

## From Bad to Worse for Brown?



Gordon Brown's post-election woes continue to make the front pages. The Times has the results of a Populus poll, and, unsurprisingly, it does not make pretty reading.

Most damningly it found that 55% of Labour party voters want the prime minister to stand aside for a new leader. The Times calls it "a dramatic collapse of confidence in Mr Brown's leadership". Labour's poll rating has fallen four points in a month to 29% while the Tories are up

one point to 40%. The 11-point lead is the largest in the five years of Populus polls.

In the paper's leader it explains the reasons for the government's unpopularity in blunt terms: "It's the economy, stupid." While the paper writes that Brown can cling to the prospect of an economic recovery, it warns that his destiny may be outside his control. "The restoration of Mr Brown's fortunes depends as much on a pronounced rebound in growth in America as on any other element," it says.

The paper concludes that Ben Bernanke, the chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board, "finds himself the de facto campaign manager for the British Labour party's 2010 bid for a fourth term effort".

An attack by former home secretary Charles Clarke on Brown's "dog whistle" language is carried on the front page of the Daily Telegraph. Writing in Progress magazine, Clarke singled out the prime minister's "British jobs for British workers" statement for criticism. He calls for a mini-budget to re-establish Labour's economic competence, following divisions over the scrapping of the 10p tax rate, and for the abandoning of the proposed extension of the time terrorism suspects can be held without charge to 42 days.

The Daily Express's splash is the news that cabinet ministers have told Brown he "must stop his crippling tax rises or face an election hammering".

"Astonishingly, Mr Brown is said to have shrugged off the concern and remained inexplicably upbeat about Labour's prospects," the paper says. In its editorial, the Express says the low-tax message is one that it has been "hammering home for years". "Billions of pounds could easily be returned to taxpayers without hitting frontline services," it claims. Simon Jenkins, writing in the Guardian, argues that in the modern age policy is less important than presentation.

He suggests that the prime minister would be best advised to "cheer up, stick to his guns and attempt some charisma implant, like Major's summoning of Michael Heseltine from the backbenches in 1990. He needs to borrow some of what his ever-chirpy critic, Jon Cruddas MP, yesterday called Cameron's "emotional literacy".

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

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

**1541** - Jacques Cartier builds the Charlesbourg-Royal fort, the first permanent European settlement in North America, near the Cap-Rouge River and the St. Lawrence River.

**1598** - Following the 1521 landing on Sable Island in southeast of present-day Nova Scotia by the Portuguese, the French establish a settlement. King Louis XIV renounced the Edict of Nantes and declared Protestantism illegal with the Edict of Fontainebleau.

**1600** - Pierre de Chauvin, Sieur de Tonnetuit founds a trading post at Tadoussac.

**1603** - Samuel de Champlain takes possession of lands he calls Terre-Neuve (Newfoundland) and Acadie (Acadia).

## England forecast to become most overcrowded country in Europe

England is set to become the most overcrowded major country in Europe with the population expected to increase by a third over the next 50 years, it has been predicted.

The forecast that the population density in England, which is already almost double the level in Germany, comes as the British government was announcing new rules to control the number of skilled migrants from outside the European Economic Area working in the UK.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics projected that England's 50 million population will rise to 68 million by 2056, but the density would vary around the country.

Nationally, the present average of 1,010 people per square mile (390 per sq km) was expected to rise to 1,349 over the next 50 years, but London was forecast to increase from 12,377 people per square mile to 13,910 within just the next 20 years.

The biggest increases elsewhere are expected in eastern and south west England. Rises in the UK's present 60 million are also predicted in Northern Ireland and Wales, but the population of Scotland is likely to stay around the same level.

Currently, the most densely populated countries in Europe are the Netherlands followed by Belgium, but both have much less people, 16 m and 10 m respectively. But of comparable size, England is already four times the population density of France.

The opposition Conservative Party, which obtained the figures, called for more tariffs on migration, warning that the recent influx was putting real pressure on public services.

Before the recent boost of immigrants, demographers forecast that the UK's population was likely to stabilise before declining due to the falling birth rate.

Most concerns are about the inevitable consequences of less space, more costly land, smaller but more expensive homes, congested travelling, overburdened health services, oversubscribed schools and the environmental impact on limited resources.

