

CanadaFocus



CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION

Global security rests on historic Canada-UK bond: Blair

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has sent a strong message to the international community that global security and protection of democratic values are inextricably tied to the historic bond between Canada and the UK.

In a keynote address before the Canada-UK Chamber of Commerce in London last month, Mr Blair stressed the partnership was cause for celebration. He underlined successful collaboration in critical areas of trade; energy; the environment; science and technology; humanitarian assistance; and the fight against global terrorism in 'every arena', from Afghanistan to Iraq, the Palestinian Territory and Lebanon.

'I hope and believe that relationship will strengthen still further,' Mr Blair told 400 members and guests. 'It is important for our two countries, and just as important as that, it is important for the world.'

High Commissioner for Canada Jim Wright echoed Mr Blair's sentiments, stating 'there are no limits to our two countries' collaboration, only opportunities'. On the business front, Mr Wright said the Canada-UK success story was mirrored in bilateral trade, now valued in excess of \$18.5 billion (the UK represents the third largest market for Canadian exports after the US and Japan); and two-way investment involving 600 British companies in Canada (\$30 billion investment) and 500 Canadian companies in the UK (\$42.7 billion investment).

'Canada wants Britain to be as much a part of our future as she has been of our past,' said Mr Wright, adding that the countries' shared interests and values also underpinned the reason their troops were serving side-by-side in Afghanistan, 'defending freedom and building democracy'.

Reinforcing the words of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who recently warned the United Nations its future depended on success in Afghanistan, Mr Blair emphasised the 'absolutely vital' role of Canada and the UK in Afghanistan. Here, he said democratic values had 'never been more important', highlighting not just the military role, but reconstruction efforts. 'For all the challenges, we have achieved a great



Photo: Kabul, Afghanistan Cpl John Bradley

'It is absolutely vital for our security [...] that we stay the course in Afghanistan': British PM Tony Blair

deal: 4.5 million Afghan refugees have returned home; there are six million children who now go to school, including of course millions of girls; there are something like over 14,000 community projects that have been financed; and health clinics have increased by over 60 per cent,' he said.

While Mr Blair expressed great sorrow at rising Canadian and British military casualties in the wake of intensified fighting with Taliban rebels in southern provinces, Mr Blair warned against early withdrawal from the 'just and noble' mission. He

said: 'I believe it is absolutely vital for our security, not just global security, but in our countries, that we stay the course in Afghanistan, that we see this mission through and that we make it clear we will not allow Afghanistan again to be used as a training ground for the terrorists of al-Qaeda or for the brutal oppression of the Taliban.'

Canadian and British troops, based in southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, have borne the brunt of the most intense period of combat with Taliban rebels. As *Canada Focus* went to press, Canada's death toll

comprised one diplomat and 42 soldiers – 20 of whom died since the start of September. A suicide bomber in Helmand province killed a British marine on October 19, bringing the UK's death toll to 41.

Referring to other conflicts in which Canada and the UK face common challenges, Mr Blair paid tribute to Canada's support of reconstruction efforts in Iraq; the nation's leading role in calling on Iran to respect human rights and political freedoms; and military contribution

continued

At a glance: Democracy at work in Afghanistan

- Canada has committed nearly \$1 billion over 10 years into reconstruction, reducing poverty and strengthening Afghanistan governance. On a trip there last month, Minister of International Cooperation Josée Verner committed \$35 million in aid – \$14.5 million to a girls' education project; \$5 million to integrate women into markets; \$5 million to deliver emergency food aid to tens of thousands of the most vulnerable families in Kandahar; and \$10 million for ongoing reconstruction projects.

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade last month put a call out for Canadian companies to bid on everything from light protective vests to flashlights and boots as part of the government's decision to buy basic equipment for about 2,000 Afghan National Police (ANP) officers.

- A survey last month found a majority of Canadians (54 per cent) supported Canada's Afghan mission, believing troops provided 'critical assistance' to the local population.

