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People

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No Wolves, no comment
Richard Meddings was choosing his words carefully yesterday as the Standard Chartered numbers man tried to reassure the market about the bank's loan exposure to Dubai without breaching client confidentiality. He maintained this tight-lipped composure when faced with a question on an unexpected topic: Rafael Benitez's future as manager of underachieving Liverpool Football Club.

Standard Chartered signed a four-year shirt sponsorship deal worth up to £80m with Liverpool in September. Since then, the club has crashed out of the Champions League and juddered to a dismal seventh place in the Premiership. As a prelude to his predictable "no comment" on the matter, Mr Meddings let slip a fact likely to inspire pity in the hardest heart, however: he's a Wolverhampton Wanderers fan.

African venture
Ariya Capital, one of the newest private equity firms in Africa, will today announce the appointment of **Stephen Lansdown**, co-founder of the UK's

 StanChart's **Richard Meddings**

biggest independent financial adviser, as a non-executive director and cornerstone investor. The move comes as Ariya, which is based in Botswana and London, seeks to raise about \$150m

to provide growth capital to invest in the renewable energy, telecoms and microfinance sectors of sub-Saharan Africa. Mr Lansdown, who co-founded Hargreaves Lansdown in 1981, stepped down as executive chairman of the IFA group on December 1, becoming an executive director. The 57-year-old former accountant is also chairman of Bristol City football club. Ariya was founded last year by Herta von Stiegel, the former managing director of AIG Financial Products.

RBS hires Barlow
Royal Bank of Scotland's Global Restructuring Group, which handles

problem loans, has hired one of the sector's rising stars, **Laura Barlow**. The group, which has more than doubled in size recently to 800, has become an increasingly important part of RBS's non-core operations as the task of restructuring the bank's assets proceeds. Ms Barlow joins from turnaround firm Alix Partners where she has spent six of the past 15 years working with struggling companies, doing financial and operational restructurings for public and private companies. These include Sea Containers and, most recently, Cattles where she is currently executive chairman of its subsidiary Welcome Financial Services.

Norley debt hire
Greenberg Traurig Maher, the latest law firm to try to break into the City, has hired **Lyndon Norley** to establish a global debt restructuring practice in London. The firm, which opened a UK office in July and now has 30 lawyers, is already involved in high profile situations. It has been advising the Cosmen family on National Express. Mr Norley was head of European restructuring at Kirkland & Ellis until recently and is expected to join Greenberg next year. Its investment committee is chaired by Gordon Power, founder of the ProVen venture capital trust.

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By Emiko Terazono

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