Source: <http://www2.irna.ir/en/news>

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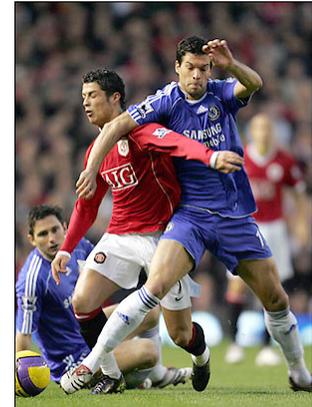
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## End of a Great Season for the Domestic Game

Despite the national teams' failure to make the European Championships this year, the domestic game is destined for glory. History will be made on May 21st when Manchester United and Chelsea face each other in the Champions League final in Moscow. Historic because it is the first time two English teams have met in the final. Historic because it is the first time Chelsea have made the final. If that wasn't exciting enough, the premiership has also reached its climax with the title still wide open. Both Chelsea and Man United could take the title on Sunday 11th May with Man Utd away at Wigan and Chelsea at Home to Bolton. Chelsea have home advantage but Man Utd have a much better goal difference. Man United simply have to win to be sure they take the title.



At the bottom of the table it is just as nail biting. Derby are down but the dog fight continues between Fulham, Reading and Birmingham. Reading have a great chance of staying up as they are away at Derby. Reading have the same points as Fulham but a worse goal difference. However, Fulham are away at eighth placed Portsmouth. There may be a chance here too though as Portsmouth will have an eye on the FA Cup final and none of the players will want to sustain an injury. Birmingham City are only one point behind both Reading and Fulham and have a better goal difference. Birmingham are at home to seventh placed Blackburn. If Fulham and Reading loose and Birmingham win, then Birmingham stay up.

In the lower leagues, Stoke City and West Brom are promoted from the Championship to the Premiership with Hull, Bristol City, Crystal Palace and Watford in the playoffs. Leicester City, Scunthorpe and Colchester are relegated.

Swansea and Nottingham Forest are promoted to the Championship with Doncaster, Carlisle, Leeds and Southend in the playoffs. Bournemouth, Gillingham, Port Vale and Luton are relegated.

Milton Keynes Dons, Peterborough and Hereford are promoted to League one with Stockport, Rochdale, Darlington and Wycombe in the playoffs. Mansfield and Wrexham are relegated.

And finally, Premiership is pitted against Championship in the FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium on Saturday May 17th. It is the first time the Cardiff City have managed to make it back to Wembley for a final after becoming the only Welsh side to lift the cup back in 1927 beating Arsenal 1-0. Portsmouth hold the record for holding the FA Cup the longest. After beating Wolverhampton Wanderers in the 1939 final the competition was not played until after World War II, meaning they held the cup for nearly seven years. Both teams will be hoping to lift the trophy for a second time.

If you are in the Hudson/St Lazare area, many friends of the BritClub will be watching the FA Cup final at Momesso's at the Complexe Sportif in St Lazare 10am May 17th. It would be great to see you there.

- The ed



Momesso's in St Lazare now has Setanta Sports channel as well as Rogers, TSN, FOX and the Score. It's a great place for Brits to meet and watch great live sport. They also have Bass and Guinness on tap as well as some great food. "See you there - Mick" Complex Sportif in St. Lazare. 1850 rue des Loisirs, St. Lazare, Quebec, J7T 3B4. (450) 424-7797.

**FA Cup Final – 10am May 17<sup>th</sup> 2008 – Cardiff v Portsmouth**

## Finance

### What is an RRSP?

MANY FINANCIAL planners say it will take 70 to 80 percent of your current income to maintain your standard of living when you retire. But conventional pension plans are designed to replace only about 50 percent of your final few years of salary and only if you've worked for your employer long enough (usually 25 to 30 years). In addition, some private-sector pensions aren't indexed for inflation. If you want to retire comfortably, you'll typically need other money tucked away in an Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). These popular savings plans allow you to shift part of your salary into a special retirement account; there, it can grow without being taxed until you withdraw it, presumably after you've retired. At that point you'll have to pay taxes, but chances are you'll have less income and therefore be in a lower tax bracket.

Another advantage: Funding your retirement with pretax dollars reduces the real cost of your contribution. Say you earn \$50,000 and contribute ten percent of your salary, or \$5,000. Your taxable salary drops to \$45,000, so if you pay federal and provincial income taxes at a combined rate of 41 percent, you receive an immediate tax savings of \$2,050 (41 percent of \$5,000). Your effective cost of participating in the plan is only \$2,950.

The RRSP contribution limit is \$13,500. However, your allowable total may be less: You can only put in up to 18 percent of your earned income from the previous year. For most people, earned income is simply their salary, but it also includes business income, taxable alimony, maintenance and child support received, and net rental income. The maximum may also be decreased if you belong to a pension plan or deferred profit-sharing plan.

