

# EchoBusiness

**BUSINESS ECHO**  
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business supplement  
Every Tuesday

## King cautious over UK economy

BANK of England Governor Mervyn King has warned that the UK economic recovery depends heavily on developments in the world economy. The Bank's quarterly inflation report said rising raw material prices, energy bills and an impending VAT rise meant inflation would remain high next year. Adding to the uncertainty are Government cuts which could trigger a slowdown in construction, Mr King said, which has been a key driver in recent faster-than-expected economic growth.

**LOCAL ADVICE:** Hartlepool Enterprise Centre in Brougham Terrace, is holding advice sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and next Thursday, from 11am to 3pm, to help businesses sign up to the Buy Local Hartlepool campaign. For more information, visit [buylocalhartlepool.co.uk](http://buylocalhartlepool.co.uk) or call Emma Adamson on 01429-867677.

**SUPER GROWTH:** The fast-growing firm behind fashion label Superdry, that began life on a market stall in Cheltenham, more than 20 years ago, has opened 14 stores abroad in the last quarter and reported rapid growth. Sales at SuperGroup rose 68.4 per cent to £57.5m in the three months ending October 31, compared with 60 per cent in the previous quarter.

**TRAINING COURSE:** North-East agency Community Renewable Energy is offering a new training course aimed at turning busy business people into renewable energy experts. To book a place on the session that takes place in Newcastle on November 24, email [val@core.coop](mailto:val@core.coop), call 01289-309669 or visit [core.coop](http://core.coop)

**ENERGY SLUMP:** The first UK energy supplier to increase gas prices this year yesterday announced a six per cent fall in half-year profits amid "challenging" trading conditions. Scottish & Southern Energy – the UK's second biggest energy firm with 9.3m customer accounts – said adjusted profits fell to £385.5m as a result of a 25 per cent rise in wholesale gas prices and a weather-related fall in output from its hydro-electric schemes and wind farms.

**PRU BOOST:** Insurer Prudential highlighted the importance of its Asian markets yesterday after robust sales in the region drove a 17 per cent rise in third-quarter sales.

**DISNEY CASH:** Visitors to Disneyland Paris spend an average of £38.60 at the theme park, a 2.4 per cent increase that helped cut its annual losses by 28 per cent.

# Physio meets football star and also nets deal

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THE former physio of Darlington Football Club who spent the summer in the US working for a Manchester United legend has secured a major contract to help staff at a leading supermarket chain stay fit.

Paul Gough Physio Rooms, which has centres in Darlington, Durham, Guisborough and Hartlepool, has been asked to provide a prevention and injury recovery service to about 300 workers at the Teesport depot of Asda supermarket.

The contract caps a successful year for Hartlepool-born physio Paul Gough, 29, who was asked by Manchester Utd and England midfielder Paul Scholes to be senior medical expert at the star's soccer academy, in Florida.

Gough, who spent four years as Darlington FC's head physiotherapist, was honoured to work alongside a footballer who has made more than 450 appearances for the Red Devils, but he accepts that from a business perspective, the contract with Asda has greater significance.

Mr Gough said: "Working with Paul Scholes in America was a dream come true. At times I was pinching myself, but this agreement with Asda



**MEETING A LEGEND:** Manchester United star Paul Scholes, left, with Paul Gough at the midfielder's soccer academy, in Florida

is so much more rewarding, as it involves recognition for the hard work and friendliness my staff have shown to our patients.

"For a huge business such as Asda to choose and trust our practice to care for its staff is an honour, and is just reward for our hard work and dedication over the years, from the office staff to the physiotherapists. I am extremely proud of our team."

As part of the agreement, Mr Gough will offer Asda workers injury prevention sessions during the firm's healthy business week that takes place later this month. He hopes the deal will help him secure contracts with other major supermarket chains and retailers.

From being a one-man operation in 2007, Mr Gough, employs eight physiotherapists and four secretaries who deal

with more than 400 patients a week. In the new year, he will open a centre in Langley Moor, near Durham, specialising in rehabilitation for people with physical disabilities.

The practice has worked with organisations including US insurer AIG, AXA PPP healthcare, and North-East businesses such as Housing Hartlepool, Tomlinson Hall, of Billingham, and Winn Solicitors.

## Driving ahead with £2m investment

AN award-winning autocare specialist has announced plans to invest £2m during the next two years, which includes a new warehouse almost the size of two football pitches.

North Eastern Tyre and Exhausts (Nete), which operates five outlets across the North-East and Yorkshire, is expanding its wholesale division, NE Wholesale, which will offer about a quarter-of-a-million tyres.

