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Edge-of-the-seat stuff

The two most important individuals in the UK financial establishment know what's

important. At 2.15pm last

Wednesday, as news filtered through that the Greek parliament

had approved an austerity programme that was essential to avoid national meltdown and international economic chaos, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and Bank of England governor Sir Mervyn

King were on the edge of their seats, glued to the action in one of the most intense and closely fought contests of the year... on Centre Court at Wimbledon.

King and Osborne, both keen tennis fans – King is a member of the All England Tennis Club and sits on the management committee of the Wimbledon Championships – were spotted in the Royal Box last week.

Just as the news came through of the Greek vote, Roger Federer (pictured), the six times Wimbledon champion and number three seed, was serving to level the second set at five

games all in his quarter-final match against Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, seeded 12th. He went on to take a two-set lead and appeared to be cruising towards a routine victory.

And then something happened. The athletic Tsonga fought back winning the next three sets 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, to win the match in one of the biggest upsets of this year's tournament. Who knows, perhaps the Greek economy might enjoy a similar unlikely recovery in the next few months...

Meanwhile, spare a thought for Angela Knight, (pictured) chief executive of the British Bankers' Association, who was also acutely aware of the tennis as she took to the stage at the

UK banking trade body's annual international conference at London's Guildhall last week.

Against the backdrop of huge change in the banking sector, widespread criticism of the industry and the magnitude of its task ahead in terms of helping to set the agenda for future reform, one might have thought the BBA event would be packed to the rafters, but Knight was forced to concede the BBA faced competition from two rather different occasions – the Greek parliamentary vote on austerity measures and the men's quarter-final matches at Wimbledon were taking place the same day.

Fortunately, the BBA event pulled a good crowd, though there was a collective sigh of relief as Knight promised to announce the results of both the Greek vote and the tennis throughout the day.



BRUMMELL

Dishing up top-notch cuisine



For those, like Brummell, looking for all the convenience of having a personal chef without the tedium of employing another member of household staff, Natalie Brawley may have the answer.

Texas-born and California-bred Brawley has created Real Food Delivered Daily, a service in north London that targets high net worth individuals keen to enjoy haute cuisine every day.

Most of her clients are City bankers and traders who either can't cook, or won't cook.

Cast aside any thoughts of meals-on-wheels – this is Michelin-quality fare delivered direct to your door.

Thirty-year-old Brawley trained at the French Culinary Institute in New York, which has produced the likes of super-chef Dan Barber, co-owner of Blue Hill at Stone Barn in New York City.

She has worked at some of the world's finest restaurants including Michelin-starred Nobu and Hibiscus in London.

She came up with the idea for her business in part to help people eat organic food regularly. She said it can prove nearly impossible to avoid paying higher prices for organic ingredients at most stores.

Variety is part of the Brawley deal. The team aims to source organic food from farms and create healthy, nutritionally balanced meals using innovative recipes.

Among the mouth-watering dishes on offer are warm butternut squash and blackbean salad, seared yellowfin tuna pasta salad and farm-fresh gazpacho soup served with Spanish tortilla.

Real Food Delivered Daily charges £35 a day for three meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner – plus a healthy mid-morning and afternoon snack.

Delivery charge is included.
Angela Henshall



IN THE NEWS

1 year ago

The European Parliament gave its blessing to “some of the strictest rules in the world” to transform banking's bonus culture after the crisis. Upfront cash bonuses were to be capped, a sizeable slice of any award was to be deferred for at least three years, subject to clawback, and at least half of any bonus was to come in shares or contingent capital. The rules came into force at the start of this year.

5 years ago

Blackstone floated Southern Cross in a £200m London share offering. Fast-forward to the present day, and the US private equity group has been forced to go to great lengths, largely in vain, to point out that having not controlled Southern Cross since then, it is not to blame for a financial crisis at the UK care home operator that has sparked the most extreme vilification of the buyout industry in years.

10 years ago

Euronext garnered enough demand to list on its own exchange in a €24-per-share flotation, despite a series of technical glitches that disrupted trading in the weeks running up to the deal, which valued the company at €2.8bn. The since-expanded NYSE Euronext this month faces a shareholder vote on its merger with Deutsche Börse, and again there have been technical problems affecting trading in recent weeks.

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