If you don't put in your allowable maximum for any one year, you can carry forward the unused amount to a subsequent year. This is a very effective way to build up your plan if you come into a windfall or find yourself with excess cash on hand.

Unlike a traditional pension, which offers the best rewards to people who stay with the same company a long time, you own the money in your RRSP no matter how frequently you change jobs or if you are self-employed. And the balances can build up quickly, thanks to tax-free compounding inside your plan. With a traditional pension, your money is invested for you; but an RRSP allows you to decide how your money will be invested. Most experts say you need a mix of stocks, bonds and "cash," meaning short-term investments such as money market mutual funds or one-year GICs.

Nothing beats stocks for growth over time. According to Scotia Capital Markets, the TSE 300 grew an average of 11.7 percent a year between 1958 and 1998, while government bonds rose 9.3 percent and short-term money market investments, 7.5 percent. But the stock market, of course, can also decline, so diversification is key. Financial planners often suggest that people with a moderate tolerance for risk subtract their age from 100 to determine the percentage of their assets that should go into stocks, then split the rest of their holdings between bonds and cash. Thus people at age 40 might put 60 percent of their holdings into stocks, 30 percent into bonds and ten percent into cash.

Source: <http://www.readersdigest.ca>

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## Other News & Events

### British Airways Possible Alliance

British Airways is possibly discussing alliances with rivals American Airlines and Continental Airlines, reported Reuters, citing a source familiar with the development. It is claimed that in the event of a deal being signed between the airlines, it would result in the creation of a powerful force in the trans-Atlantic region that is likely to foster better co-operation between British Airways (BA), American, reportedly the biggest airline globally in terms of traffic, and Continental, ranked fourth in America.

While BA confirmed that it was into talks with the two US rivals, it refused to elaborate on the nature of the alliance or whether it would lead to a merger with either of them.

<http://www.redorbit.com>

### British house prices fall

British house prices took their steepest annual fall in 15 years in April, data from HBOS, Britain's biggest mortgage lender, showed.

The weak British figures from HBOS come after a Bank of England policy maker warned that house prices could fall by more than 30 percent.

The average cost of a house fell 1.3 percent on the month to pound(s)189,027, or \$375,700, last month, the third monthly decline in a row, leaving prices 3.7 percent lower than April last year. That was the biggest yearly decline since June 1993, analysts said.

<http://www.blackenterprise.com>

### Boris Johnson takes London

The opposition Conservative party seized control of London on Saturday piling pressure on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown after the ruling Labour Party's worst local election

results in four decades.

Gaffe-prone lawmaker Boris Johnson beat maverick left winger Ken Livingstone in the battle for London, the key prize in the elections that the British media said became a "May Day Massacre" of Labour.

Amid widespread predictions of the end of a political era for the ruling party, Brown could launch a fight back as early as next week, when a new legislative programme is outlined.

He admitted the results from elections across England and Wales and London were "bad", but blamed the effects of the global credit crunch for the centre-left party's defeat.

<http://afp.google.com>

### Robobugs to swarm over enemy lines

A British defence company is creating an army of robotic bugs for use in wars.

In a \$41 million deal with the US Army, British defence behemoth BAE Systems has embarked on an ambitious program to create "miniature robots" modelled after spiders, dragonflies, snakes and butterflies to go over enemy lines

"[BAE] will create an autonomous, multifunctional collection of miniature intelligence-gathering robots that can operate in places too inaccessible or dangerous for humans," the company said in a statement.

While some of the robobugs still exist only on the drawing board, the company said plans for the spider-like bug were "well advanced" and it had hopes they might hit the battlefields as early as this year.

A soldier would carry the robots into the field via a small tracked vehicle from which

they would be deployed. They would swarm into their target and relay images back to their soldier-operator via a hand-held or wrist-mounted computer.

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

### British men top Europe's depression league

The reserved, traditional 'stiff upper lip' is to blame for a high rate of depression among British men, according to a new study, published in the British Journal of Psychiatry (May 1, 2008). The study, which was headed by Professor Michael King of the Royal Free and University College Medical School, London, looked at data from general practices in the UK, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Estonia and the Netherlands. It found that the rate of major depression and panic syndrome was highest among males in the UK.

"Men are less able to talk about their problems than women or express their emotions. They have less social support and, as a generalisation, men are less emotionally intelligent than women and have not traditionally been encouraged to share their feelings."

