

Speech: Scott Wightman's speech at launch of the book '200 Years of Singapore and the United Kingdom'

Minister Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Your Excellencies, my co-editor Prof Tommy Koh, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to begin by adding my thanks to all of you, but especially to the minister, for joining us here this evening and supporting this project. And like Prof Koh, I must thank, too, all of the contributors to this collection of essays. I'm very happy that some of you have been able to join us here today.

The authors of the essays are the people who have done the real work, drawing on their deep research and personal experience to help us tell the story – the good, the bad and the ugly – of a unique relationship. Prof Koh has explained to you some of the contents of the book and why we thought it would be interesting and useful to bring them together in one volume.

My personal hope is that the book and the individual essays will be seen as a constructive contribution to the collective reflection that the bicentennial of the establishment of a trading post in Singapore by Raffles and Farquhar has stimulated here.

It has been interesting for me to observe in the last 12 months how many different views there are in Singapore on the significance of the anniversary, on the impact of British rule and administration, on what it means to be Singaporean.

Not surprisingly, this has intensified since the turn of the year. I consider this robust discussion to be a thoroughly good thing. It is good that people should exchange views and debate such questions. It's good that they should have different opinions. There are of course no right answers to the questions. There is no single truthful version of history. There are no uniquely correct interpretations of historical events. So it's very healthy that people should be encouraged to question what they're being told rather than meekly accepting the authorised version, as still happens in too many countries around the world.

These discussions and debates are more productive and are more useful if they are well informed. Hearsay, rumour and deliberate disinformation, whether on or offline, are the handmaidens of misunderstanding and prejudice. Ignorance and misrepresentation fan the flames of hatred and xenophobia. But thanks to the efforts of our contributing authors, I believe participants in the debate about how Singapore became what it is today will be better informed if they read this book.

HC Scott Wightman addressing the audience at the launch of "200 Years of Singapore and the United Kingdom".

I hope too that British readers of the book will gain a better understanding of the people, the forces and the events that have shaped modern Singapore and which help to explain what drives this remarkable place and motivates its citizens and leaders. They will see how Singaporeans took some of the institutions and approaches developed by the colonial administration and then adapted, updated and applied them, invariably much more effectively than their predecessors. The results are all around us and indeed embodied in the Singaporeans in this auditorium.

Too few people in the UK – and in Europe generally – are aware of what is happening in this part of the world of the pace of change, of the dynamism to be found throughout the region. Too many in the UK at least project on to Singapore their pre-conceived political views, without bothering themselves with the reality. I hope that in a small way this book may reduce that tendency.

In anniversary years such as this, it's natural for us to look back, to rediscover and reappraise the past. That is what Prof Koh and I have tried to do in this book. But in my role as High Commissioner, my day job is to deal with the present and look to the future. And I'm glad to say that the present state of the bilateral relationship is strong. Whether it's in the economic sphere, with over 4000 British companies with a presence in Singapore and with extensive Singaporean investment in the UK.

Or in science and innovation with so many research collaborations between our scientists it's impossible for us to keep track of them all. Or in education with 7000 young Singaporeans studying in the UK, another 50000 studying in Singapore for British qualifications and more and more young Brits spending time at NUS or NTU or SMU as part of their studies. Or in defence and security, with a Singaporean regularly being selected as the top overseas student at our Staff Colleges and with four Royal Naval vessels visiting Singapore in the space of 12 months.

Yet while the relationship is strong, the potential is there for it to deepen further. And that is why our two Foreign Ministers, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and Jeremy Hunt, launched our new SG-UK Partnership for the Future on 4 January during the Foreign Secretary's recent visit to Singapore. Through this Partnership we can take our relationship to a new level. So while our shared history is rich – as I think we capture in this book – our shared future can be even brighter.

Thank you again to all of you for coming this evening. Thank you Minister. Thank you to the National Museum of Singapore for allowing us to use the facilities here. I feel it to be a particularly appropriate venue, not just because of the subject of the book but because my wife Anne has spent so many hours here as a docent, learning about Singapore's history and sharing her knowledge with others, Singaporeans and foreigners.

