



## A Country Shaped By Travel

Whether it is to trade, to work, or to socialise, humans have always needed to travel from place to place. Let's see how the changes in transport have shaped the British landscape and people's lives.

### *On foot*

For thousands of years, if you wanted to get somewhere, you had to walk, or, if you were lucky, go by horse. Our countryside is criss-crossed with ancient footpaths traversed by traders, armies, pilgrims or visitors. They are a map of the way places and people were connected. Nowadays, these paths are mainly used for leisure. In Scotland, the 'right to roam' is protected by law. People are free to explore open countryside as long as they follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. However, in the rest of the UK, there are restrictions on people's access to the countryside. The public only have access to about 8% of land in England.

### *Canals*

Although the earliest canals were built by the Romans, the real surge in British canal building happened during the Industrial Revolution. Canals were a way of transporting large amounts of heavy goods around the country as well as providing a constant supply of coal to the industrial centres. Thousands of miles of canals were built by wealthy investors and businessmen. Cities grew and prospered and many people moved from the countryside to the cities. By 1901, around three quarters of the population lived in urban areas. The cities have outlasted the canal industry though. Improved roads and the age of the railways led to the canals falling out of favour. Nowadays, canals are mostly used for leisure and recreation.

### *Railways*

Steam locomotives went from being a novelty to being a widely-used means of transport in the early part of the 19th century. By 1920, there were around 20,000 miles of railway and 2,186 million passenger journeys. However, what followed was a gradual decline in rail usage and railways. In the 1960s, the railways were cut back to try to save money. Roughly 5000 miles of railway and 2300 stations were



closed mostly in rural areas. This caused many communities to lose their connections. In modern times, there is renewed interest in rail. The controversial HS2 project aims to create fast links across the UK. However, the budget is spiralling and many people are worried about the impact the works are having on the environment. The fight over the future of rail goes on.

### *By road*

In the UK today, the car is king. Around 6 in every 10 journeys in England are made by car and there are over 30 million cars on the roads. The first motorway was built in 1959 and there are now 2300 miles of motorway in Great Britain and 247,500 miles of road altogether. However, the convenience of road travel has its costs. The environmental impact of cars is now well-known and the move to electric vehicles is underway. But there are other concerns: cities are congested and dangerous and people are less physically active. Many cities are now trying to find ways to encourage walking and public transport use again.

## FOCUS

1. What does 'traversed' mean?
2. What does the word 'surge' suggest about the growth of canal building during the Industrial Revolution?
3. What word means 'got richer and more successful'?
4. What are 'rural areas'?
5. What word means blocked, crowded and busy?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**R**

What is 'the right to roam'?

**S**

How did canals change Britain and British life?

**S**

Summarise the changing fortunes of rail travel.

**R**

How many miles of road are there in Great Britain?

**P**

How might travel change in future? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.



## Charles Rennie Mackintosh

On 15 June 2018, residents and art-lovers watched in horror as a fire engulfed the Glasgow School of Art in the heart of Scotland's largest city. The fire came four years after an earlier blaze had almost destroyed it. An enormous fundraising effort had allowed for work to start on restoring the treasured building only for the second fire to rip through again causing catastrophic damage. Any fire is horrific but this building held a special place in this city: it had been designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, one of the finest British artists and architects. His designs are part of what gives Glasgow its identity.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh was born in Glasgow on 7th June 1868 and grew up as one of eleven children. During his lifetime, Glasgow was a booming industrial centre. Glasgow sits on the River Clyde and had a prospering shipbuilding industry. As the city thrived, artists and designers such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh benefited too and the city developed a vibrant art scene.

Charles was artistic from a young age: he used drawing and painting as a way to express himself and had a special interest in drawing plants and flowers. From aged 15, he studied at the Glasgow School of Art and also became an apprentice to a local architect called John Hutchinson. After completing his apprenticeship, he got a job as an architect and began developing his own style of architecture and interior design. Charles, his wife Margaret Macdonald and two other artists became known as 'The Four' and helped develop the 'Glasgow Style'. This was an Art Nouveau style with influences from Celtic symbols and Japanese design. It is based around simple lines and shapes, creating stylised (rather than realistic) images. Charles Rennie Mackintosh drew upon his early love of plants and created flower and plant designs that can be found in a lot of his work.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh worked on buildings around the city of Glasgow. One example is the Willow Tea Rooms which fans of his work still visit today. Mackintosh designed this premises for Miss Cranston in 1903 and he was given the freedom to



throw all of his creativity into it. The result is that it is jam-packed with sumptuous décor, whimsical murals and distinctive furniture such as Mackintosh's high-backed chairs. He worked on The Glasgow School of Art for many years and it was opened in 1909. However, the design was credited to his employer and he was only mentioned as assisting on the project.

Charles left Glasgow in 1914. He initially moved to rural Suffolk but he was not accepted there and was forced to move, first to London and then to France. Charles continued to draw and paint but his time as an architect was over. He returned to London for medical treatment and died there in 1928, reportedly with a pencil in his hand. Although his work went out of fashion for many years, it is now celebrated again. The hope is that The Glasgow School of Art will be rebuilt faithfully in its original style following the latest fire. Glasgow is not ready to give up on one of their Mackintosh treasures.

## RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. What important industry made Glasgow wealthy?
2. What influenced Mackintosh's style?
3. Who did Mackintosh marry?
4. When was the Willow Tea Rooms built and for whom?
5. Where did Mackintosh die?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**E**

How does the writer capture the force of the fire in The Glasgow School of Art?

**V**

What does 'booming' mean in this context?

**V**

What word is closest in meaning to luxurious?

**V**

What does 'whimsical' suggest about the murals in the Willows Tea Room?

**I**

What evidence is there to suggest that Mackintosh was not celebrated during his lifetime?



## Four Nations In One

The UK, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to give it its full name, is a union between four countries each with its own characteristics and national identity.

### *England*

England makes up more than half of the area of the United Kingdom, has 8 out of 10 of the UK's largest cities and nearly 85% of its population. More people live in London than in all of Scotland. London is the political centre of the country as well as a global city and economic powerhouse. It is also a diverse city which attracts people from all around the world either to visit or to work and settle. Away from London, some of the other English regions have suffered due to the decline of traditional industries such as mining or fishing. On the other hand, some of these areas boast great natural beauty. England has rolling countryside rising to hills and mountains in the north such as in the Lake District and the Pennines. It has a long coastline with many beaches, cliffs and fishing villages.

### *Wales*

Wales may be small but it has a strong national identity and has kept Welsh as a national language alongside English. Cardiff, the capital city, gained its wealth from mining in the surrounding valleys. However, when the mining industry went into decline, these areas suffered from unemployment. The natural landscape has however led to a growing tourism industry. Visitors seek out the national parks and the stunning coasts. Wales has its own parliament giving it autonomy in some areas.

### *Scotland*

To the north of England lies Scotland. Scotland has the second highest population but the lowest population density of all of the four nations. That means that there are relatively few inhabitants relative to its size. The capital of Scotland is Edinburgh, a stunning historic city built on a dormant volcano. However, the largest city is Glasgow, which grew as a centre of shipbuilding. Scotland though is most famous for its wild places. From rugged, remote mountainsides to heather-clad moors and picturesque islands with white sandy beaches, Scotland has it all (if not always the weather).



Since 1999, Scotland has had its own parliament and the right to set some of its own laws. Though this has allowed greater independence, there are some who wish it went even further.

## *Northern Ireland*

Northern Ireland, with Belfast as its capital, was created when Ireland was partitioned in 1921 and is the smallest of the four nations in both population and area. The Northern part, which was mainly protestant and unionist (in favour of the union with the rest of the UK) stayed as part of the UK whilst the rest of Ireland became a free state and later the Republic of Ireland. This partition involved lots of unrest. This went on for many years resulting in a conflict known as 'The Troubles'. Northern Ireland's fortunes improved with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 marking an end to the worst of the fighting and its rich culture and arts scene has been able to flourish.

### VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. What does the phrase 'economic powerhouse' mean?
2. Which word in the section on Wales means 'freedom to make decisions'?
3. Find a word that means distant or faraway from everything else.
4. What does rugged mean?
5. What does 'unrest' tell us about what happened when Ireland was split in two?

### VIPERS QUESTIONS

**R**

What is the largest city in Scotland?

**R**

When did Scotland get its own parliament?

**E**

What is the writer's opinion of Scotland? How do you know?

**R**

What was the name of the agreement that ended the violence in Northern Ireland?

**S**

Put the four nations in order of population size from biggest to smallest.



## The River Severn

At 220 miles (354km) long, the River Severn (or Afon Hafren as it is called in Welsh) is the longest river in the UK. It starts its journey as not much more than a series of puddles in a peat bog in the Welsh Cambrian mountains. The frequent rain saturates the land and then pools and trickles over it. Eventually, these unpromising-looking trickles gather together into something that starts to resemble a stream. It begins to find a way downhill through the conifers of the Hafren Forest. It meanders around obstacles to find the easiest path, moving quickly and eroding a way forward for itself. The stream forms waterfalls where the soft rock is worn away leaving harder rock that the stream gushes over.

As the river becomes larger, it begins to pass by towns and villages. Near Llanidloes, one of the Severn's tributaries (a smaller river joining a larger one) is regulated by a dam which was built between 1965-1967. It helps stop flooding further up the river in the winter whilst keeping the water flowing during the summer. It can hold up to the equivalent of 550 million bath tubs of water. It is also habitat for fish and birds: red kites and buzzards are frequent visitors.

As the river crosses the border with England, it widens and slows. It loops around Shrewsbury in Shropshire. Because of its position close to the Welsh border, this town saw lots of skirmishes between the Welsh and English. It's more peaceful these days and the river is a popular place to relax. However, flooding can be a problem because of the way the town is almost circled by the river. The town has had to install flood defences to help it avoid the worst of the damage.