- Canada's Brigadier-General David Fraser this month handed NATO control of southern Afghanistan to Major-General Ton van Loon, from the Netherlands. At a November 1 ceremony, he said: 'We are making progress against the Taliban, but more importantly we are making progress for the Afghan people.'

- Canada recently signed a memorandum of agreement, joining the UK, Australia and the US, in a programme to seek ways to protect soldiers against improvised explosive devices (IEDs), commonly known as roadside bombs.

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British PM Tony Blair





Strong allies: Canadian High Commissioner Jim Wright and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

to the African Union force in Darfur, Sudan, on top of humanitarian assistance there, totalling more than \$40 million since 2003.

Returning to other key issues discussed with Mr Harper during his July visit to the UK, Mr Blair said it was crucial that both countries 'stand up for open trade in the international trading system', fight protectionism, and push for a return to suspended Doha Round of World Trade Organisation negotiations together with a revitalisation of the EU-Canada Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement.

He credited Canada for commanding a world stage as a new energy superpower, notably in hydro-electricity, nuclear power and carbon sequestration, and paid homage to the nation's role as a secure energy supplier and leader of technological developments in climate change. Canada ranks fifth in the world in total energy production, coming seventh in global oil production, second in hydro-electricity and first in uranium.

Mr Blair also pointed to the fact that Canada and the UK were home to some of the best scientists in the world – currently collaborating in areas such as stem cell science, urban energy efficiency, and genetic mutations behind asthma, diabetes, cancer and heart disease – adding that the UK had much to learn from Canada in terms of successful commercialisation of research.

- To view a copy of Tony Blair's speech, visit www.international.gc.ca/london – The High Commissioner's Page.

- To view a copy of Stephen Harper's speech, visit www.pm.gc.ca – Media Centre/Speeches July 14, 2006.

Green plan heralds clean bill of health for Canadians

The Harper government has unveiled key pillars of its environmental agenda, harnessing tough regulations on smog and greenhouse gas emissions to improved health for all Canadians.

Tabling the Clean Air Act in Parliament last month, Minister of the Environment Rona Ambrose said the proposed legislation, which will move industry sectors from voluntary compliance to mandatory regulation, clearly recognised that environmental policies impacted on health outcomes – a platform applauded by the Canadian Medical Association.

'Our plan puts the health of Canadians first and the health of our environment first,' said Ms Ambrose. 'Any polluters that go over their targets will be fined and all money will go towards an environmental damages fund.'

Minister of Health Tony Clement warned air quality in Canada had worsened over the past decade and was literally choking the nation, linked to 5,900 annual deaths from stroke, cardiac and lung diseases, on top of its role in exacerbating asthma cases.

'The proposed Clean Air Act will go a long way towards improving the health of Canadians,' he said. 'Even more important, it will protect the health of the most vulnerable – young children, elderly Canadians and people who already suffer from chronic health and respiratory illnesses.'

If successful, the Clean Air Act, underpinned by targets that promise tangible results, will introduce regulations that compel industries to cut their air pollutants by 2010. It sets a 2050 target for reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions by 45 to 65 per cent from 2003 levels, with hard caps on emissions planned for 2020 or 2025.

In the lead-up to 2050, Ms Ambrose said short-term 'intensity-based' greenhouse gas reduction targets would be set in consultation with provinces, territories and industry sectors, hopefully by spring, adding that the government would be accountable to Parliament via annual reporting.

Life in Canada scores UN nod of approval

- Canada maintained its leading position as one of the world's best countries to live in, according to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2006 Human Development Report. The study, released on November 9, ranked Canada sixth out of 177 countries based on criteria including life expectancy, health, education, income, poverty levels and environmental quality. Norway led the pack, followed by Iceland, Australia, Ireland, Sweden and Canada. The UK was placed 18th.