It's a happy coincidence that my parents are able to be here this evening and

in true Academy Awards fashion I want to thank them for their love and support. I'm very grateful to everyone at SPH, above all to our editor Kelly Pang, for their support for the project. Thank you to my colleagues from Eden Hall who have helped arrange this event but more generally for the High Commission and British interests in Singapore.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I say in my Foreword to the book, I was deeply honoured when Prof Koh made me an offer I couldn't refuse to co-edit this volume with him. Tommy, every one of my colleagues in the Diplomatic Corps has nothing but the greatest respect, admiration and affection for you as a legal scholar, an outstanding diplomat, and as a person. Honestly, it is one of the proudest moments of my professional life to see my name alongside yours on the cover of this book.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity. I hope you all enjoy the book.

[News story: Treasury backs British brewers with duty freeze](#)

- from today, taxes on beer, cider and spirits are frozen for another year, keeping costs down for industry and consumers alike
- alcohol duty cuts and freezes over the last six years have provided £4.4 billion of support to pubs and drinks industry
- a typical pint of beer is 14 pence cheaper than if taxes had risen in line with inflation

Beer lovers, brewers, and landlords alike can raise a toast today as Dry January comes to an end and alcohol duties are frozen for another year.

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, during a visit to an independent brewery in Liverpool, praised the contributions made by the British beer and drinks industry to the economy and communities, including local pubs.

Philip Hammond, Chancellor of Exchequer, said:

In recognition of the important contribution of British pubs and drinks makers to our communities, I have frozen taxes on beer, cider and spirits again this year.

These duties would have otherwise come into effect today but instead we're supporting an industry that employs 900,000 people across the UK. Whether it's local pubs, craft cider mills or independent distillers, this government is helping these businesses to thrive and ensuring they remain at the heart of our economy.

Previously announced in the 2018 Budget, the freeze will keep costs down for beer, cider and spirits, and builds on the numerous cuts and freezes to duty by the government since 2013. The move has saved the public an average of 14 pence on every pint of beer, 4 pence on a pint of cider and £1.50 on a bottle of Scotch whisky.

As well as the duty freeze, the Treasury also announced at Budget that it will be looking at the Small Brewers Relief to make sure the scheme continues to support the country's smallest beer makers, helping them to grow and expand into new markets. A survey asking small brewers for their views on the relief was launched this week.

Mike Benner, Chief Executive of Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), said:

The freeze in beer duty is good news for UK brewers, publicans and beer drinkers. A planned rise in line with inflation would have meant a £100 million hit to Britain's brewers. We will be toasting the Chancellor this week with a well-deserved pint.

Small Brewers Relief has been a great success in enabling the explosion in the number of craft breweries and the world-beating beer they brew. Positive reform is now required in order to ensure it continues to support a healthy and sustainable sector and this review will help to deliver that.

In addition to pubs, the duty freeze on cider will support the economies of British rural communities and help fuel investment and innovation in whisky and gin producers.

Keeping duty down will also help businesses to expand and take advantage of exporting opportunities and build on previous successes, such as Scotch whisky exports which totalled over £4 billion in 2017 and the current 'ginaissance' occurring in England.

[Speech: A Burkean moment for transport](#)

Thank you very much. It's a massive pleasure to be able to welcome all of you to this Transport Technology Innovation Showcase today.

I'd also like to welcome the [Government Office for Science](#) and of course the work they've done on this new [Foresight report](#).

This is a terrific document. It is a very interesting and thought-provoking and subtle piece of work, and I think it's going to make a big difference to how we think about mobility strategy in the years to come.

A new era in transport

The word "historic" is wildly over-used. But even so I think it is fair to say we are at a genuinely historic juncture for transport in this country.

We can think of the 19th century in terms of the coming of the railways and the astonishing social and economic and cultural changes which that created. And we can also think of the effects of the motor car in the 20th century and the changes that created.

