

## Britain's Crime rate falling while drug and gun offences increase



The fall in the annual crime rate in England and Wales is accelerating, with a drop of 9% recorded by the police in the year to September 2007, according to Home Office quarterly figures published recently.

The continuing decline in police recorded crime, which includes a substantial 17% drop in robbery, a 16% fall in serious violence and a 9% reduction in sexual offences is matched by a 4% fall in crime as measured by the British Crime Survey over the same period. However, these figures are marred by a 4% rise in gun crime recorded by the police and a 21% rise in drug offences.

The rise in gun crime represents an increase of 427 offences to a total of 10,182 firearms offences, but Home Office statisticians said the main increase had been in incidents in which guns had been used to threaten but no one had been hurt.

The number of gun-related deaths went down from 55 to 49 in the year to September 2007. Incidents involving serious injury also fell, by 16%.

The 21% rise in the number of drug offences, from 46,200 in the period from July to September 2006 to 55,700 from July to September 2007, reflects the implementation of the decision to reclassify cannabis as a class C drug. The Home Office said that the rise coincided with increases in the use by police of powers to issue cannabis warnings instead of arresting and prosecuting offenders.

But gun crime and drug offences form only a small proportion of the total crime recorded by the two sets of figures. The police recorded a 9% drop in the number of offences reported to them between the third quarter of 2006 and the same quarter of 2007 - the figure fell from 1.359m to 1.240m.

The Home Office figures show that the fall in crime is accelerating, with a 2% drop in the final quarter of 2006 followed by falls of 3%, 7% and now 9% through the first three quarters of 2007.

The vast bulk of offences recorded by the police are property crimes, such as burglary, which fell by 8%, car crime, which is down 12%, other thefts, down 6%, and criminal damage, which has fallen by 11%. But the British Crime Survey demonstrates that these sustained falls in crime have still to be reflected in the public's perceptions of crime. When the public are asked about their worries about events such as burglary, car crime and violent crime, about one in nine say they remain very concerned.

About a third of the public say that there are severe problems of antisocial behaviour in their area, particularly concerning rubbish on the streets and teenagers "hanging around".

The home secretary, Jacqui Smith, said that the latest set of crime figures contained "some excellent results", with people's risk of becoming a victim dropping to historically low levels: "In 2008 we will

**Timeline:  
Quebec  
A chronology  
of key events:**

### **Prehistory**

Paleo-Amerindians, whose presence in Quebec can be traced back 100,000 years, preceded the Algonquian and Iroquoian aboriginal peoples, with whom the Europeans first made contact in the 16th century.

Some 8,000 years ago, the south of Quebec became habitable when the temperature warmed up on this part of the Earth. The first peoples began to immigrate on what is today the territory of Quebec. They were the ancestors of today's Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples.

### **11th century**

**1001** - The Viking explorer Leif Ericson reaches America by ship.

tighten our grip on violence and antisocial behaviour, working with police and local partners."

But Chris Huhne, the Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, said gun crime needed to be tackled more vigorously: "Police should be devoting more time to stop and searches for knives and guns, and the government needs to clamp down with a major new effort to stop gun smuggling," he said, claiming that there were nine times more officials involved in tackling cigarette smuggling than gun smuggling.

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

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## Few crying into beers at decline of big six breweries

Many of the great names of British brewing have downed their final pints and headed for the exit.

Once there was Bass Charrington, Allied Breweries, Whitbread, Courage Imperial, and Watneys. Scottish & Newcastle was yesterday added to that list of once- mighty brewers.

The recommended take over offer by Carlsberg and Heineken is set to lock the doors for the final time on a British industrial machine that, by owning most of Britain's pubs and brewing the stuff we drank in them, permeated every community in Britain.

Over the next few months, the S&N name appears set to wither and eventually die. Whitbread alone survives in name, but now it runs hotels, coffee shops and pub-restaurants.

Who will mourn the passing of the so-called "Big Six"? Not the British pub-goer who long ago signalled indifference to the brewers' product. New generations, led by women, demanded something else - and got it in the form of lagers, wine, soft drinks, alcopops, cocktails, spirits and Babycham.

Nor too the real ale adherents who waged campaigns from the 1970s against what they regarded as tasteless, mass-produced beer.

Nor the publican or pub operator. The old image of the pub - its spit-and-sawdust floor or beer-stained carpet, gloomy interior and smoke-smelling regulars replicated across the UK - has been transformed in the past decade, hastened by the smoking ban and the relentless quest by pub operators to keep up with changing customer behaviour.

