

"Migrant Workers Better Than Brits"

Migrants are more reliable and harder working than British-born workers and are boosting economic output by £6 billion a year, according to a government study published in October 2007. Immigrants have a better work ethic than the British and are willing to work longer hours with less time off sick. However, the study found that, while large numbers of migrants bring overall economic benefits, their arrival may be hitting the wage levels of the unskilled.



A separate Home Office report issued the same day found concerns in the regions over the impact of record levels of immigration on crime, education, housing and health. Half the areas consulted said migrants were putting pressure on private accommodation, leading to higher rents.

Liam Byrne, the Immigration Minister, welcomed the economic contribution of migrants but admitted that the scale of change had unsettled parts of the country.

He said: "In the long run, our country and Exchequer is better off with immigration rather than without it . . . But alongside this there is evidence that the pace of change has been unsettling and has created challenges."

Immigrants now account for more than four million of the 37 million working-age people in Britain, according to the report on the economic impact of immigration.

The study highlights the huge economic benefits of immigration but admits that the numbers arriving to work may be hurting unskilled British workers. The effect could be even greater as the study did not take into account the effect of the tens of thousands of workers who have arrived from Eastern Europe since 2005.

Employers praised the reliability of immigrants and their willingness to work hard. "This was sometimes defined in terms of migrant workers' productivity and speed. But it was also related to their willingness to work long hours, beyond the normal working day. Several employers also mentioned that migrant workers actively sought overtime to earn extra money," the report added.

A study by the Institute of Directors said that immigrant workers significantly outperformed the existing work-force in terms of productivity, education and skills, work ethic, reliability and the time they took off sick. They were crucial to the hotel and catering trade in London and the North East and some employers in agriculture said that their businesses could not survive without them.

Source: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk>

Timeline: Canada A chronology of key events:

2005 July - Senate approves a bill to legalise same-sex marriages.

2005 August - Canada sends naval vessels to Churchill, an Arctic port, for the first time in 30 years. The move is seen as a challenge to rival territorial claims and follows a spat with Denmark over an uninhabited island.

2005 November - A commission set up to investigate the scandal involving misspent government money exonerates PM Paul Martin, but criticises his predecessor Jean Chretien.

2005 November - Paul Martin's minority Liberal government is brought down in a vote of no confidence.

The Downside to Immigration

A second report published by the Home Office highlighted the downside to immigration from Eastern European countries – Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which joined the EU in 2004.

Eight regions – Scotland, the South West, London, East Midlands, North West, Eastern England, the South and Yorkshire and Humberside – were asked about the impact of migration from these countries.

Five out of the eight mentioned difficulties over crime and disorder and education, six out of eight difficulties over health and seven out of eight mentioned difficulties over housing.

There had been reports of increases in low-level crime, such as driving offences, and some areas had noted an increase in translation costs in the criminal justice system.

Four areas had seen increased pressure on affordable private housing and rent levels, others complained that the immigrants lived in overcrowded, poor-quality accommodation. Many areas said that immigrants were being exploited by landlords and in the East Midlands and Scotland there was an emerging problem of homelessness.

Schools in the East Midlands and North West had seen more pupils arriving and leaving during the school year and in other areas some children from Eastern Europe were not going to school.

On health, the study found that 13 per cent of NHS staff in the North West were immigrants. In Sheffield and the East Midlands there had been an increase in GP caseloads and at accident and emergency departments in the East of England, north Lincolnshire and Southampton.

The report said that in the North West, South West and Scotland there had been community tensions after the arrival of foreigners – especially in areas that had previously never experienced migration.

Source: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk>

British Children lack 'Britishness'

Children are growing up without a clear sense of their own "Britishness", the chief inspector of education has warned. Christine Gilbert, the head of Ofsted, said most schools lacked a coherent approach to developing pupils' sense of personal and national identity.

Many history lessons, citizenship and religious education classes failed to prepare children for key aspects of modern life, the watchdog said. In future Ofsted will inspect schools on how well they are discharging their new legal duty to promote "community cohesion".

Writing in her annual report, Ms Gilbert warned that schools were not giving children a clear understanding of their own identity and "what it means to be British".