Each year, the UNDP's human development report also frames debate on some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. This year's report, 'Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis', calls for a global action plan under G8 leadership to resolve a growing water and sanitation crisis, responsible for the annual deaths of 1.8 million children. The report recommends that governments guarantee every person has access to at least 20 litres of clean water a day and commit at least one per cent of GDP to water and sanitation.

Canada's green credentials take root in London

London's Battersea district – famed for its iconic power station, emblazoned across the cover of Pink Floyd's *Animals* album – is about to welcome a new landmark: Maple Leaf Walk. Leading Canadian corporations Dadco Group and TD Securities, both with offices in the UK, are funding the planting of 32 maple trees in Battersea Park, symbolising Canada's commitment to the environment. High Commissioner for Canada Jim Wright rolled up his sleeves at an October 16 tree planting ceremony with Dadco Group Chairman Victor Dahdaleh and TD Securities Chairman and CEO Robert Dorrance (pictured right).



More Canadian companies stay firmly in the black

Business bankruptcies in Canada have diminished to a 25-year low, according to a new study incorporating latest data from the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada and Statistics Canada. It detailed just over 7,300 companies went bankrupt last year at a rate of seven for every 1,000 firms, down from the 1992 peak of 15.4 per 1,000 businesses. The trend is mirrored in the UK, where, according to credit-checking company Experian, business failures fell 4.1 percent to 4,611 in the quarter to September 30 compared with the same period last year: the first decline in two years.

Canada lures \$10 million wind farm deal

Airtricity, the international renewable energy company headquartered in Dublin, last month announced its first foray into Canada, with the \$10 million acquisition of Toronto-based wind farm developer Gale Force Energy (GFE). The deal will leave GFE's senior management and development team in place, with the company's head office remaining in Toronto. Airtricity, develops and operates wind farms in Ireland, the UK and North America.

Two-Bite Brownies hit UK supermarket shelves

Toronto-based company Give and Go Prepared Foods this month launched its trademark brownies at selected Sainsbury's stores and Costco warehouses in the UK. Sainsbury's stores stocking Two-Bite Brownies (as part of the sandwich 'Grab 'n Go' offering) include: Golders Green, South Harrow, High Wycombe, Eltham and Wood Green. At Costco, the brownies



will be packed in large tubs under Give and Go's 'Homestyle' brand.

Details: ros.burrige@international.gc.ca

Grape expectations

Canadian wine products have racked up unprecedented growth over the past decade, largely attributable to a switch by growers from native species to wine-quality grapes (vinifera and French hybrid varieties). A Statistics Canada report last month found the Canadian wine industry grew at 'a remarkable pace' between 1997 and 2005. The industry boasted the eleventh highest growth rate of 215 industry groups, with its real gross domestic product inflating at an average annual rate of 7.1 per cent, more than double the national average of three per cent.

Blackberry awards honour pick of the hi-tech crop

The search for the top woman in technology is over. Shirin Dehghan, CEO of UK telecoms firm Arieso, cleaned up at the 2006 Blackberry Women and Technology Awards in London (November 2) – a gala event attended by Deputy High Commissioner for Canada Guy Saint-Jacques. Ms Dehghan was named 'Outstanding Woman in Technology 2006' and also pocketed the 'Best Woman in Technology at an SME' title. The awards, launched in 2005, recognise the achievements of women in the hi-tech sector via innovative use and development of technology.

Exploring UK investment strategy

The Canadian High Commission this month hosted the eighth International TradeNet event (November 1), focusing on the hot topic of Inward Investment Strategies. International TradeNet is a network of trade and investment promotion professionals from the public and private sector, who meet three times a year. Judith St. George, Minister Commercial/Economic, introduced the event, which drew representatives from 30 countries and regions, featuring speakers from UK Trade & Investment and Think London.

