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**: PUBS**

**Cheap booze not so super for bars**

SUPERMARKETS have been blamed for a doubling in the number of pub and bar closures in the last year.

Twenty-three venue operators went bust in the first three months of 2010, up from 11 the same time last year, say accountants Wilkins Kennedy. The on-trade has been hit by the smoking ban and cheap booze from supermarkets.

Anthony Cork of Wilkins Kennedy warned that further tax hikes could be the last straw. He said: "The Government needs to understand the sector and not tax it out of existence."

**Cash point**

with **TRICIA PHILLIPS**

Citizens' Advice Media Champion 2010

**Savers feel the pinch**

SAVERS are being hammered yet again as rates are being slashed and accounts withdrawn. In the last week alone a dozen best buy rates have vanished.

Barclays has withdrawn the bonus on its Golden ISA which now offers just 2.08%, down from 3.10%.

Coventry Building Society has pulled both its one-year fixed-rate ISA at 3.25% and its two-year ISA at 3.50%, while Northern Rock's Regular Saver at 5% is no longer available.

Andrew Hagger of Moneynet.co.uk says: "Until we see an upward movement from the 0.5% base rate, there's little chance that savers will have anything to smile about."

"In fact, with VAT set to rise and inflation taking chunks out of any return they managed to make, it's just more doom and gloom."

With pathetic returns there is little incentive to save at the moment. Reducing debt by making overpayments on mortgages or credit card bills could be a better use of your cash.

To get the best savings rates around you'll have to lock your cash away for at least a year. The best current rates include the following:

- ▶ Instant access - 2.80% from the AA and Egg on balances from £1.
- ▶ Fixed ISAs - 3% from the Post Office and Northern Rock for one year.
- ▶ Fixed rate bonds - 3% for one year from the Post Office, 3.75% for two years from Kent Reliance Building Society, and 4.10% for three years from the AA.

**THE REAL STING**

**Coke could dry up amid strike threat**

SHOPS could see Coca-Cola shortages this summer because of a strike by thousands of the firm's workers.

Unions will ballot production and distribution staff at 12 sites in a dispute over pay and pensions. Leaders warn unless bosses resolve it, its drink supplies may "dry up".

Unite and the GMB say results will be known at the end of June, with any action likely to be held in July. They have accused the World Cup sponsor of refusing to consult on changes to conditions of employment and not negotiating on basic pay rises.

Unite's Jennie Formby said: "Presumably, Coca-Cola Enterprises understands the World Cup it sponsors stands for fair play, but where is the fair play in sneakingly attacking pay and pensions while freezing worker representatives out of discussions? Our members have had enough." The GMB said: "Employees have already voted by 96% in a consultative ballot to take action." Coca-Cola said: "We've been talking to the unions in detail over recent weeks. We intend to continue this approach to reach a constructive outcome. In the current climate, the pay rises offered are very competitive."

The company says it is confident of maintaining supplies in the event of any action.



**UK's in the big picture**

COMING-of-age movie *An Education*, starring Carey Mulligan and Peter Sarsgaard, above, helped the UK film industry put in a stellar year.

A report from the UK Film Council says a string of big screen successes

contributed £4.5b to the economy and the industry currently employs more than 36,000.

We are now a major player worldwide, with actors winning a number of international awards and

specialist studios providing cutting-edge effects for Hollywood blockbusters such as *Avatar*.

The UK's portrayal in film is also credited with attracting 10% of visitors to the country.

**: AGM**

**Pru is blasted**

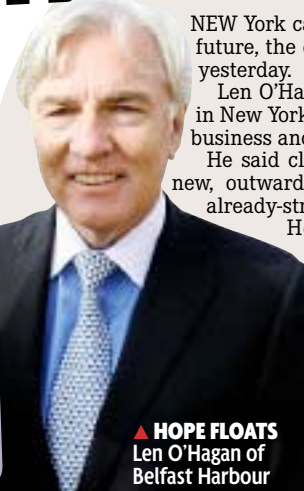
SHAREHOLDERS yesterday called for the heads of Prudential bosses following its failed £24.5billion attempt to buy Asian insurer AIA.

Chief executive Tidjane Thiam and chairman Harvey McGrath faced criticism over the collapsed bid which left the financial group with a £450million bill.

Investor Anthony Watts fumed: "You're a disgrace. You and the board made the judgment call, you got it wrong."

"It has been a shambles from the start - you should do the honourable thing."

**IT'S UP TO NEW**



NEW York can help secure Belfast's economic future, the chairman of the city's harbour said yesterday.