But I want to suggest in the time-honoured fashion that we are on the cusp of something extraordinarily interesting, by way of a transport revolution for the 21st century.

As you will be aware, technology often has its inflection points. Sometimes change is slower than people think. The Boeing 737 is more than 50 years old, after all. But there are moments of disruptive change, and this is one of those moments.

It is not going to be dominated by a single invention or technological breakthrough.

Rather it is the way in which a series of new technologies come together in a great turbulent confluence and play off each other, and play off other social trends and economic incentives that I think will transform the way in which we travel, plan, use, pay for and operate transport.

Offering great opportunities for British business and industry to create new products, to conquer markets and ultimately to build economic value.

Learning lessons from the car

If we are going to do that, we've got to have foresight. But we've also got to have hindsight. We've got to learn from the past.

In the years after World War 2, Britain embraced the motor car as emphatically as it abandoned rail travel. Between 1945 and 1970 the number of cars on our roads rose nearly tenfold.

Cars were new, shiny and aspirational. For the British people, coming out of a wartime environment, filled with desire for the new and transformative, cars were everything that other modes of transport were not.

As cars became more affordable, people enjoyed previously unimaginable levels of freedom and independence.

They could live further from their place of work, consider jobs in other towns and cities, and still stay close to friends and family. In effect, cars created the suburbs and opened up the countryside.

For businesses, cars meant they could exploit a wider labour market. They could build offices at more accessible and affordable locations. They could

send their sales reps to meet clients face to face around the country.

In short, travel was democratised.

It's important to note that the triumph of the motor car didn't arise from any single public or private choice. It arose from countless smaller ones. No one, certainly not in government or outside, had more than a tenuous grasp on how exactly transport would evolve.

Or how the growth of motoring would affect our society and environment and our wellbeing.

The trends were noted in some quarters, but that doesn't seem to have counted for much during the 1950s when cars were flying out of the showroom at a time when Britain was the second largest manufacturer of cars in the world, behind only the United States.

These benefits were celebrated, and rightly so. But people were unaware of costs that only became apparent later.

Traffic congestion. Falling use of public transport. Falling use of active travel. Air pollution. Greenhouse gas emissions. Wider health effects, especially the spread of obesity. Greater social separation.

The point about separation really matters. As you will know, I am someone who thinks a lot about norms and values in people's lives as well as economics and politics. One of the worries I have is this: what does it do to an already individualistic society when someone is in a car in their own demarcated space surrounded by their personal area of control and not mixing with other people? Does it serve to encourage individualism, and if so what does that mean?

And of course this transition imposed huge externalities. Huge costs imposed on other people or other communities or other places, costs that were deferred or pushed onto others without any great recognition of what their effects might be.

So it's really important to maintain a sense of history, to continue to look backwards, and to reflect on previous lessons learned as we seek to do great things in the future.

Transport's wider impact

So the 20th century motoring boom left us with a mixed legacy – something in many ways to be excited about and proud of, but something that also contained real worries for the future.

But as we think now about the transport technologies of the future – electric cars, hydrogen power, autonomous vehicles, drones, the use of big data across the whole range of transport – we understand so much more about the complex interactions between transport and everything around it.

Yes, we have the same practical need to achieve greater mobility, as we did in the past. And yes we still want new technologies to provide us with fast, reliable, safe, affordable transport connections. These things haven't changed.

Only this time, we can be much more explicit and self-conscious about the moral and political choices that come with those decisions.

We are in a kind of Burkean moment. Burke talked about past, present and future, generations that have passed away, those that are living and still yet to come, society as an inheritance that we receive, that each generation must cherish, must improve and pass on to future generations.

This is a Burkean moment for transport. We need to work out what we think about that, why it matters, what the drivers of change are, and how we can build a consensus that can sustain itself over time. And this is a huge challenge. A challenge for us in government, but also a challenge for you, a challenge for everyone.

We will move, if we do it right, from siloed thinking to a more integrated approach – integrated in terms of technology, geography, economics, sociology and culture.