For more information about International TradeNet, visit www.tradenet.org.uk

Seaplane operator makes a splash on the Thames

It was a case of history repeating when Canada's AirSea Lines touched down in London



Historic touchdown: Canada's AirSea Lines hits UK scene

this month. The company, which corners a niche as the only scheduled service seaplane operator in Europe – flying between eight Greek destinations, in addition to Brindisi, Italy – fulfilled its plan to land one of its DHC-6 Twin Otter aircraft on the River Thames. Seaplanes were a common sight on the Thames before the Second World War, destined for Egypt and India. The landing marked a fitting London arrival for AirSea Lines, opening 'exploratory talks' during the World Trade Market (November 6-9) to expand services into the UK. The company's Greek subsidiary AirSea Lines SA also announced it had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with aerospace company BAE Systems of the UK to develop mutual business interests in Greece.

Enterprise Ireland opens its doors in Toronto

A new technology partnership was signed last month by Canada's National Research Council and Enterprise Ireland during a trade mission to Canada led by Ireland's Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheal Martin. The deal was strengthened by Enterprise Ireland's decision to set up an office in Toronto. Last year, Irish exports to Canada totalled €339 million. Ireland, meanwhile, ranks fifth in terms of foreign direct investment from Canada. In a separate development during the four-day trade mission, Mr Martin announced a second initiative to support co-operation between the two countries in the development of the biotechnology and life-science sectors.

Prehistoric jawbreaker

Paleontologists in Alberta have solved a 30-year-old mystery behind the discovery of prehistoric teeth belonging to an extinct creature that fell through the cracks of time.

The fossils, dating back 60 million years, were stumbled upon by a University of Alberta genetics professor, searching for insect fossils along the banks of the Blindman River, north of Red Deer, in 1977. After decades of painstaking research, University of Alberta experts recently revealed their historic findings, lifting the lid on a new and intriguing mammal: *Horolodectes sunae* (aka hourglass biter).

'In an area of North America that's been fairly well studied, it's unusual to have a new critter pop up,' said Craig Scott, a University of Alberta PhD student and lead author of the study.

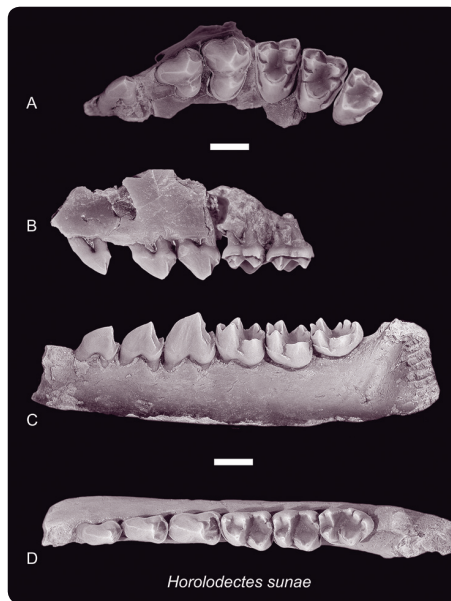
The now-extinct creature is understood to have roamed central Alberta when the area resembled a subtropical swamp, akin to the Louisiana bayou, during the Paleocene epoch, 10 million years after the extinction of dinosaurs. Researchers assume *Horolodectes*, which preyed mainly on insects and grubs, was a furry tree-dwelling mammal, roughly the size of a hedgehog, with long, sharply-pointed teeth (some shaped like an hourglass).

The small predatory mammal's identity remained a mystery for so long because its upper and lower teeth were never found together. According to Mr Scott, *Horolodectes* – an evolutionary 'dead end' with no modern descendants – may have only ever existed in Alberta. He, together with Calgary colleague Michael Webb and University of Alberta Professor emeritus Richard Fox, published the first account of the creature in the September issue of the *Journal of Paleontology*.

Beam us up

Canadian space enthusiasts at the University of Saskatchewan last month led an international NASA-funded contest aimed at making a voyage into space as simple as an elevator ride.

The Spaceward Foundation's Elevator 2010 Competition, held in Las Cruces, New Mexico (October 20-22), called on contestants to invent a space-bound vehicle capable of carrying people and cargo. In short, a space elevator which, if ever built, could move along a cable or ribbon anchored to the ground at one end and an orbiting space station at the other, offering a safer and more cost-effective



Prehistoric teeth cracked the code of an extinct creature

alternative to rocket launches.