She said: "Young people understand less than they should about how our democracy works, the forces which have shaped it and its values, history and heritage: in short, what we understand by 'Britishness' in the contemporary world." The report warned that except in the best schools, a "coherent whole-school approach" to developing pupils sense of personal and national identity "was generally lacking". The report said: "Children and young people need knowledge, confidence and skills to develop as active and productive members of their communities and as well informed and responsible citizens of the wider world."

Source: <http://ukpress.google.com>

British Immigrants' Self Help Group

We became aware of a problem within the British community in Montreal recently. There are a significant number of people who came across here without a job, for whatever reason, either alone or with a spouse, who cannot find meaningful employment because of the laws in Quebec or the lack of recognition of their qualifications. It follows that there is a pool of underused talent out there that is being wasted.

What I propose is the formation of a British Immigrant Self Help group to pool resources, promote these individuals and to foster relations with industry in Montreal. The role of the group would be to pass information concerning employment opportunities around speedily, to offer help and advice, to keep the whole British community aware of individuals looking for work, to ask British employers in Montreal for support in finding job openings for fellow Brits and to champion the cause of unemployed or underemployed British workers in the area.

We are asking three things:

- If you are unemployed and would like to become involved in such a group please contact us.
- If you know of any job opportunities open to Brits in your field of employment please contact us with details.
- If you are an employer in a British company or a British born employer in a Canadian company please contact me with any help, advice or employment opportunities.

To access the British Immigrants' Self Help Group Web site visit www.britclub.ca and click on Britannia's shield. The web site is brand new so any help regarding site content would be much appreciated.

We hope that the group will grow and become a very valuable resource helping British families prosper in Quebec.

Calling all Brits in the Montreal Area

You never know when you're going to need help!

If you go to any major city in the western world you will find Jewish, Italian, Greek, Chinese, etc. communities supporting each other in. You'd be hard pressed to think of anywhere where the same can be said of the British?

The britclub is asking British expats in the Montreal area, on or off island, to galvanise and start working together to make sure we prosper in Quebec. Montreal is by no means an easy place to emigrate to and, especially in the first few years, a helping hand is always very welcome. The britclub has started the process and, with the launch of the new British Immigrants' Self Help Group, we are moving the process forward. However, we cannot do it without you! Your eyes and ears in Montreal, Laval, Vaudreuil, Hudson, St Lazare, Rigaud, etc. are invaluable. Please send anything at all that you think might benefit fellow Brits in the area and we promise we will spread the information throughout our great community.

The Ed.

Crackdown on Canadian Con

Police in Montreal made 130 arrests in October in a series of busts on alleged international fraud rings operating out of the city.

Laurence Vitas, from Montreal, was the sole director of a UK-registered company called Paper Roll Logistics, which hid behind a mail drop in Rotherhithe, South London.

The Department of Business has now petitioned the High Court to have Paper Roll shut down in the public interest. British journalists caught up with Vitas as he drove away from his flat in Montreal, Quebec, but he refused to say if he'd be fighting the London case, due to be heard in January.

Meanwhile, Mounties in Canada are cracking down on similar scams, questioning dozens of suspects following raids on what a spokeswoman called a "well-structured organisation trying to make money everywhere they can". They allegedly peddled stationery and first aid kits to firms that had not placed orders and then got money by "lying and putting on a lot of pressure for people to buy." Victims were businesses in the UK, continental Europe, the US and Canada.

The scam was first uncovered due to the fate of Merchant Retail Supplies, which claimed to be based in York but was run by George Haligua of Montreal. In 2004 gunmen burst into his office and shot him in the legs. And there's been a network of similar scams run from Montreal by Michael Mouyal which, we reported in June, netted £64m.

So why is Canada such a hotbed for this particular fraud? The clue might just lie in Mouyal's fate. After pleading guilty to making false or misleading representations he got away with probation, a fine and community service.



<http://www.mirror.co.uk>

A Great British Tradition – Bonfire Night



Guy Fawkes

In 1605, Guy Fawkes and a group of co-conspirators attempted to blow up King James 1 and the Houses of Parliament, in what has become known as the Gunpowder Plot. Before they were able to carry out their plan they were caught, and subsequently tortured and executed.

