

press release

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The Share Centre reveals FTSE 100 biggest winners and losers since April and where to invest now

- Vedanta up 194%, Barclays up 138%, Rentokil up 120%
- United Utilities down 9.7%, Reed Elsevier down 7.6%, Thomas Cook down 7.2%
- The Share Centre highlights Man Group as a company with future potential

Over the last six months the FTSE 100 has risen 31%. Now half-way through the financial reporting season, Nick Raynor, investment adviser at The Share Centre, reviews the index's performance, highlighting this year's biggest winners and losers and identifies a company with future potential.

"Over the last six months the FTSE 100 has been steadily climbing, having risen from a low of 3933 back in March to a confident 5213. Investor confidence has fuelled this resurgence as many return to the stock market in the search for income and growth. While the stock market has performed well, it has been a tale of two halves for individual companies, with some recording their highest profit levels ever and others struggling to stay afloat."

BIGGEST WINNERS:

Vedanta up 194%

Vedanta Resources is a metals and mining group with annual sales of \$1.9bn. The company primarily produces aluminum, copper, zinc and lead. Since its low of 743p back in March, Vedanta's share price has increased nearly three-fold to 2191p. The company's performance has been boosted by the weak dollar, coupled with the resurgence in minerals and commodity prices, which has lifted the whole sector.

Barclays up 138%

Barclays' share price has rocketed over the last six months currently trading at 376p, not far off the price levels it was trading before the collapse of Lehman Brothers. The bank chose financial

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independence over government support and as a stand-alone bank has outperformed its rivals. As a result Barclays' shares were not diluted and therefore rose faster as confidence returned to the market. The old saying, "sell in May and stay away until St Ledger's Day" would certainly have proved costly to Barclays investors. Collectively, from 1 March up to mid-August, banking shares went up over 300%.

Rentokil up 120%

Rentokil is known as the royal rat catcher, but has many other strings to its bow i.e. the laundry group, Initial. Following a disastrous 2008, Rentokil decided to reorganise its business operations. The company has since delivered better than expected cost savings and its share price has increased almost more than doubled from 53p to an impressive 116.8p. More recently, Rentokil made a surprise return to the FTSE 100.

BIGGEST LOSERS:

United Utilities down 9.7%

United Utilities share price has slowly been falling as investors move from steady performing shares to snap up down beaten shares for value. As a result, United Utilities share price has dropped from 495p back in April to 451p. There are also concerns of OFWAT's forthcoming review, which is likely to have a negative impact on the water sector as a whole. United Utilities may well be forced to cut its dividend, but the company has strongly suggested that no cut will be needed. On the plus side, United Utilities' shares are currently yielding over 7%.

Reed Elsevier down 7.6%

Reed Elsevier, provider of journals and textbooks, has seen a large fall in profits over the last six months. Its share price has dropped from 498.5p back in April to 463p, which is believed to be the result of spending cut backs in education publications and increased debt pressure. More recently, the publisher surprised the market by placing 110m new shares in the market. As a result, of this announcement its share price took a 15% hit. Funds raised by the placing will be used to pay off debts acquired from Reed Elsevier's takeover of ChoicePoint.

Thomas Cook down 7.2%

The travel sector has not had the best year as consumers continue to tighten their belts. Thomas Cook's August trading statement confirmed it was suffering and that swine flu had impacted the tour operator much worse than its rival TUI. Tough conditions in the global travel market have forced Thomas Cook to abandon its operating profit target of £480m for next year, a goal established in the happier times of 2007. Since April Thomas Cook's share price as dropped from 250p to 233p.

WHERE TO INVEST NOW:

Man Group

Man Group, the world's biggest listed hedge fund manager, has recovered well since March when its share price hit a low of 150p. Since then its share price has more than doubled and is currently trading at 341p, but we believe that there is still room for improvement.

Man Group recently released a trading statement, which made for very positive reading. It noted that redemptions had slowed and that assets under management had increased by 1.2% to £27.2bn. Although pre-tax profits had fallen, which was expected, they were still of a reasonably high level.

Man Group is currently offering a solid dividend of 6% which should prove to be rather attractive to income seekers right now.

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Note to editors:

Past performance calculated based on prices on 7 April 2009 and 12 October 2009. Current share prices correct as at 12 October 2009.

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Investing in general, and the products and services mentioned above may not be suitable for all: if in doubt, individuals should seek independent financial advice. The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up and investors may not get back their original investment. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

The bases and levels of taxation relating to ISAs, CTFs and SIPP's are subject to change and the value of these tax allowances may depend upon the circumstances of the individual.

About The Share Centre:

The Share Centre was established in 1990 to provide value-for-money share services for private investors. Its range of services includes buying and selling shares (by Internet, telephone and post) and a comprehensive share administration and safe custody service. Tax-efficient investment 'wrappers' including ISAs, CTFs and SIPP's are also available.

The Share Centre's Advice team provides comment on market sectors, individual shares and funds on www.share.com. Access is available to customers and registered users of the site. Registration is free. To understand how our Advice team arrive at their views please read our [Investment Research Policy](#)

In addition, account customers can receive individual telephone advice on UK-listed shares and on funds traded via the CoFunds trading platform.

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