To think about mobility in a different way.

We will think of it in part as more of a service, but that's just one part of it. When we travel today we think about whole journeys, but now we can use technology to plan every part of that journey. When I came here today, I came on my bike – I'm a bike-o-holic – but I also took the tube. We think about passenger information and payment being merged together.

And when we do these things, we are seeing early signs of the future. We see mobility apps filling unused capacity, encouraging shared mobility, and reducing spikes in demand, so that we can all benefit from faster, more reliable journeys.

The key lesson remains, transport is not, and has never been, just about transport. It's about better connected cities, and better housing. It's about rural areas and rural connectivity. It's about loneliness, more inclusive communities and more productive businesses. It's about society and culture.

In government, we know that signing off a transport scheme today affects society in a vast number of different ways. This in turn raises questions of accountability, not just for use of public money but for the future – and whether we have thought about future generations and the impact of our choices. And it raises questions of how we support innovation – one of the things very close to the heart of people here.

We've already placed some significant limits on the use of internal combustion engines in transport, to control its harmful side effects. Now we have to decide what we want from emerging vehicle technologies.

What balance do we seek? What do we want in the way of efficiency? What do we

want in the way of fairness? What do we want in the way of inclusivity?

How can we use policymaking to support wider goals of clean air, higher productivity, and more sustainable economic growth? And how do we bring these new technologies to market?

Foresight and government FOM strategy

That's the wider context in which this Foresight report is being launched. Foresight is a difficult thing to gain. Any help one can have in this area is important—to gain a foundation of understanding and evidence to inform our decisions and anticipate future trends.

Thinking about the impact of change on different parts of society, younger people and old. Thinking about the economics of electric vehicles.

Thinking about the changing cost of manufacturing, purchasing, running, repairing battery operated cars. All the things that it will mean for car owners, the motor trade, and those around them.

These three foresight scenarios are a really helpful way of helping us look at the different trade-offs and the agendas that could potentially dominate the public discussion.

Of course we intend to use the report, and indeed we will use it, as we reflect further on the [Industrial Strategy](#) we've launched. That strategy is an attempt to become self-conscious in some of the ways I've described today—about where we place our bets, and what we're trying to achieve.

Some countries claim not to have an industrial strategy. But believe me, any one who says that has a strategy -they just don't know it.

In the UK, we are investing nearly £1.5 billion between 2015 and 2021 to support the growth of ultra low emission vehicles. But we have also spent £250 million up to 2021 to support more than 200 companies and research organisations developing technology for autonomous vehicles.

Because we want to build that next generation, next century research base. And our new Future of Urban Mobility Strategy which will come out in the next few weeks will do that from the point of view of cities.

Investment

But one thing that is really exciting to me – I come from a family of entrepreneurs – is to look at the different companies that are actually driving the change.

The car platforms which have historically been dominated by huge manufacturers are suddenly opening up. They are becoming platforms for technology on which smaller players, more entrepreneurial, more energetic players, can make a difference using better technology and communications.

We've seen some fantastic examples of that just recently at the [Future Aviation Security Solutions](#) event last week. At today's innovation showcase you'll see some of that innovation and energy at work, and it is profoundly exciting.

The [Transport Technology Research Innovation Grant](#), and [Innovation Challenge Fund](#) have made a big difference in this area. We have funded 146 projects over the past five years.

More than half of T-TRIG awardees have entered into subsequent collaborations, and raised over £25 million extra from the private sector and other funding sources. Not huge numbers, but a very useful start.

For example, Tevva Trucks developed a system which allows diesel HGVs to switch to electric running in emission-controlled areas—a system which has secured a £12 million investment for Tevva from India.

Other [beneficiaries of early DfT funding include Wayfindr](#) – a charity which has developed an indoor navigation technology for the visually impaired.

And of course [e-cargo bikes](#). We're already thinking about how we can support and fund the growth of e-cargo bikes and a much greener and higher quality last mile.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, we have no time to lose. The pace of technology change can be very quick.