The study found that men are most likely to suffer depression between the ages of 30 and 50, while panic attacks most frequently occur between 40 and 50.

<http://www.easier.com>

### Canadian Affair land in New Brunswick

The U.K. tour company, called Canadian Affair, has added Fredericton, New Brunswick to its list of landing spots as it markets Canada to British tourists. There are 26 flights, one a week, this spring through to mid-October. The service flies from Gatwick.

<http://dailygleaner.com>

## ***And Finally***

### **Do you know when St George's Day is?**

This was passed on to me by Frank Hunt of St Lazare on 23<sup>rd</sup> April – St Georges Day. I thought it was well worthy of the Gazette (Welsh and Scottish look away):

To be English is to be part of the world's richest culture. From this sceptred isle sprang talents as diverse as Orwell and Chaplin, Kipling and Shakespeare, Nelson and Joe Strummer. In every field, in every era, the evidence of English greatness is there for all to see, from the enduring genius of Elgar to the magic of Michael Owen's goal against the Argies. As Ian Dury once sang: "There are jewels in the Crown of England's glory, too numerous to mention, but a few."

OK, not many of us know more than the first two lines of There'll Always Be An England, but we do know that our country gave the world football, cricket, rugby, tennis, the Beatles and Dickens. As a people we are not given to chest beating. Reserve and restraint are as much English qualities as inventiveness and enterprise. But we do resent the way Englishness is sneered at by the chattering classes. For them, the cross of St George is tainted by memories of empire (even though the Royal Navy smashed the slave trade). It has been like this for decades. More than 50 years ago, George Orwell wrote that "England is perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their nationality." These sniggering fools don't even know the roots of their own radicalism. For every Francis Drake in English history there was a Wat Tyler. For every Wellington there was a Captain Swing. Military achievement understandably shaped our self image. The stout Yeomen of England have been beating off invaders for centuries. We saw off Bonaparte and smashed the Spanish Armada. But England gave the world parliamentary democracy and the trade unions too.

We are strong-willed people, rightly proud of our traditions of free speech and tolerance. Our defining national characteristic is "constructive bloodymindedness" according to Keith Waterhouse, one of the greatest living Englishmen. Illustrated by the phrase "thus far and no further", it is why most of us refuse to take Europe seriously. European? Never! I was born English and I will die English, (unless Co. Durham achieves independence). A soggy croissant will never replace egg, bacon and buttered toast. Whether your England is summed up by a bowler hat or a pit helmet, punk rock or Morris dancers, there are few national tapestries as rich as our beloved Albion's.

My England is bubble and squeak and foaming pints of Boddingtons. It is Les Dawson and Barbara Windsor, Max Miller and Page Three. My England is pie and mash and Aston Martins, Derby day and Arfur Daley, Mods and Suedeheads, Lennie McLean and Carry On films. My England stretches from Dennis Skinner to Roger Scruton, from Peggy Mount to Beki Bondage. It's Blackpool beach, Charlie Drake, roast beef, imperial measurements and fish n chips. It's defiance. Whether it be King Alfred standing up to the Vikings, Colonel H at Goose Green, or the Metric Martyrs giving the finger to Brussels. No-one likes us! We don't care! And of course it is a national disgrace that TV gives St George a blank. But what do they know? How often do they get anything right?

If you are English turn off the TV on April 23rd and get down to the pub, preferably in a fine Longshanks shirt. As Chesterton wrote: "St George he was for England and before he slew the dragon, he drank a pint of English ale out of an English flagon."

Enjoy yourself this St. George's Day. And remember, there will always be an England. And.....For the absolutely 100% through and through Englishman, remember this. Before 1066 and the temporary aberration of England being ruled by the French, the patron saint of England was St Edward the Confessor. There was never any doubt about his existence and he was an original Englishman (well, actually, Saxon but one can take such things too far). October 13 is St Edward the Confessor's day so if you are unable to celebrate today, you will have a second chance later this year.

## Notices

[advertise@britclub.ca](mailto:advertise@britclub.ca)

### Westwood High School Girl's Rugby Team

There are a group of girl's at Westwood High School that love to play Rugby. They need knowledgeable and willing volunteers to coach them and help them to raise the standard of their game. If you can spare a little time to pass on your knowledge of Rugby to the girls please contact [mick@britclub.ca](mailto:mick@britclub.ca) and I'll pass on your details to them. Thank you.

- *Come on people, show a little spirit **and lend the girls a hand!!!***

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