Every year since then on November the 5th, we have traditionally celebrated his notorious treasonous Gunpowder Plot failure by letting-off fireworks and burning an effigy of 'Guy' on a bonfire.

Some interesting facts:

- Until 1959, it was illegal not to celebrate the date of Guy Fawkes arrest in England.
- As late as 1998, the death penalty still existed in peacetime for the crimes of treason and piracy with violence in England and Wales.
- Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators in Gunpowder, Treason and Plot is Undoubtedly one of the most audacious and publicised acts of treason against a monarchy.
- The first official Guy Fawkes' Night bonfire was lit on the night of the Gunpowder Plot on 5 November 1605, when Londoners joyfully lit fires in gratitude for their king being safe.
- The ritual soon spread, first to Bristol in 1607, and from that time until 1859 it was a national day of thanksgiving.
- The bonfire was originally known as a 'bone fire', to signify the 'bones' of the effigy.

Finance

Credit Scoring

The credit score also referred to as a "FICO Score" is a mathematical formulae created by Fair Isaac and Company.

The credit score is used by most companies to decide if the applicant is a good credit risk or not. Equifax and Trans Union will crunch the numbers from the credit report, and spit out a number somewhere between 300 and 900.

A low score indicates abad risk; scores of 700 plus puts the applicant in lenders good books.

How the scores are calculated

FACTOR	WEIGHT	POINTS
Payment History Bankruptcies, late payments, past due accounts and wage attachments, collections, judgements	35%	315
Amounts owed Amounts owed on accounts, proportion of balanced to total credit limit	30%	270
Length of credit history Time since accounts opened, time since account activity	15%	135
New Credit Number of recent enquiries, number of recently opened accounts	10%	90
Types of Credit Number of various types of accounts (credit cards, retail cards, mortgage)	10%	90
Potential Totals	100%	900

How to improve your credit score

1. Order a copy of your credit report, review it carefully and correct any significant errors.
2. Must pay bills on time.
3. If you have a questionable credit history, open a few new accounts, use them responsibly, and pay them off on time.
4. Don't open account you don't intend to use. Having 5 or 6 of the same type of credit card (Visa for example) does not work in your favour.
5. Note that having a credit card or instalment loan can help boost your score, so long as you don't have too high a balance.
6. Keep the balance low in relation to the available credit. If the credit limit is \$10,000, keeping the balance below \$2500 (or 25% of the limit) will improve the score. Balances over \$7500 (or 75% of the limit) will decrease the score. Going over the limit has an even more negative effect.
7. Pay off credit card debt instead of moving it around to lower rate cards. Moving balances to other credit cards (called a "balance transfer") and closing out the old account can hurt the score.

(Source: Kim Whitehead - Mortgage Broker)



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Multiculturalism in Canada

A nation based on immigration, Canada has a long history of being culturally diverse. The British North American Act that marked Canadian Confederation in 1867 recognized the three racial, religious, and linguistic collectivities of the time: the aboriginal people, the English, and the French. Since then, new Canadians have been arriving from ever more diverse areas of the world, creating an increasingly multicultural Canadian population. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister at the turn of the 20th century called for equal status for immigrants, no matter their length of history in Canada. "Let each of them honour the land of their fathers," he said, "but let all of us work together to build the land of our children."

Multiculturalism has been a hot topic of late, as several studies seek to understand its impacts in Western nations. Though results and reactions in the United Kingdom and the United States have cast a somewhat unflattering light on the notion, the fundamental perceptions of multiculturalism in Canada differ significantly from those in the U.S. and the U.K.