Nowadays, lagers account for a bigger share of the UK beer market each year. The British Beer & Pub Association says lager's popularity began in the 1970s, when British people started going on holidays to Spain, drank continental lagers and acquired a taste for them.

Lagers have also become more popular as British society has changed and jobs have become more service-orientated, leading to less physical labour and less demand for heavy beers. "An awful lot of ales were built around heavy industry," he said.

Both production and consumption of beer is in decline, with production falling faster than consumption because more beer is being imported. Since 2000, the amount of beer imported into the UK has risen by 50 per cent.

Brewing is by no means a dead industry. The total number of breweries operating in the UK has trebled to more than 700 since the early 1980s, but this is due to the emergence of some 500 microbreweries, which produce less than 100,000 hectolitres of beer annually and only account for 2 per cent of the total beer market.



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# The BritClub Gazette

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Issue No. 16

[www.britclub.ca](http://www.britclub.ca)

Monday, February 4, 2008

Scottish & Newcastle was begun in 1749 when the William Younger Brewery was established in Leith. Up until the 1990s, S&N was a regional brewer, owning ale brands such as Tartan Special and Newcastle Brown.

Source: <http://www.ft.com>

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## Immigration is Tough!

"Life in Canada is a lot harder than I ever imagined." This has to be the most common comment uttered by British people who have immigrated to Canada. Most immigrants want very much to adapt to life in Quebec but adapting to a new culture is a lot harder than it first appears. And, if it is hard to move to Canada, it is doubly hard to move to Quebec with all the language restrictions imposed on immigrants.

As hard as it is for many immigrants just to get to Canada in the first place, the real difficulty starts on arrival. Immigrants must learn new rules and new strategies for getting the things they need. In effect, they have to reconstruct their social identities.

It turns out that the hardest time for an immigrant is around the two-year mark. That is when all the glitter of the new country has faded and the reality of how difficult it is has sunk in.

The immigration process has been likened to the grieving process -- denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance.

Of course there is the initial honeymoon period in the first few weeks; the move still seems like a holiday. Then the experience of how difficult it is to get the things you need, like a job, starts to take hold. The first aspect, denial is particularly relevant to Quebec as many British immigrants refuse to believe that the language laws are not going to affect them significantly. When they realise they are affected anger usually follows. It is certainly hard not to get angry when you can't even get in the door to get an interview for a job because of your name, your lack of Canadian experience and your lack of French.

In trying to make sense of it all, people resort to bargaining with themselves. "If I take a lower level job for a while I can at least get some Canadian experience". Or with a higher power "Oh God! Show me a sign that this is right and I will stay one more year."

Depression can set in for some when the true difficulty of adapting to the new culture sinks in. People will doubt that they are doing the right thing. This is especially true of cases where children are involved and you don't just have to think whether you have done the right thing for yourself. One of the major sources of depression is feeling worthless when you cannot find a job. Any successes gained in the UK evaporated on entering Canada. Having to grit your teeth and fight hard for survival is difficult and it is easy for self doubt to raise its ugly head.

However, eventually, if people can endure the first two years, they will begin to develop their new identity and have more success.

What can we do to make the process easier? Stick together, offer help and advice, take newcomers under your wing and explain the difficulties and how you overcame them. Watch out for each other and make sure British immigrants in their first couple of years are included in social events and are introduced to your network of friends. Look out for job opportunities and make sure you pass on the information and "put in a good word" for any Brits you know who are in need of employment.

What can new immigrants do? Volunteer to coach sports, help out at schools, take part in local community events, learn to speak French at the earliest opportunity. This is a new country with a completely different set of rules and regulations – accept it and move on!

**-Ed.**

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## Quebec needs to attract skilled migrants

A new report by the Conference Board of Canada (CBC) says that Quebec could face a shortfall of 292,000 workers by 2025, rising to 363,000 by 2030. One possible solution would be to increase immigration of skilled migrants.

The non-profit research outfit's report, entitled 'From Baby Boom to Labour Crunch: Quebec's Impending Labour Shortage', stated that the amount of available skilled labour most likely peaked in 2007 and will gradually subside over the long term. By 2030, the labour shortage will amount to 8.5 percent of Quebec's total labour force. Ontario, in comparison, only has a projected labour force shortfall of 6.2 percent.

