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MARKET REPORT

A FURTHER weakening of the pound against the American currency boosted the big dollar-earning companies such as equipment rental group **Ashtead**, up 90p to 2223p, **Melrose Industries**, 7p stronger at 177½p, and cruiser operator **Carnival**, 96p ahead at 3462p.

Recruiter **Hays** fell 1p to 138p as it flagged up weaker market conditions despite annual operating profit growing 2 per cent to £248.8million.

Retailer **McColl's** reversed 2¾p to a record low 45¾p as it blamed poorer summer weather for a 3.6 per cent fall in quarterly sales.

Easyhotel was steady at 94½p as founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou bought £60,000 of shares after accusing a consortium of bidders of trying to buy out shareholders "on the cheap".

Building products distributor **Brickability** closed at 68p on its Aim debut after raising £57million at 65p.