With about 250,000 new Permanent Residents arriving yearly and 18 per cent of Canadian citizens being foreign-born, Canada has the highest immigration rate of any G-8 country. The proportion of immigrants who become citizens is higher than in any other country. Among G-8 countries, the Canadian population is the most supportive of immigration and sees multiculturalism as an increasingly important element of their Canadian identity. The prevalence of multiculturalism studies and discussions in Canada attests to the important role that the notion plays in today's society. This fall, for example, a commission is being headed in the province of Quebec to give immigrants, French-speaking Quebecers and English-speaking Quebecers a chance to come together and discuss perceptions about immigration in Quebec. The goal is to understand the different stakeholder perceptions in order to work towards easing the transition of newcomers into Quebec society. Another example is the focus on multiculturalism in the current Ontario provincial election campaign. A main issue is whether faith-based schools should be publicly-funded, thereby grouping students by religion, or whether the status quo should be maintained, in which students are exposed to multiple faiths in non-denominational schools. See David Cohen's most recent blog for further discussion on this issue.

In 1971, Canada was the first Western country to officially adopt multiculturalism. It was added to the Constitution in 1982 in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging," explains the Canadian government. It encourages Canadians to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs.

Source: cicnews.com; Government of Canada; Globe and Mail; Toronto Star; CTV.ca; wikipedia.com

Sport

Yes, OK we lost. Yes, it was hardly knockabout stuff. Yes, even Wilkinson's boot had a dent in it. But South Africa themselves were hardly the high-kicking troupe of Moulin Rouge can-can dancers who had mesmerised an outclassed England side 36-0 in the pool match just five weeks earlier. In fact, the Springboks have now won two World Cups without scoring a try in either final — and the Southern Hemisphere sides normally look down their noses at England's inability to chuck the pill about. Indeed, we had the sight in the second-half on Saturday night of an England back line running the ball like the South Africans had earlier in the tournament while the Boks played like England, controlling the game with kicks from their own 22. But the bottom line — Cueto's disallowed try aside — was that Brian Ashton's team still never looked like breaking the South African resistance. However, it was a lesson to the world of how to lose. Australia and New Zealand quit the scene moaning and bleating — and still haven't stopped.

Our footballers' inglorious retreat from Moscow was accompanied by the sound of Steve McClaren's undignified whingeing about refereeing decisions — conveniently forgetting that one such blunder allowed Wayne Rooney's goal to stand. Yes, when the England players finally emerged into the mixed zone in the early hours of Sunday Mark Cueto expressed his astonishment at how his try at the start of the second half had been disallowed. But, generally, England took it on the chin. As skipper Phil Vickery said: "We gave it everything but we just weren't good enough."

Source: <http://www.thesun.co.uk>



Other News & Events

Brits lay claim in race for Antarctic seabed

A New grab for control of the seabed off Antarctica may be triggered by British plans to claim sovereign rights over more than a million square kilometres of territory. The planned British submission to the UN will be closely watched by Australia and other nations with claims on Antarctica, perhaps triggering competing claims. Britain's bid to grab oil, gas and mineral exploration rights for a huge swath of seabed on the continental shelf near the South Pole follows recent jostling between Russia, Canada and other northern nations for similar rights around the North Pole.

A 1959 Antarctica treaty signed by Britain, Australia and several other countries agrees that no new claims will be asserted but Britain is preparing a claim for seabed up to 350km offshore into the Southern Ocean.

<http://www.news.com.au>

Another Great British Brand Under Threat

The possibility of a bid to buy Scottish & Newcastle raises the likely spectre of another great name in the British business world being sold into foreign hands in what has become a well-worn path.

Carlsberg and Heineken say they are forming a consortium which may make an offer and S&N shares have already raced ahead 20% in the expectation of the possibility of a £7.5bn takeover.

S&N has been around for 260 years and brings together many classic British brands such as Newcastle Brown Ale, John Smith's bitter and McEwan's Export.

<http://business.guardian.co.uk>

Report Warns UK of Obesity Problem

Most British citizens could be obese by 2050, a new government report warns, and the nation's health secretary called Wednesday for a fundamental shift in the way the nation tackles obesity. Health Secretary Alan Johnson didn't blame British eating habits, calling obesity "a consequence of abundance, convenience and underlying biology."

"As this report starkly demonstrates, people in the U.K. are not more gluttonous than previous generations and individual action alone will not be sufficient," he said in a speech to Parliament.