The first main passenger rail line between Manchester and Liverpool was opened in 1830. But it took just 30 years to complete the whole of the rest of the British rail network—10,000 miles of rail track built right across the nation, in just three decades.

Yes there was cut-throat competition and a certain amount of skulduggery. But there was also huge energy and creativity, and the great transport challenge we face is also going to be about creativity and energy, as well as nimbleness, imagination and technology.

So I am delighted not just to welcome you today, but to thank Foresight for the fantastic work that they've done. If we think about it hard, and we do it well, we can transform mobility in this country.

Thank you very much.

News story: Independent Venue Week joins UK Government in fight against ticket rogues

Music venues across the nation are hosting a number of gigs which will give fans the opportunity to see, and maybe meet, their favourite artists and discover new musicians at affordable prices.

The majority of venues taking part in the week-long celebration are selling tickets through reputable online companies and for any resales, through sites that encourage fan-to-fan resale so tickets are sold on at the original value or lower.

Statistics from UK Music estimate that:

- nearly 300,000 people enjoyed Northern Ireland's vibrant music scene in 2016 and the sector contributes more than £88 million to the local economy
- over 2.5 million people enjoyed Scotland's vibrant music scene in 2017 and the sector contributes more than £111 million to the local economy
- over 1.1 million people enjoyed Wales' vibrant music scene in 2017 and the sector contributes more than £60 million to the local economy

This follows work by UK Government to strengthen the existing ticketing information requirement in the Consumer Rights Act 2015, and introduce a new criminal offence of using automated software to buy more tickets online than that allowed.

Minister for the Creative Industries, Margot James, said:

Northern Ireland has produced great music talent including Van Morrison and Snow Patrol – and for its music scene to continue to thrive, it's vital that fans are able to see their favourite acts at fair prices.

Scotland boasts a rich musical heritage, it is the birthplace of KT Tunstall, Calvin Harris and Annie Lennox.

Known to many as the 'land of song', Wales is rightly renowned worldwide for its musical heritage and iconic performers, including Tom Jones and the Manic Street Preachers. It is great to see initiatives like Independent Venue Week helping to promote the next generation of Welsh musicians while championing ethical ticket companies.

I'm pleased that Independent Venue Week is supporting the UK Government's work to stop fans being ripped off. We have already introduced a new criminal offence to ban the use of automated

software that buys up lots of tickets and sells them on at inflated prices.

By working with the music industry, together we can ensure that thousands of people who enjoy gigs right across the nation are protected from ticket touts.

Founder of Independent Venue Week, Sybil Bell, said:

The wonderful thing about seeing an artist in a smaller venue is you get to enjoy the feeling of discovering a brilliant new artist at the same time as supporting a local business.

Ticket prices are more affordable than the bigger shows bands play when they have grown which means the small venues are accessible to more people. Gig goers who support these venues help them keep these cultural hubs alive and give artists the platform they need to learn their craft.

The Competition and Markets Authority is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the Advertising Standards Authority has acted to clamp down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

Independent Venue Week is a great way to showcase Scotland's vibrant live music scene while protecting gig-goers from being ripped off by ticket touts.

Scotland's economy receives a huge boost from locals and tourists alike packing out small venues to listen to a diverse range of artists.

I want more people to be able to enjoy Scotland's music scene at a fair price. Initiatives like Independent Venue Week and the UK Government's crackdown on touts will hit the right note with music lovers across the nation.

The Competition and Markets Authority is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the Advertising Standards Authority has acted to clamp down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

UK Government Minister for Wales Nigel Adams said:

Wales has a diverse music scene which is enriched by artists performing both in Welsh and English across a whole spectrum of

genres.

Independent Venue Week will give fans a flavour of exciting new talent whilst promoting ethical ticketing practice meaning that artists, venues and fans all benefit.