Nete has been established for more than 40 years and employs more than 370 people across the region.

Tim Darcy, general operations and logistics manager, said: "The acquisition of this massive storage space in Stockton is in addition to our current NE Wholesale storage sites, and is a strategic move in Nete's growth plans.

"We are now able to work even closer with our wholesale customers and offer an incredible range of tyres we now have at our fingertips, all with a substantially decreased delivery time."

The auto specialist also has plans to invest in the latest technology to improve stock control and selection.

Mr Darcy added: "While the rest of the market is combating tough conditions, Nete is forging ahead with plans to be as efficient as possible, confirming our status as front runners in the industry."

## Market report

THE rally on London's FTSE 100 Index came to a halt yesterday as world markets retreated on concerns that China will tighten policy to cool rising inflation and curb growth.

Stocks fell sharply after China's central bank announced it would raise the amount of cash that banks need to hold in reserve.

In London, mining giants – that benefit significantly from Chinese demand – provided much of the downforce on the FTSE 100, which closed 58.3 points lower at 5816.9.

Metal group **Lonmin** was the worst hit of the London mining stocks, down five per cent, or 88p to 1806p.

Strong gains in the utility sector failed to offset the commodity falls, with **Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE)** rising by nearly four per cent after it confirmed the group remained on track to meet full-year forecasts, despite a six per cent fall in half-year profits to £385.5m.

SSE – up 42p to 1160p –

gave a further boost to investors by maintaining its dividend policy and hiking its half-year payout by more than inflation.

The results sparked increases for **National Grid**, up 7.5p to 583p, while water firm **Severn Trent** and British Gas owner **Centrica** also benefited – ahead 9p to 1438p and 1.9p to 336.2p respectively.

Meanwhile, **Rolls-Royce** shares were back under pressure after Singapore Airlines said it had taken three of its Airbus A380 superjumbos out of service to make precautionary changes to the planes' engines. The stock was 18.5p lower at 588p yesterday, dashing the tentative recovery signs seen since an update from the company on Monday.

Other fallers included **Sainsbury's**, which dropped 4p to 373.2p despite the supermarket group meeting market forecasts with an eight per cent rise in underlying half-year profits to £332m.

## Share prices

**NORTH AMERICAN**  
Du Pont.....£29.22-0.38  
**AEROSPACE**  
Avon Rbbr.....170  
Chemring.....£28½-¼  
Cobham.....207¼-2  
Meggitt.....321¼-8¼  
Senior.....147¼-1¼  
**AIM**  
API Grp.....15½  
Cape.....396½-¾  
Chapelthorpe.....23½  
Dawson Intl.....1¼  
Johnson Service.....24¼  
Man Brnze.....60½-2¼  
Metalrax.....10½-¾  
Nichols.....452½+4  
Scapa Grp.....25-¼  
Youngs.....552½-7½  
**AUTOMOBILES & PARTS**  
GKN.....176¼-3¼  
**BANKS**  
Allid Irish.....30½-1½  
Barclays.....289½-7½  
Bk Ireland.....35¼-½  
HSBC.....689½-4¼  
Lloyds Banking.....67½-¾  
Ryl Scotland.....42-1½  
Stan Chart.....1888½-25  
**BEVERAGES**  
Diageo.....1150-5  
**CHEMICALS**  
Croda.....1450-32  
Elementis 98.....115-¼  
Johnsn Mat.....1925-45  
Misy.....297-1  
**CONSTRUCTION**  
Balfour Beatty.....285½+½  
CRH.....1173-68½  
Costain.....225-1  
Low Bonar.....45½-1  
Marshalls.....107½+¼  
**ELECTRICAL EQUIP**  
Domino Ptg.....538+6  
Morgn Cru.....229-6¼  
Ox Instmts.....519½-1

**FOOD RETAILERS**  
Morrisons W.....273½+1  
Sainsbury.....373¼-4  
Tesco.....413  
Thorntons.....96¼-3  
**FOOD PRODUCERS**  
AB Food.....1100-7  
Carns Millg.....637½  
Nth Foods.....45¼+½  
REA Hldgs.....706-16½  
Tate Lyle.....527½-2  
Unilever.....1860-37  
**GENERAL FINANCIAL**  
3i Group.....324¼-1  
Close Bros.....818-3½  
Provident Fin.....733½-½  
Schroders.....1633-34  
Schroders NV.....1283-24  
REXAM.....315½+1¼  
Smith DS.....182¼+1½  
**GENERAL RETAILERS**  
Ashley L.....17  
Dikons Retail.....26½  
HR Owen.....100¼+2  
Inchcape.....336-11¼  
Kingfisher.....238+¾  
M&S.....395½-10½  
Next.....£21-¼  
Signet Jewellers.....£22¼+½  
WH Smith.....467½-¾  
**HEALTH CARE**  
Smith Nph.....596½+2½  
**HOUSEHOLD GOODS**  
Reckitt Benckiser.....£35¼