University of Saskatchewan Space Design Team (USST) beat 12 competitors in the 'Power Beam Challenge', when its elevator prototype climbed 200ft at an average speed of 0.96 metres per second. Sadly, as USST President Clayton Ruszkowski told *Canada Focus*, this climb speed was 0.04 m/s short of bagging the \$150,000 NASA prize purse.

The team, comprising 20 undergraduate engineering and physics students, spent 10 months devising this year's elevator prototype powered by 60,000 watts of light. They are now working on a solar-cell skinned prototype, powered by a laser, for next year's competition. 'It is our second year in which we have been placed first,' said Mr Ruszkowski. 'Last year we climbed 40ft, which was 20ft higher than the next closest team.'

Other Canadians competitors in this year's 'Power Beam Challenge' included a team from the University of British Columbia and a private group from Toronto.

Canada nips at the heels of Silicon Valley

Canadian technology companies have blitzed the 2006 Deloitte Technology *Fast 500* ranking, dominating half the top ten slots and driving the highest revenue growth in North America.

'Canada is now the second largest tech-hub, following the Silicon Valley,' said John Ruffolo, national leader for Deloitte's Technology, Media and Telecommunication practice.

'Canada's competitive advantage is partly attributable to its loyal and highly skilled workforce, attractive tax incentives encouraging R&D, and is supported by longer-serving management teams.'

A total line-up of 56 Canadian companies this year made the *Fast 500*, an annual award program that charts the fastest-growing technology, media and telecommunications firms based on five-year average revenue growth. Ontario boasted the lion's share, with 21 winners, tagged by Quebec, 13; British Columbia, 12; Alberta, six; Manitoba, two; and one recipient each in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

According to the latest revenue statistics (2001-2005), Canadian companies registered an average 3,876 per cent growth, overtaking their US counterparts (1,927 per cent growth). Canada also stamped its mark as a software and biotech hotspot, with a respective 43 per cent and 23 per cent of the winners operating in the two sub-sectors, against an overall 36 per cent and 15 per cent of all *Fast 500* recipients.

Pulling the plug on internet 'bad guys'

Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian has stepped forward as a champion of a global online identity system framework, aimed at safeguarding Internet users from cyber threats wrought by spam, phishing and identity theft. In a white paper released last month, she advocated guidelines to help consumers verify the legitimacy of online businesses and protect their own online identities. It was inspired by the *7 Laws of Identity*, formulated via a global dialogue among security and privacy professionals headed by Microsoft's chief identity architect Kim Cameron.

'The Internet is not in the hands of the people – it's in the hands of the fraudsters,' said Dr Cavoukian, warning that such cyber crime threatened consumer confidence in e-commerce. She also gave a thumbs-up to 'infocards' – a concept due to be introduced by Microsoft for its new Vista operating system in January 2007, enabling websites to verify customers' identities without receiving or keeping personal or financial information.

Dr Cavoukian believes similar protection should be grafted onto the Internet, built into all security systems created by companies across the globe.

Aga Khan praises multicultural

Canada: Canada's reputation as a role model for cultural diversity, anchored to a history shaped by multiculturalism, has been boosted by the government's \$30 million backing of a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Prime Minister Stephen Harper last month pledged the capital as part of a partnership with the Aga Khan, spiritual leader of 15 million Ismaili Muslims, stating: 'Pluralism is the principle that binds our diverse people together. It is elemental to our civil society and economic strength.' The Aga Khan Development Network will provide \$10 million to the centre, aimed at fostering pluralism and exporting positive lessons from Canada.

Canada steps up aid to Pakistan's earthquake zone:

The Canadian government has injected an additional \$40 million into reconstruction efforts in northeastern Pakistan, hit by last year's October 8 earthquake. The payment brings Canada's contribution to \$130 million, incorporating the pledge to match donations of nearly \$28 million by Canadians. 'This additional funding will help to rebuild schools and provide assistance for other priority reconstruction projects,' said Minister of International Cooperation Joséé Verner.