"Tight labour markets are no longer an exclusively Western Canadian concern. Quebec is already facing a lack of workers with specific trade skills, and more generalized labour shortages could be felt in the broader economy as early as 2010," said Marie-Christine Bernard, Associate Director.

CBC said that, in practice, a large fall in the number of available workers is not economically sustainable. A severe labour shortage would result in a quick increase in wages, prompting companies to replace labour with capital equipment.

CBC feels there is no "simple solution" to the impending shortfall. However, the organization proposed a few possible approaches, including attracting more skilled migrants and streamlining recognition of foreign credentials.

Source: <http://www.workpermit.com>

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## 10,000 Hits Competition Winner John Tackles Bill 101

The problem with Bill 101 is simple. It is an infringement of international laws laid out in the Geneva Convention. Everyone has a right to practice their own beliefs and religions in any way they choose. However in Quebec those rights are taken away. Having lived around the world and having found a British community wherever I go I do agree that when you live in another country you should speak that language as a common courtesy, however it should be a choice instead of a rule. In Japan, Italy, Germany and France I have found British schools, they were private and expensive but the choice was always there to be educated in your mother tongue. Are we forgetting that School is a place in which we should be educating the youth of the future as opposed to supporting a political argument that is bigoted and absurd in its conception?

The idea of Bill 101 is to preserve culture, yet it only really affects the language that is spoken in the province as opposed to offering any idea as to what culture it is protecting. Language is not culture; language is a means of communication. The American, Australian and British cultures are vastly different yet they use the same language to communicate. The Haitian, Quebecois and French cultures are also vastly different yet they all speak French.

I believe that preservation of culture is important, especially in a country devoid of it along with history. But first let's establish what that culture is other than Poutine and Religious profanity and let's put some effort into protecting that. Is it possible that Bill 101 is a desperate form of denial of the realisation that years after struggling to preserve a culture there wasn't one to preserve.

Many of my friends here are Francophone, some separatist, yet none of them can actually state what they are fighting against. Yet the perpetual nature of the argument fostered by a political party whose only point of existence would disappear should the "struggle" end continues to influence them in insidious ways such as this very discussion. I believe that viewing this situation as a casual and temporary observer sheds more light on its absurdity. In a province devoid of medical care shouldn't we be fostering physicians who can save lives as opposed to creating a generation of people who speak a language at the detriment of any natural skill they may have?

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Having said that, my advice to the lady twenty minutes from the border is MOVE HOUSE!! Nothing here will change in the immediate future. After Bill 101 the result was the greatest human exodus since World War 2. For example, the head offices for the Bank of Montreal are in Toronto. For more hilarious absurdities including the contraventions in Bill 101 of the Geneva Convention and the subsequent law suits just type "bill 101" into Google.

I would also be interested in any opinion which states the benefits of Bill 101 to any community here in Montreal or Quebec.

We are British, wherever we go, no matter how small a community we are, we will always be British and proud. Let the Francophones watch and learn how a real culture survives.

God save the Queen. - *John, Beaconsfield*

(If you have any thoughts on this subject please send them to [mick@britclub.ca](mailto:mick@britclub.ca))

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## Brown hosts G4 summit on global financial turmoil

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown hosted a summit in London in January with the leaders of the three other largest economies in Europe on the global financial turmoil.

German chancellor Angela Merkel, French president Nicholas Sarkozy and Italian premier Romano Prodi were attending the meeting along with the president of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso.

Brown's spokesman said the leaders would discuss "issues such as transparency surrounding off-balance-sheet risks faced by banks, issues such as cross-border co-operation and management of financial crises."

The talks on improving the transparency in international capital markets and in the banking systems come in the wake of recent global financial turmoil.

The British premier was expected to use the discussions to talk about improving co-ordination between national regulators and reviewing the role of credit rating agencies, according to the parliamentary news service, epolitix.

His spokesman confirmed Monday there would be a wide-ranging agenda at the summit, but that the leaders "would mostly be concentrating on economic issues."

According to the online Earthtimes news service, the so-called G4 leaders would also be holding discussions on the challenge of climate change.

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## Two British Columbia aboriginals say 2010 Olympics will not be all fun and games

Kanahus Pellkey says if aboriginals have their way, the 2010 Winter Olympics will not be all fun and games.

She and Dustin Johnson, two members of the Native Youth Movement from British Columbia, brought that message to Montreal Thursday.

"The world is not welcome to our territories," Pellkey told reporters during a news conference held at the Olympic Stadium, the main site of the 1976 Summer Games.

