



June 29, 2005

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EQUITIES	Close	Change	% +/-	P/E '05	YTD
ISEQ	6482 ↑	21	0.32%	11.0	4.59%
FTSE 100	5090 ↑	47	0.93%	13.5	5.74%
DAX 30	4557 ↑	34	0.74%	15.0	7.08%
DOW	10406 ↑	115	1.12%	19.5	-3.50%
NASDAQ	2070 ↑	25	1.21%	15.6	-0.91%
S&P	1202 ↑	11	0.91%	21.0	-0.86%

CURRENCIES	Euro	Dollar	Stg	Yen
Euro	1.0000	1.2040	0.6636	132.8500
Dollar	1.2040	1.0000	1.8232	110.3500
Sterling	0.6636	1.8232	1.0000	200.0800
Yen	132.8500	110.3500	200.0800	1.0000
Oil (Nymex)	58.0500			

This Week's Research
CRH
Grafton Group

Today's Research
INWS

Today's Recommendations

Breaking News

IFG upbeat on current trading

IFG Group Chairman, P J Moran said yesterday that in the light of trading so far this year "we remain confident of meeting market expectations for the year". The financial services group also told shareholders at its AGM that it was appointing Colm Barrington to its board. Speaking after the meeting, chief executive Richard Hayes said the business had never been in better shape and was aiming to double earnings per share to 20 cent by 2007.

Fyffes trading update

Fyffes said it expects a mid-teens percentage rate of growth in its full year underlying earnings per share, ahead of current market expectations, while it sees first half adjusted EPS up 40 percent. 'This outturn will be weighted towards the seasonally stronger first half, with adjusted earnings per share for the first six months currently expected to be in the order of 40 percent ahead of the same period last year,' Fyffes said in a trading update. 'With the benefit of this very positive start to the year and notwithstanding the strong performance achieved in the second half of 2004, Fyffes' current target for full year 2005 is an increase in adjusted earnings per share, excluding exceptional items, in the mid teens in percentage terms, ahead of current market expectations,' it said. Fyffes said it continued to focus on improving profitability in its UK and Ireland operations and on counteracting significant cost inflation across the group. The company is due to report first-half results in early September.

Shareholders back Shell

Shareholders have backed Royal Dutch/Shell's plans to unify its dual ownership structure. Shell hopes the unification of its Dutch and British companies will help streamline its management structure. The new company will be known as Royal Dutch Shell Plc and will be the world's third-largest publicly-traded oil firm with market capitalisation of more than \$200bn.

INWS (€2.57) Trading statement released Stuart Draper

- Trading statement : This morning, Independent News & Media issued its H1 pre-close period trading statement. Overall, it was confirmed that the strong revenue conditions of Q1 2005 have continued into Q2 and that the group remains on course to achieve current market expectations for 2005 earnings.
- Advertising revenue : These market expectations are for 2005 eps of 16.1c, representing year on year growth of 14%. This earnings growth is being driven by a combination of c.10% circulation growth and over 10% growth in advertising revenue.
- iTouch sale : It was recently announced that the group's sale of its 37.4% stake in iTouch to Japanese mobile phone content provider, For-side.com Co, for c.€100m in cash, has been declared wholly unconditional. The offer of 44p per share was a 26.6% premium, with the proceeds being used for general corporate purposes and to enhance the group's publishing brands.
- London Independent : However, despite the major circulation gains being made by the London Independent, its profitability is only improving modestly. Also, with the consensus forecast already expecting further 14% eps growth in 2005, there may be limited scope now for further positive earnings surprises.
- FX effect : The strengthening of the FX rates for the Australian and New Zealand dollars, and the South African Rand, versus the Euro, over the course of 2004, also helped the reported 2004 growth, but such translation growth from these commodity currencies is unlikely to be repeated in 2005.
- Indian acquisition : The group also recently completed the €25.5m acquisition of a 26% stake in Indian newspaper publisher, Jagran Prakashan Ltd., which publishes the Hindi-language daily, Dinik Jagran, India's largest selling daily newspaper with 16.4m readers daily. The deal follows recent changes to India's foreign ownership legislation in the media sector, which now enables foreign companies to acquire up to 26% of Indian publications. The acquisition will be financed from Independent's existing cash balances, but is only likely to be modestly earnings enhancing in 2005.
- Fairly valued : With the shares trading at 16x consensus 2005 eps of 16.1c, we re-iterate our current NEUTRAL recommendation on the expectation that the group's earnings growth rate will start to slow in 2006, and that such a multiple quite fairly values an intrinsically cyclical earnings stream : **NEUTRAL**.

Business Press

- REO to take legal action against Aberdeen (IT)
- CRH may make bid for tilemaker Terreal (IT)
- Aminex placing raises €7.4m (IT)
- Public 'should be allowed to buy Aer Lingus shares (II)
- Bol cuts 20-year fixed rate by 0.5pc (II)

Investment Press— Lex

- Royal Dutch/Shell: UK budgets under Gordon Brown's tenure have shown that taxation and simplicity rarely go hand in hand. But the complexities produced by Royal Dutch/Shell's unification give the chancellor a run for his money.



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