Canada pledges \$1 million for UN refugee agency:

Canada has earmarked \$1 million for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Foreign Minister Peter MacKay made the announcement during this month's official visit to Canada by the UNHCR High Commissioner, António Guterres. The funds are in addition to more than \$30 million provided this year via the Canadian International Development Agency. In a separate move, Canada last month agreed to accept 63 Palestinian refugees from Iraq, held at the Ruwayshid Refugee Camp in Jordan, under the Government Assisted Refugees Program.

Afghan mission draws top national honour:

Four Canadian soldiers who risked their lives in Afghanistan last month became the first to receive Military Valour Decorations, recognising 'gallantry and devotion to duty in combat'. The decorations, created in 1993, include the Victoria Cross, the Star of Military Valour and the Medal of Military Valour. The inaugural recipients are: Sgt Patrick Tower (Star of Military Valour); Sgt Michael Thomas Victor Denine, Pte Jason Lamont and MCpl Collin Ryan Fitzgerald (Medal of Military Valour).



Barry Penner, Dan Richardson and John Les at Ardvreck School with the Richardson pipes

WWI hero's pipes homeward bound:

The bagpipes a Canadian courageously played to buoy troops' morale on the battlefield during the First World War's Battle of the Somme, earning him the Victoria Cross, have returned to Canada. Piper James Cleland Richardson, of Chilliwack, enlisted with British Columbia's 72nd Seaforth Highlanders in 1914. He was serving with the 16th Battalion Canadian Scottish when he died in France, on October 9, 1916. His pipes, found a year later by a British army chaplain, lay unidentified for almost three-quarters of a century in a school display cabinet in the Scottish highlands. The Canadian Club of Vancouver has purchased them from Ardvreck School in Crieff, after research by Pipe Major Roger Maguire of the Canadian Scottish Regiment pinpointed their location. A Canadian delegation including the piper's grand-nephew Dan Richardson last month travelled to Scotland to receive the pipes, to be displayed at the BC legislature.

North Korea bows to pressure: The global crisis surrounding North Korea's nuclear weapons test was defused on October 31, when the nation agreed to return to six-party disarmament talks. The turnaround followed pressure from China and a US offer to discuss financial sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council.

Canada tops the global privacy table:

Canada and Germany are the world's best defenders of privacy, according to a London-based international rights group Privacy International. This month's release of the

group's privacy league table, assessing the 25 EU member states and 11 benchmark countries, found Canada and Germany offered 'significant protections and safeguards'. Canada received the highest ranking of five for its legal limits on keeping of private data.

Sir Bob Geldof applauds stem cell research:

Irish rocker and activist Sir Bob Geldof last month commanded a world stage in Toronto at the opening of the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine. The centre, created by the University Health Network, embraces research via the use of stem cells to grow or repair tissues, organs and cells. Sir Geldof compared its vision to his own hopes to improve the lives of people around the globe.

Gone with the wind:

Nature's long-distance flyer, the monarch butterfly, made headlines last month, when they were spotted in south-west England. Each year, millions migrate 2,000 miles from Canada and the US to spend winter in Mexican mountain forests. This year, some were blown 3,000 miles across the Atlantic.



Lest we forget: A gathering of 150 people paused to remember thousands of Canadian men and women who sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom and democracy at a Remembrance Day service at Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey. High Commissioner for Canada Jim Wright (pictured above) read the psalm and laid a wreath, paying homage to 2,731 Canadian soldiers buried at the cemetery – 326 of whom died during the First World War and 2,405 in the Second World War. The occasion, organised by the Canadian Defence Liaison (London) and Veterans Affairs Canada – both located at the Canadian High Commission – also paid tribute to Canadian soldiers who have lost their lives in the Afghan mission since 2002. The religious service was conducted by Canadian Forces Padre Captain Maude Parsons Hörst.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 8-25**'Da Kink in My Hair'**

European premiere of the hit production by Toronto playwright/actor Trey Anthony, complete with a Canadian cast.