"This is all stolen land, here as well as on the West Coast."

Pellkey pointed out that her father attended the opening ceremonies in Montreal in 1976 to also protest against the Olympics.

The pair say they are visiting Central Canada and parts of the United States to raise awareness about opposition to the Olympics in Vancouver and the negative effects of holding the Games.

"We're travelling around bringing awareness to the issue that indigenous people are continuing to fight for their land and freedom," she said.

Pellkey said natives also are calling for an international boycott of the 2010 Olympics and all corporations that are involved in sponsoring the events.

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"The Olympics are about money, the corporate sponsors are about money, everything is about money, but native people remain the most impoverished people in the land."

She and Johnson have already visited a half-dozen native and non-native communities in Ontario and plan to be in Ottawa on Friday.

The Native Youth Movement also says the construction of infrastructure for the Olympics is adding to extensive destruction of traditional homelands of the local indigenous peoples.

Marcel Sevigny, a Montreal housing rights activist, said what is happening in Vancouver brings back memories of what occurred in Montreal before the 1976 Summer Games.

"The occupation of native land in British Columbia by organizers of the Olympics reminds me of the scandals that took place in Montreal where several hundreds of families were forced out of their homes because of the Montreal Olympics," he said, referring to expropriations that took place to get land to build facilities.

Sevigny said he wasn't surprised real estate agents and promoters were trying to make a big profit to the detriment of the local population and natives in British Columbia.

"Here in Montreal (in 1976), it was to the detriment of very poor families in Montreal who were trying to find lodging. . . it seems to be the same thing, Olympics after Olympics."

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

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## Household tax has risen by £7,800 a year under Labour, says thinktank

The average UK family is paying almost £8,000 a year more in tax than in 1997, while stagnating earnings are making it harder for households to meet these and other rising costs, a recent report claims.

The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), a centre-right thinktank, said the average household now paid £16,938 in taxes - £7,800 more than when Labour first came to power. It said the rise, when combined with "excessive debt" and the increasing costs of servicing a mortgage and paying bills, meant British households were vulnerable to any economic downturn." The government's increases in taxation and the recent availability of easy credit is a potentially toxic mixture," the CPS said in a report entitled *Why do we feel so broke*.

It said that until recently, average families were able to absorb tax increases partly through rising salaries and greater levels of personal debt. But since 2005 increases in disposable income after tax and housing costs have stalled or gone into reverse.

As a result, average disposable incomes have been squeezed from 71% of take-home pay in 1997 to 67% today.

The report said families on average earnings had been hardest hit by the tax rises, with their disposable income falling by £950, or 6%, since 2002.

The impact of rising tax bills was compounded by weak increases in earnings and a significant increase in housing costs - the CPS said for "average households with average mortgages" the cost of running a home has been increasing at around 10% a year.

In the five years since 2002, it said, the costs associated with owning a property have increased by 80%, with mortgage interest payments doubling and electricity and gas bills rising by 68% and 52% respectively.

Household debt has increased sharply over the same period, with the total for each household rising from £34,019 in 2002 to £55,554 in the third quarter of last year.

While debts were worth 66% of household income in 1997 and 83% in 2002, by 2007 they had increased to 108% of income.

"The increase has been dramatic and has left households very exposed to any significant increase in interest rates," the report said.

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

## Other News & Events

### Beckham left out of England squad

David Beckham has been left out of Fabio Capello's first England squad to play Switzerland on 6 February. It means Beckham will be left still searching for his 100th cap, although Capello has not fully closed the door on the 32-year-old former captain. Capello, who also dropped Beckham at Real Madrid, is thought to have had doubts over his match fitness. Beckham has not played a competitive game since England's Euro qualifying defeat by Croatia on 21 November. However, Beckham has been training at Arsenal and told BBC World in Brazil on Tuesday that he "is as fit as I can be. I'm fit and sharp and I'm ready to be selected".

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

### Wales claimed their first win at Twickenham for 20 years

with a superb second-half comeback to defeat England. England dominated the first half, with Jonny Wilkinson's boot and a Toby Flood try giving them a 16-6 half-time lead.

But the second half was a different story as James Hook kicked Wales to within seven points of England.

Lee Byrne finished off a superb move before Mike Phillips put Wales ahead for the first time after Iain Balshaw's indecisive kick was charged down.

It was Wales' first match under new coach Warren Gatland, and the New Zealander must have said something special to his players at half-time as they recovered from a terrible first half to get his reign off to a winning start.

