



THE EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENCE > GROWTH: PLAYING TO OUR STRENGTHS
LOW-CARBON ENERGY OPTIONS > EDUCATION POLICY IN PRACTICE

Britain in 2014

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

WORKING FOR LESS?

Insights from the new economy

132
 PAGES OF
 KEY DATA
 & EXPERT
 OPINION

100 YEARS OF CHANGE

How have we progressed since World War One?



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WELCOME TO BRITAIN IN 2014



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A CENTURY OF CHANGE

Britain in 2014, the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) magazine, showcases how research the ESRC funds influences life in Britain today. This issue, with the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War in 2014, journalist and former ESRC Council member David Walker asks experts on social science, history and economics how Britain has changed in the past century. The issues they discuss set the scene for *Britain in 2014*.

The state cares for us more now but, with a growing older population, is the pension and benefits system sustainable? How has the class system evolved? Have we abandoned our values in the pursuit of money and celebrity? How have immigration and migration changed society? And, as a once world-leading nation of innovation and manufacturing, what do we make today?

Britain is a tale of social progress but contradictions remain: today, equality of opportunity is recognised in law yet the labour market remains unequal for many. Education is available to all, yet still some gain an advantage. War today is waged as much through technology as troops but our support for military action has dwindled. It's hard to imagine living in an age when so many went willingly to the battlefields of Belgium and France cheered on by their families and friends.

Today there are other threats: from climate change, a fast-increasing global population and limited or declining resources. But where once empire fought with empire, some of these new challenges have started a spirit of global co-operation.

Perhaps one of the greatest changes is in politics. Traditionally we held politicians in esteem, believing that office made them right. Now many regard those who run the political system with cynicism, suspicious of their motives and sceptical of their promises.

Britain 100 years ago is a different place, but many of the principles and skills that once made it great apply still. Most of us believe honesty and hard work deserve reward. Charity and informal care thrive despite the most severe recession in recent history. British science, innovation and enterprise lead the way in many sectors.

And Britain in 2014 – although no longer an empire – still has a role to play on the world stage, despite the century of change.

Nick Stevens
Editor, Britain in 2014



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CONTENTS
BRITAIN IN
2014



06 /
A CENTURY
OF CHANGE

06 *It's 100 years since the start of World War One. How has society changed?*



12 /
ENVIRONMENT

- 12 **FUEL FOR THOUGHT**
What does the future hold for fossil fuels and Britain's energy policy?
- 16 Opinion: *Energy and the public*
- 17 Third sector / Transport emissions
- 18 Ecosystems
- 20 Hairdressers and sustainability / Friendly travelling
- 21 Cycling
- 22 Wind Power
- 23 Recycling
- 24 Opinion: *A green economy*
- 25 Figures: *Energy in the home*

26 /
PUBLIC SERVICES

- 26 **RAISING THE BAR**
With big changes due in education, who will benefit, and who won't?
- 30 Opinion: *Policing*
- 31 Early learners
- 32 Academics
- 34 Austerity / Prison visits
- 35 Travellers
- 36 Healthcare
- 37 Third Sector
- 38 Confidence at school
- 39 Figures: *Emergency services*

40 /
MONEY & BUSINESS

- 40 **RISKY BUSINESS**
How fragile is our economy after the financial crisis and can we create stability?
- 44 Opinion: *A different recession*
- 45 Energy bills / Regulators
- 46 Pensions
- 48 Scottish currency
- 49 Small businesses
- 50 Energy suppliers
- 51 Robots
- 52 Figures: *Weekly spending habits*



53 / JOBS & GROWTH

- 53** **JOBS & PRODUCTIVITY**
Can we solve the jobs and productivity conundrum that hails from the recession?
- 56** Opinion: *Thatcher's legacy*
- 57** The housing market
- 58** Higher education
- 60** Monetary policy / Construction
- 61** Flexible working
- 62** Opinion: *Leaving the EU*
- 63** Figures: *Jobs around the UK*



64 / POLITICS & GOVERNANCE

- 64** **TIME TO BREAK FREE?**
What are the issues that face Scottish voters as the referendum looms?
- 68** Opinion: *The rise of UKIP*
- 69** Political trust
- 70** Lobbying
- 72** Young voters / Corporate responsibility
- 73** Voting and Social Media
- 74** Opinion: *The World Service*
- 75** Figures: *MPs' salaries*



76 / SCIENCE & WELLBEING

- 76** **CARING FOR THE ELDERLY**
Are we caring for our ageing population?
- 80** Opinion: *Cancer outcomes*
- 81** Design for the elderly / Crime deters
- 82** Genomic science
- 84** Getting active / Alcohol abuse
- 85** Cutting calories
- 86** Supermarket offers
- 87** Family separation
- 88** Opinion: *Sleep patterns*
- 89** Figures: *Your wellbeing*



90 / SOCIETY

- 90** **CHANGING TIMES**
As life in the 21st century gathers pace, are our lives really changing faster than before?
- 94** Opinion: *Coping with the recession*
- 95** Charitable giving / Housing
- 96** Poverty
- 98** Aspirations / Happiness
- 99** Working hours
- 100** Equality
- 101** Faith
- 102** Opinion: *Third sector*
- 103** Figures: *Lives through the decades*



104 / CULTURE, MEDIA & SPORT

- 104** **THE SAVAGE ARENA**
How online cyberbullying affects us
- 108** Opinion: *Olympic linguistics*
- 109** Media representations / Accents
- 110** Performance pressures
- 112** Migration / Online content
- 113** Bad Social Media
- 114** Youth aspirations
- 115** Dating scams
- 116** Opinion: *Age discrimination*
- 117** Figures: *A broadcasting timeline*



118 / INTERNATIONAL

- 118** **THE GREAT DEPRESSION**
How can our politicians learn from the Great Depression of the 1930s?
- 122** Opinion: *Return immigration*
- 123** China's success / The slave trade
- 124** War in Syria
- 126** Gibraltar
- 127** Gains from migration
- 128** Monetary union
- 129** Opinion: *Growth in China*
- 130** Figures: *Targets to beat world poverty*