Len O'Hagan was speaking ahead of a summit in New York this week which will be addressed by business and political leaders from both cities.

He said closer ties between the Big Apple and a new, outward-looking Belfast would help formalise already-strong links.

He added: "Belfast is redefining its international image and it is important we build upon our long-standing relationship with the US, particularly New York."

"This new Belfast has much to offer the overseas investment community, not least the various regeneration projects under way throughout the city."

▲ **HOPE FLOATS**  
Len O'Hagan of Belfast Harbour

**: SHOPS**

**Stores' goal for World Cup cash**

THE high street is banking on a World Cup bonanza to boost lacklustre sales. Store bosses hope a combination of footie fever and the summer will tempt customers to part with their cash.

Many chains need a lift as figures from the British Retail Consortium revealed takings nudged up just 0.8% last month. This was much better than the 2.3% slump in April but way down on March's 4.4% jump.

The BRC's Stephen Robertson said: "Consumer confidence has clearly improved since last year's lows but there is still plenty of uncertainty."

**FTSE 100**

down 56.9 at 5069.1

Anglo American..... 2458.0 -59.5	British Airways.....196.4 -4.4	Enterprise Inns.....101.3 -4.2
AB Foods..... 966.5 -9.5	BP.....430.3 -3.05	GKN.....121.4 -3.9
Arriva..... 765.5 +0.5	BT.....128.4 -1.7	GlaxoSmithKline.....1164.0 -11.0
AstraZeneca.....2924.5 -25.5	Cable & Wireless.....62.4 -0.5	Hays.....97.0 -1.2
Aviva..... 323.4 -5.7	Capita Group.....769.5 -1.5	Halfords.....503.5 -3.5
BSkyB..... 569.5 -6.5	Carnival.....2568.0 -40.0	Home Retail.....240.0 -2.0
BAE Systems..... 3191 -1.9	Carphone Warehouse182.8 +0.25	HSBC.....629.4 -0.7
BAT..... 2135.5 -7.5	Centrica.....281.4 -0.1	Imperial Tobacco.....1903.0 -14.0
Barclays..... 285.9 -2.7	Compass.....549.5 -0.5	ITV.....54.2 -0.95
BG Group..... 1045.0 -24.0	Diageo.....1060.0 -10.0	Kingfisher.....216.2 -5.4
Billiton..... 1735.0 -36.0	DSG International..... 24.3 +0.02	Land Securities.....601.0 -5.5
BR Land Co..... 446.1 -10.1	Easyjet.....407.0 -6.9	Legal & General.....75.8 -1.9

**your holiday**

Australian Dollar	1.66
Bangladeshi Taka	2.13
Canadian Dollar	1.42
Croatian Kuna	8.02
Czech Koruna	26.04
Egyptian Pounds	7.30
Euro	1.13
Hungarian Forint	306.73
HK Dollar	2.01
Polish Zloty	5.56
S African Rand	10.60
Swiss Franc	1.37
Thai Baht	42.67
Turkish Lira	2.13
UAE Dirham	6.93
US Dollar	1.35

2010 high 5825.0 2010 low 4940.7

Lloyds..... 54.0 -1.48	Rolls-Royce.....581.5 -5.5	Stagecoach.....184.1 -3.7
Marks & Spencer.....337.4 -2.5	Royal & Sun Alliance...118.7 +0.7	Standard Chartered.. 1611.0 -10.5
Morrison..... 262.0 -2.5	RBS.....43.1 -0.4	Standard Life.....176.9 -2.1
National Grid.....485.4 -2.2	SABMiller.....1890.0 -25.0	TalkTalk.....124.5 -2.1
Next..... 2056.0 -27.0	J Sainsbury..... 323.4 -1.9	Tesco.....407.1 -5.15
Old Mutual.....109.0 -2.3	Scottish & Southern1074.0 -13.0	TUI Travel.....222.8 -4.9
Pearson..... 917.5 -22.0	Severn Trent.....1230.0 -8.0	Unilever.....1850.0 -16.0
Prudential..... 534.0 -22.0	Serco..... 606.0 -4.5	United Utilities..... 552.5 -4.0
Reckitt Benckiser.....3183.0 -22.0	Shell.....1788.5 -20.5	Vodafone.....137.5 -1.15
Reed..... 471.4 -5.3	Smith & Nephew.....630.0 -6.0	Wolseley.....1587.0 -13.0
Rentokil Initial.....116.8 -1.6	Smiths Group.....1018.0 -17.0	Yell..... 28.8 -0.85
Rio Tinto.....3052.0 -64.0	Smith WH.....454.0 +10.0	Trinity Mirror.....90.2 -6.0