### US sees job cuts as economy cools

Jobs have been cut in many industries

The US has seen the first decline in employment since August 2003, providing fresh evidence that the US economy could be entering a recession. Employers cut 17,000 jobs from their payrolls in January, Labor Department figures showed. Economists had been expecting a rise of 80,000. The US economy has slowed sharply in recent months as a housing market slump has dented consumer spending. US interest rates have been cut twice in nine days to boost growth.

### Canada top retirement destination for British: survey

British citizens have selected Canada — ahead of New Zealand and Portugal — as the top country in which to retire, according to a survey measuring perceptions of quality of life.

The survey of British expatriates living around the globe was commissioned by NatWest International Personal Banking. Respondents gave Canada a mean score of 63.95 out of 80, with high marks given for housing, natural environment and availability of consumer goods.

"There are a number of different reasons why people relocate abroad, to be nearer to family and friends, to start a new job, or as the study demonstrates, to increase their quality of life," said David Isley, head of NatWest International Personal Banking, in a release issued Friday.

"This is only likely to increase in the future, with many more taking the decision to spend their twilight years sipping sangria in Spain, Chianti in Italy or eating maple syrup and pancakes in Canada."

Nine in ten respondents said they were enjoying a higher

quality of life abroad and six out of ten said they had no plans to return to the U.K. Ninety per cent of expatriates who completed the survey said leaving home put them in a stronger financial position, and 81 per cent said that since moving, they enjoyed a greater sense of well-being.

The study projects that by 2025, 1.8 million Britons may retire abroad. By 2050, this proportion could increase to 3.3 million.

<http://www.cbc.ca>

### Scientists Grow Human Skin In France

Scientists in France have developed human skin which may reduce chemical testing on animals.

Cosmetics giant L'Oreal showed Sky News their new product called Episkin in an exclusive visit to their laboratory in Lyon, France.

The skin is grown from cells removed from donor skin left over after cosmetic surgery. Tests have shown it gives more accurate results than animal skin.

The new skin has been cleared for use and will now be available to use in the cosmetic industry.

Dr Estelle Tinois-Tessonnaud, who led the research said: "It was very important because following regulation in 2009 the cosmetic industry will not be allowed to sell a cosmetic with raw materials that have been tested on animals so it was absolutely fundamental that we get this model."

"People are amazed at what we've been able to do. They say 'Wow, you can grow human skin in a laboratory, that's fantastic.'"

<http://news.sky.com>

## *And Finally*

### **Immigrant: Does the jobs you hate**

Migrant Watch has today confirmed what many people already knew: immigrants are taking the jobs UK citizens are too lazy to do. The results of the latest report on immigration also include the shocking revelations that immigrant workers, "arrive at work on time", "do overtime" and "work hard and consistently". Douglas Ramsbottom, who manages a warehouse in Lincolnshire, confirmed the findings: "When I ask them to turn up at 8am, they turn up at 7.45 and get ready for work."

"Then they come back to work the next day. It's all very foreign to me," he added.

Ex-Eton Party MP Nigel Hastilow has damned the verdicts. "It just shows we're letting people into the country who are boosting our economy," he raged, "it goes against everything us British are proud of. Those on benefits who don't have the willpower to stay in a job, they're the real British citizens, not these soviet lot."

"Rivers of blood," he added, seemingly unconsciously.

However, a spokesperson for the Labour Party said that the findings just back up what the government has been saying all along. "The twelve immigrants we've let in since 2004 are a hard-working bunch," she said, "we've always known that, but we're still going to implement restrictions on the immigrants from those properly Eastern European countries. You can barely call them European really. Plus, it keeps the Eton boys quiet."

Outside government circles some people admit to being confused by the findings. "I thought immigrants stole donkeys and set fire to swans," queried some bloke we interviewed.

"That's the gypsies," replied a passer-by, who added, "Immigrants sleep in post-boxes."  
"Like the Jews," another passer-by added.

"No, no, it was the Jews who stole Christmas in 1981," argued an elderly lady who was eavesdropping in on the conversation.

A brief discussion amongst the Group Think Tank that had just been set up revealed it to be an accurate cross-section of Daily Mail readers who agreed that the Migrant Watch report was to be read with a pinch of salt. Or better yet, not read at all. Or better yet, deported.

In an exclusive extra, a spokesman for the Immigrant Rights Movement, an organization attempting to get the voice of immigrants heard in the British press, didn't get his views heard.

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

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