The [Competition and Markets Authority](#) is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, whilst the [Advertising Standards Authority](#) has acted to clamp down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

Notes to editors

[Further information on Independent Venue Week.](#)

Further Information on gigs taking place in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

Watch a [clip](#) of Independent Venue Week's documentary which explores the world of independent music venues.

UK Government has strengthened the existing ticketing information requirement in the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and have introduced a new criminal offence of using automated software to buy more tickets online than that allowed.

We support the work of enforcement agencies in this area, such as the Competition and Markets Authority, National Trading Standards, and the advertising industry's own regulator the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

We also welcome the increasing adoption by industry of technological solutions such as blockchain and mobile 'ticket-less tickets', and agree with Professor Waterson in his latest report that this is likely to bring about the greatest change in the ticketing market in the future, with the potential to significantly restrict the ability of touts to distort the market.

[Press release: Government announces new plans to protect treasure finds](#)

- Changes would ensure more outstanding artefacts are acquired by museums for public display
- Consultation comes after record breaking number of discoveries in 2017

Plans to [widen the definition of treasure](#) so more archaeological finds can be protected for the nation have been outlined by the government today.

Heritage Minister Michael Ellis announced proposals that would allow more artefacts to be acquired by local and national museums and put on public display.

Under the plans, the definition will be changed so that finds worth more than £10,000 will be considered treasure and made available for acquisition by museums.

Currently artefacts over 300 years old, made of gold or silver or found with artefacts made of precious metals where an owner cannot be found, can be officially designated as treasure, and therefore become the property of the Crown. Treasure is then offered to local or national museums for public display.

Each year, dozens of items of national importance are believed to be lost to private sellers because they do not meet the treasure criteria or are sold by those who do not declare the find.

These include the 1,700 year old Roman era Crosby Garrett helmet that was found by a metal detectorist in 2010. Despite its archaeological importance, because the helmet was made of a copper alloy it did not meet the treasure criteria and was sold to a private collector for £2.3 million.

The proposals are to be [consulted](#) on and aim to clarify, improve and streamline the process for reporting treasure to ensure that museums can continue to acquire important finds for the nation.

There are currently no sanctions on someone who knowingly buys an unreported find and the growth in online markets has given opportunistic finders an outlet to sell unreported finds under the radar. The changes will also mean that the duty to report treasure will be extended to those acquiring it.

The measures would be the first major changes since the Treasure Act came into effect more than 20 years ago.

Heritage Minister Michael Ellis said:

The search for buried treasure has captivated people's imagination for centuries. And in recent years the number of finds has continued to increase.

However some outstanding artefacts of great archaeological and cultural importance have been lost to private sellers simply because they do not meet the current criteria for treasure.

These new proposals will help our museums acquire these treasures and make it harder for nationally important finds to be sold for personal profit.

More items than ever are being discovered by treasure seekers across England, Wales and Northern Ireland with the number of finds increasing by over 1,500%

since 1996.

The latest figures show that 2017 was a record-breaking year for treasure finds with a total of 1,267 items unearthed, including ancient Roman statues, Bronze Age rings and a Stuart pocket watch.

In the last 20 years, 13,000 finds have gone through the treasure process. Of these, over 30% are now in museums and can be enjoyed by millions of people each year.

Notes to editors

- [Full details of the consultation.](#)
- Since the medieval period, the law of treasure trove determined the future of objects of gold and silver that had been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery. Where an owner or heir could not be identified, they became property of the crown. From the early 20th century it became common practice for the Government to reward the finder if the item was acquired by a museum.
- In 1997, the Treasure Act 1996 superseded this common treasure trove law and widened and clarified the definition of treasure. The Act gave the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport responsibility for the treasure process and retained the duty of the coroner to investigate possible treasure finds.
- Under the Act, finders have a legal obligation to report finds to the local coroner. Where a coroner declares an object treasure, it then becomes property of the Crown and is offered to museums. If the find is acquired by a museum, the finder and the landowner are eligible for a reward. This process is administered by the British Museum.

Image: Anglo-Saxon pendant (650-700), Unknown maker, [Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery](#)