**IND ENGINEERING**  
600 Group.....16½  
Charter.....722-5  
Fenner.....281½+12½  
IMI.....827½-21  
Molins.....59½  
Renold.....35  
Spirax Srco.....1795-14  
Weir Grp.....1665-44  
**INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORT**  
Forth Ports.....1270-41  
**INVESTMENT**  
Alliance Trust.....355¼-½  
Br Assets.....132-2½  
Candover Inv.....750-5  
Dunedin Inv.....218-2  
Witn.....454¼-7¼  
Edinburgh USTT.....596-2½  
Fergn & C.....295½-4¼  
Hend Smllr Cos.....268-1¼  
Scott Am.....232½-2  
Witan.....485½-3¼  
**LIFE INSURANCE**  
Lgl & Gen.....100¼-1¼  
Old Mutual.....132½  
Prudential.....623-7½  
**MEDIA**  
BSkyB.....727-1  
Chrysalis.....145-1  
D Mail Tst.....562½-5  
Pearson.....962½-10  
Trinity Mirror.....104¼-1¼

**MINING**  
BHP Billiton.....£24-½  
Lonmin.....1806-88  
Rio Tinto.....£43½-1¼  
**NONFEE INSURANCE**  
Marsh Mcl.....1571+7¼  
**OIL & GAS PRODUCERS**  
Premier.....1770+3  
R Dutch Shell A.....£20½-¼  
R Dutch Shell B.....£20-¼  
**PHARMACEUTICALS**  
Astrazeneca.....£30½-¼  
Axis-Shield.....257¼-7¼  
Glaxo.....1238+4  
**REAL ESTATE**  
Brit Land.....501-10  
DTZ Hldgs.....42½  
Gt Portland.....345-2½  
Hamrsn.....421¼-8½  
Land Secs.....695-1½  
**SUPPORT SERVICES**  
Bunzl.....729½-4  
Capita.....730½-10  
Davis Service Group.....405-8  
De La Rue.....633½-6  
Electro Com.....252-1  
Hays.....113¼-2½  
Menzies J.....510+2  
Prem Farnell.....283¼+¼  
Rentokil.....90½-¾  
Travis & P.....882½-7½  
Wolseley.....1775-42  
**TECHNOLOGY**  
IBM.....£90¼  
Psion.....92-4½  
Spirant Comms.....152-4  
**TELECOM (MOBILE)**  
Vodafone Group.....173½-½  
**TOBACCO**  
Br Am Tob.....£24  
Imperial Tobacco.....£20-¼  
**TRAVEL & LEISURE**  
Compass Grp.....540½-2  
FirstGroup.....398¼-4½  
Ladbrokes.....133-2  
Rank Org.....130-¼  
Stagecoach.....215-2¼

## Indicators

**The FTSE 100** .....5816.9  
Down.....58.3  
**US dollar** .....1.6079  
Up.....0.0015  
**Euro** .....1.1717  
Up.....0.0141

## Popular shares

Admiral Grp.....1633-38  
Aviva.....416½-6½  
BAE Systems.....359½+10¼  
BG.....1277-5  
BP.....445½-9  
Brit Airways.....272¼-5½  
BT Grp.....159½+1¼  
Centrica.....336¼+1¼  
GlaxoSmithKline.....1238+2½  
HSBC HLDGS.....689½-4¼

## Northern shares

Barrat Dev.....83½-1  
Bellway.....557½-½  
Go-Ahead Gp.....1293¼-36½  
Grainger.....103¼  
Grepps.....434¼-4¼  
Heliuss Energy.....25¼  
Norman Broadbent.....71  
Northern 2 VCT.....67  
Northern Investors.....188  
Northern Venture Tst73½+2  
Northgate.....244  
Northbrian Water.....346¼-5  
Opsec Security Group.....28  
Persimmon.....369¼-2¼  
Sage Group.....271½+4  
Severfield Rowen.....245+4  
Stadium Cross.....24  
Stadium.....67½  
Vp.....162½