The obesity analysis by the Foresight program, run by the Office for Science, concludes that excess weight has become the norm and described Britain as an "obesogenic" society. Obesity costs Britain the equivalent of \$90 million a year already. Obese people have a greater risk for life-threatening conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

The number of overweight and obese people has tripled in the last 25 years. One in four adults are now obese, according to the most recent Health Study for England.

<http://ap.google.com>

Study blames obesity on modern life

A new study claims obesity is not simply caused by overeating and lack of exercise but that it is the result of modern life.

"The technological revolution of the 20th century has led to weight gain becoming inevitable for most people, because our bodies and biological make-up are out of step with our surroundings,"

says a press release by the U.K. government on the report. The study found that obesity has many causes and is a "much more passive phenomenon" than often believed.

Researchers also found that it will take at least 30 years to reverse the obesity epidemic. Canadian studies have indicated that in 2004, 4.5 million Canadians were obese, while 58 per cent of the population was either overweight or obese.

Researchers in Britain also noted that obesity costs Britain about Cdn\$90 billion every year. By comparison, studies over the past decade here in Canada have reported that obesity costs Canadians anywhere from \$2 billion to \$5 billion per year.

<http://www.ctv.ca>

British property 'vulnerable' to crash

The UK could face a downturn in the property market, the International Monetary Fund warned yesterday.

The IMF finds the UK housing market, along with European counterparts, is overvalued and is at risk of a downturn and correction in prices.

The British market is thought to be particularly at risk as property value increases have outpaced income growth. However, the IMF does admit there is "considerable uncertainty about these estimates". Meanwhile the British public is more upbeat about the prospects for the property market. A poll by the Association of Investment Companies (AIC) shows 62 per cent of the public expect property values to increase and just a fifth feel prices will stagnate.

<http://www.myfinances.co.uk>

Sending Gifts Home for Christmas

Canada Post suggests that you mail greetings and gifts by the following dates to ensure that air mail letters, cards, and parcels from Canada, and surface mail parcels, arrive at their international destinations in time for the holidays.

To	Air Mail	Surface Mail
	(letters, cards, small parcels)	(small parcels)
Africa	November 26	October 12
Asia	December 3	October 19
Australia	December 3	October 19
Caribbean	December 3	October 26
Central America	November 26	October 19
Europe	December 3	October 26
Middle East	December 3	October 12
South America	November 26	October 19
United States	December 10	November 23

FedEx

- Will accept parcels for shipping up until Dec. 22 for delivery before Christmas.
- International parcels can be sent overnight for an extra fee.

General

- Packages are priced according to the heavier weight between volumetric (for light but large packages) and actual weight.
- Most courier companies charge a fuel surcharge. Canada Post's is 6.25 per cent, and is included in the price of prepaid products.
- Counter prices are charged when post office staff weigh, price, and post the items.
- If a package weighs more than 30 kg, overweight charges apply.
- FedEx's money-back guarantee for on-time delivery is suspended from Dec. 12 to Dec. 24.
- Unclaimed packages, or parcels with outstanding fees, will be returned to the sender after 30 days and may carry a return charge.
- International Customs tips:
 - Many countries allow gifts to enter the country duty free if the value is less than a certain amount. This amount varies from country to country — for example, in the United Kingdom, a gift valued at less than \$68 is duty free.
 - The package must be clearly marked as a gift to qualify.
 - If you want to avoid brokerage fees and C.O.D. for taxes and duties when purchasing presents online, try shopping at Canada Post's Borderfree retail partners. The list spans retailers of products ranging from jewelry to tools. Shopping with Borderfree means you can pay in Canadian dollars and have a guaranteed price for shipping, duties and taxes.

Packaging Tips

- Use the right packing materials:
 - Bubble wrap: offers protection and soft padding for fragile gifts. And it's cheap — 1.89 metres of bubble costs \$1.98, and a whole roll, which should last you several holidays, costs about \$43. If you're looking for something fast, easy and not messy, choose bubble wrap.
 - Shredded construction paper cushions objects so they don't move around. You can make it yourself, but it can be messy for you and the recipient.