Hackney Empire, London.
www.hackneyempire.co.uk
www.treyanthony.com

November 11-23**Angela Hewitt**

Acclaimed pianist and winner of the 2006 'Artist of the Year' Gramophone Award. Touring UK: Petersham, London, Glasgow.

www.angelahewitt.com

November 16-18**2006 Canada-UK Colloquium**

Meeting of leading Canadian and UK experts on energy security.
Chateau Lake Louise, Alberta.

george.edmondsbrown@tesco.net

November 18, 2006, to**February 18, 2007,****Get your skates on**

In the lead-up to the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver, the Canadian Tourism Commission and partners bring a taste of Canadian winter sports to London's Canary Wharf Ice Rink.

www.canarywharficerink.com
www.canadakeepexploring.co.uk

December 5-6**APTS Europe 2006**

London's premier transport and border security exhibition, Airport, Port and Transport Security Europe (APTS). Canadian companies will showcase an array of cutting-edge technologies.

National Hall, Olympia, London
www.aps-expo.com
george.edwards@international.gc.ca

Until December 20**Colour Chording: Post-Painterly Abstraction of the Canadian Prairies**

William Pehudoff painting exhibition.

Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London.



Photo: Dorian Amos and Pamela Brown

Call of the wild: Canada's Yukon Territory inspired a British couple to offer shares in a gold mine to the world

Eureka! A golden opportunity to strike it rich in the Yukon

A British couple who emigrated to Canada in search of 'the good life', only to stumble upon the rare good fortune of vacant claims in the Yukon Territory's historic Klondike gold fields, has sparked a modern-day bonanza.

'We're finding gold in every bucket of gravel that we dig at the moment,' Dorian Amos told *Canada Focus* after his memoirs, *The Good Life Gets Better*, made Waterstones' 100 best paperbacks of 2006 within days of hitting the shelves last month. 'And who knows what's down there – that's the beauty of it.'

That said, anyone who purchases the book will have a vested interest in Mr Amos striking it rich.

A partnership between the former cartoonist and UK-based publishers, Eye Books, means anyone who buys a copy also buys into the 12-acre claim, situated a stone's throw from the famous Bonanza Creek.

As Eye Books Managing Director Dan Hiscocks explained, each copy represents a share of the mine, registered as The Good Life and jointly owned by the publishing house and Mr Amos. 'People who buy the book will become the beneficiaries of all the gold from it,' he said. 'We know there's gold there. Dorian has sluiced a few pans and in each one there has been gold. But we want to try and keep it a traditional mining process.'

He said it was hoped people who bought the book might want to travel to the goldfield and experience the raw beauty of

Canada's wilderness first-hand. The Klondike goldfield was the site of the most frenzied gold rush in history, dating back to 1896.

Mr Amos, who emigrated to Canada with his wife Bridget seven years ago, said Canada always had 'a real draw to it'. The couple ended up in the Yukon at the end of a 500-mile canoe trip. 'There we found endless, remote wilderness,' said Mr Amos. 'We built a cabin, struggled through 40 below winters, survived rotting ice, killed our meat, built our fires and gave birth to a son [Jack]. We found adventure, challenges and freedom... we found it. We found life.'

The family expanded with the birth of a daughter, Jesse, nine months ago. A webcam is under development so shareholders can

monitor progress and sneak a snapshot of Canada's wilderness.

Details: www.yukongoldminingclub.com

■ The day *The Good Life Gets Better* was released (October 19), Statistics Canada revealed 75,000 UK tourists visited Canada in August, up 3.9 per cent on July figures. Last year, for the first time, the number of British visitors to Canada surpassed the 900,000 barrier (906,179), according to the Canadian Tourism Commission.

CanadaFocus

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