we will support whatever direction it goes in."

Integral to McLaren’s hopes of moving up the grid in 2021 will be how well the new senior team gels.

"I personally would be a fan of alternating races. If a country wants to have a grand prix, that’s good for racing, but should you go to 24/25 or should you stay at 21/22 and rotate markets? That would keep demand up," he argues.

"The Olympics is every four years, so if you have a grand prix every two years in some key markets, I think that works. It gives us calendar expansion without breaking the work demands that go into 24/25 races. But ultimately we will support whatever direction it goes in."

Integral to McLaren’s return to the front of the grid in the new era, is sceptical about the current frontrunners and the sport’s big spenders.

The fifth-round tie is the furthest the club have progressed in the FA Cup since
Foden stars as City follow Madrid win with third Carabao Cup in a row, writes Frank Dalleres

AT ELY has not been the happiest of times for Manchester City. The title they have held dear for two years is being wrested away by Liverpool, the title they covet most looks like being out of reach until 2022, and the knockon effect of that has been to raise doubts about the futures of the men who have taken them to new heights. But the last few days have brought cheer. A comeback win at Real Madrid to seize control of their Champions League last-16 tie, a long-awaited and unexpected Premier League defeat for Liverpool and, yesterday, in the Carabao Cup final at Wembley, a victory over Aston Villa and a first trophy of the campaign. After everything, not far off a perfect week.

This was not plain sailing, even if it looked it after half an hour. With Phil Foden to the fore, Sergio Agüero put City ahead and Rodri swiftly doubled the lead. Mbwana Samatta’s flying header before half-time kept the contest alive and the holders needed a fine save by Claudio Bravo to win the competition for a third time in a row.

Wolves might have been had referee Lee Mason not wrongly awarded City a corner from which Rodri nodded their decisive second goal, and had Bravo not displayed razor-sharp reflexes to tip aIJosé Gomes shot onto the post two minutes from time. City’s 70 per cent possession did not allow much room for Jack Grealish’s obvious gifts to flourish and Villa’s most dangerous moments came from crosses by Ahmed Elmohamady or Anwar El Ghazi – the latter’s centre was despatched emphatically by Samatta. Still, they clung on as City racked up 22 shots. With a relegation battle in front of them, Dean Smith’s side will need similar fighting spirit.

GREALISH SHACKLED
Villa may wonder what might have been had referee Lee Mason not wrongly awarded City a corner from which Rodri nodded their decisive second goal, and had Bravo not displayed razor-sharp reflexes to tip aIJosé Gomes shot onto the post two minutes from time. City’s 70 per cent possession did not allow much room for Jack Grealish’s obvious gifts to flourish and Villa’s most dangerous moments came from crosses by Ahmed Elmohamady or Anwar El Ghazi – the latter’s centre was despatched emphatically by Samatta. Still, they clung on as City racked up 22 shots. With a relegation battle in front of them, Dean Smith’s side will need similar fighting spirit.

Foden, 19, was handed only his 10th start this season on the right of a front three but proved his team’s most effective outlet, running Villa utterly ragged in a superb first half. He stole in at the far post to head Rodri’s ball back across goal for Agüero to bury the opener and, in one piece of virtuoso skill after halftime, controlled a long pass and set off on a dribble while juggling the ball. He rightly took the man-of-the-match award.

ROCKY STONES
John Stones, too, was given a rare chance to impress having fallen down the pecking order this term, but did little to silence his critics.

Samatta’s goal came after the £47.5m centre-back inexplicably fell over when trying to deal with a hopeful ball forward. It was not the assured display with which to demand he adds to his 10 league starts and may also give England manager Gareth Southgate pause for thought as he mulls his Euro 2020 selection.

SPORT DIGEST

MEXICO WIN LIFTS WATSON BACK INTO WORLD TOP 50
Britain’s Heather Watson will return to the top 50 of the women’s tennis rankings today after she won her first title since 2016. Watson overcame 17-year Canadian Leylah Fernandez 6-4, 6-7 (8-10), 6-2 in the final of the Mexican Open in Acapulco yesterday. The 27-year-old from Guernsey said: “It’s been a few years, so I’m just really, really happy that I came through that match.”

ACHELLOTTI SEES RED AFTER EVERTON GOAL RULED OUT
Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti was sent off after the final whistle of his side’s 1-1 draw with Manchester United yesterday for protesting the decision to disallow a late goal. The Toffees thought they had snatched victory when Dominic Calvert-Lewin’s shot deflected in off Harry Maguire, but Gylfi Sigurdsson was offside and ruled to be interfering. Everton, who took the lead through Calvert-Lewin in the third minute, remain 11th in the Premier League. United, for whom Bruno Fernandes scored again, stay fifth.

FIVE-TRY WASPS BEAT EXILES AND CLIMB INTO TOP HALF
Wasps ran in five tries as they came from 14-3 down to beat London Irish and climb to sixth in the Premiership yesterday. Props Byi Alo and Ben Harris, full-back Marcus Watson, scrum-half Dan Robson and fly-half Jacob Umaga all crossed for the visitors. Bristol went third as they defeated West Country rivals Bath 19-13. Tries from back-row Christopher Vui, wing Alapati Leuia and replacement Harry Randall earned Bristol their first win at The Rec for 14 years, despite Bath hitting back through replacement Will Chudley.

CARABÃO CUP

VILLA MAN CITY

Samatta 41
Agüero 20, Rodri 38

A PERFECT WEEK
To find out how we are different, come in and see us at one of our seven Branches across Greater London.

**Chelsea**
45 Cadogan Street
Chelsea, London
SW3 2QJ
8am - 5.30pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 207 337 0590
chelsea@killik.com

**Chiswick**
23 Chiswick High Road
Chiswick, London
W4 2ND
8am - 5.30pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 208 090 3303
chiswick@killik.com

**Richmond**
2 Paradise Road
Richmond, Surrey
TW9 1SE
8am - 5.30pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 208 948 7337
richmond@killik.com

**Hampstead**
2a Downshire Hill
Hampstead, London
NW3 1NR
8am - 5.30pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 207 794 3006
hampstead@killik.com

**Esher**
9 Esher High Street
Esher, Surrey
KT10 9RL
8am - 5.30pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 1372 464 877
esher@killik.com

**Kensington**
281 Kensington High Street
Kensington, London
W8 6NA
8am - 5.30pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 207 603 3618
kensington@killik.com

**Northcote Road**
125D Northcote Road,
Battersea, London,
SW11 6PS
8am - 6pm
Monday to Friday
+44 (0) 207 337 0455
northcoteroad@killik.com
We may not be the biggest, but we’re proud to be the best.

Voted Wealth Manager of the Year 2019 by readers of the Financial Times and Investors Chronicle.

For a complimentary review of your investments, email ISA@killik.com today.

Capital at risk. Past performance is not an indication of future performance.