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- Packing chips fill in spaces to keep items from moving too much. Suitable for lightweight gifts. Costs \$3.98 per bag. Like shredded paper, it can get messy, though.
 - Corrugated boxes and inserts: provides an extra layer of protection. Very durable and good for delicate gifts.
 - Foam in place (available at Pak Mail): is packing foam moulded to cushion your item. One sheet, which covers a small item, costs \$5.98. The sheets are also prone to cracking.
 - Boxes: offers better protection than envelopes. Use new boxes, as cardboard weakens over time.
- Pack it properly:
 - Each item should be packed about five centimetres from the walls of the box to keep it from shifting, experts advise.
 - Use packing tape at least five centimetres wide. Masking tape and cellophane aren't strong enough to withstand the stresses of shipping.
 - Don't tie packages with string or ribbon, as it could potentially catch in processing equipment.
- Addressing your packages:
 - Addresses should be upper case and punctuation should not be used, unless it is part of a proper name, like St. John's.
 - When shipping within Canada, the municipality, province and postal code should appear on the same line.
 - To ship internationally, the country must be spelled out in full after the postal code.
 - Postal codes must be upper case and the first three elements should be separated from the last three by a space, not a hyphen.
 - The number sign (#) must never be used.
 - Check weight restrictions for shipping overseas:
 - Some countries restrict the size of packages that can be accepted. For example, you can't ship a package heavier than 30 kilograms to England. You can check international weight restrictions.
- Know which items are restricted:
 - Some food, nutritional supplements and technologies (including simple things such as batteries) cannot be shipped to certain countries.
 - Things that cannot be shipped include replica and inert munitions, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, medical materials, anything perishable, liquids, liquefiable substances, powders and plants.
 - You can't send bottle caps, coins, food, glass, jewellery, keys, liquids, pencils, pens, powdered material, seeds, perishable items, or anything prohibited by law or considered dangerous as letter mail.
 - Not all countries have full postal services available. Only documents can be shipped to Iran.
- When sending the package through customs you need to claim the actual weight, regardless of which one is used for pricing.
- If your package gets lost or damaged, you can usually submit a claim in writing for reimbursement. It must be sent in within 90 days of shipping date for parcels within Canada, or six months for international shipments.

And Finally

An unexpected by-product of David Beckham's American odyssey is that British fans keen to monitor the progress of the England midfielder via TV are finding themselves puzzled by some of the phrases used by US match commentators. So, never one to turn down an opportunity to educate below is a list of terms that should relieve the confusion:



- **Shoot-out** - a term invented by Americans to describe what should happen in the event of a 'tie' (draw) when Soccer was first attempting to win Uncle Sam's heart and mind - has now become the accepted phrase in Britain for the penalty decider in the event of a drawn tie in a cup competition. Confused? Hang in there.
- **Shut-out** has a similar lineage, and is now almost interchangeable with the more familiar anglo 'clean-sheet'.
- **Roster** - squad
- **Zones** - areas of the pitch (which Brits never call a 'field').
- We struggle mightily with the term '**Offense**' for attack, and take particular offence at seeing it spelt with an 's' instead of a 'c'.
- **Half-backs** - wingers.
- **Back tackler** is not someone who tackles back to try to win the ball once they've lost it, but a tackle from behind.
- **Bulldogging**: A player showing determination to win the ball back.
- **Chicken Wing Battle**: Two players challenging for the ball and using their arms and elbows to do so.
- **Final Signal**: Final whistle.
- **In the Wheelhouse**: Within easy reach of the goalkeeper.
- **Knock Like A Bear Kiss**: A tackle that looks bad but is just clumsy rather than dangerous or malicious.
- **Match-ups**: Man-for-man marking.
- **Midfield Stripe**: The half-way line.
- **On Frame**: A shot that is on target.
- **On the Doorstep**: In front of the goal.
- **Real Estate**: The space (or lack of it) in the penalty area.
- **On the Diagonal Surface**: A cross-field pass, a la Beckham.
- **Slow Roller**: A weak shot at goal.
- **Some Wheels**: A burst of pace.
- **Southpaw**: A left-footed player.
- **Stutter-Step**: A Cristiano Ronaldo-style step-over.
- **Takeaway**: An interception or tackle that sees the tackler emerge with the ball.
- **Upload**: Kick the ball with full power.

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