The river swings south as it establishes itself in England. It flows through a gorge at Ironbridge. Ironbridge is named after the bridge that was built over the Severn in 1779 - the first iron bridge in the world. It is sometimes called the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. During this period, traditional manufacturing, which relied on making things by hand, was replaced with efficient machines and new techniques. This





revolution in manufacturing changed life in Britain in a lot of ways. People moved to the towns and cities to take up jobs in factories and workshops and the wealth of the country increased.

After passing Bridgenorth, Bewdley and the city of Worcester, the river is joined by the River Avon at Tewkesbury. It then carries on to Gloucester where there is a canal which once allowed larger vessels to access the ports in Gloucester and connected the city with foreign trade. At Gloucester, the River Severn becomes tidal. It becomes known as the Severn Estuary. There are some discussions about ways that the powerful tides that sweep in and out of the estuary each day could be harnessed to generate electricity. The tiny trickle of water has become a mighty force. The River Severn ends its journey by pouring out into the Bristol Channel between England and Wales.

## RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. What is the Welsh name for the River Severn?
2. Where does the Severn originate?
3. What is used to help control the flow of the River Severn?
4. When was the famous bridge in Ironbridge constructed?
5. What tributary joins the River Severn at Tewkesbury?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**V**

Which word means soaked?

**V**

What does 'resembles' mean?

**V**

What are 'skirmishes'?

**S**

Put these places along the River Severn in order: Ironbridge, Bridgenorth, Gloucester, The Hafren Forest. Shrewsbury, Llanidloes.

**E**

What words has the writer chosen to capture the size of the Severn Estuary?





## Who's In Charge?

The UK has a complicated political system with various layers of power and decision-making. So who is actually in charge of the country and how does it all work?

### *The Monarch?*

The UK is a monarchy, meaning that the reigning king or queen is the head of state. Despite the grand title, the monarch has fairly limited authority and their role is largely ceremonial. They represent the country as a figurehead. This could include hosting important foreign guests or attending events to represent the nation. The monarch also has a symbolic role in parliament and in theory has to give their approval for new laws. However, none of the decisions are actually theirs to make and the monarch has not refused to approve a new law in over 300 years. It's not all bad news though: the crown does own all swans, dolphins and whales in British waters!

### *The Prime Minister?*

The Prime Minister (PM) is the leader of the government and he or she decides on government policy – the plans that the government will aim to implement. They appoint ministers who will then be responsible for a particular department such as defence or transport under their leadership. The exception is that some areas of governance are now 'devolved'. This means that there are now elected bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who have their own powers to make decisions in key areas such as education or health. Moreover, some matters are decided at a local level by an elected local council or parish council.

The prime minister's power to make decisions for the nation rests on the fact that they are the leader of the biggest party. This is called holding a 'majority'. In theory therefore, the PM can depend on their MP's support in bringing in the laws they want. However, their power can be fragile. If the government has a 'slim' majority (they only



have a few more MPs than a rival party), they may have difficulty getting the votes they need to pass their laws through parliament. If they lose the support of MPs in their own party, they could find themselves in the difficult position of having their plans repeatedly turned down.

## *The Electorate?*

Ultimately, the PM only has power as long as the electorate (the British people eligible to vote) choose to vote for their party. At an election, voters choose the MP who they feel will best represent them. Each MP belongs to a political party. The candidate with the most votes in each constituency is elected to parliament and is meant to represent the views of the people in that area. The leader of the party which has the most MPs is then the Prime Minister. As such, in a democracy (such as the UK), the people have the power, at least once every five years, to decide who sits in parliament and runs the country.

### SUMMARY FOCUS

1. Summarise the role of the monarch.
2. How is the prime minister of the UK chosen?
3. Summarise in your own words what a 'slim majority' is and why it might cause problems to a prime minister.
4. Who do you think is in charge of the UK? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

### VIPERS QUESTIONS

**I**

What evidence is there that the monarch doesn't interfere with politics?

**V**

Find a word in the section on the Prime Minister which means 'carry out'.

**V**

What does appoint mean?

**I**

What evidence is there to suggest that MPs aren't always loyal to their party?

**R**

How often are elections held in the UK?

### Answers - A Country Shaped By Travel:

1. Travel over or through
2. It grew very quickly and suddenly
3. Prospered
4. Areas away from towns and cities. Countryside.
5. Congested.

R: The law in Scotland that allows people to explore the countryside freely.

S: Cities grew and got richer. Lots of people moved from the country to the city.

S: Trains were at first not taken seriously (a novelty), then they became popular in the 19th century. In the 20th century they started to be used less and lots of railways were closed. Now new railways are being built again.

R: 247,500 miles

P: Various answers likely to reference the challenges of private cars and moving to more environmental transport and/or more active travel.

Answers - Charles Rennie Mackintosh:

1. Shipbuilding
2. Celtic and Japanese art and design. (Also accept flowers/plants).
3. Margaret Macdonald
4. 1903, Miss Cranston
5. London

E: The use of word 'engulf' which makes it sound as if the fire swept through and overwhelmed the building; 'rip through' suggests the fire was fast and powerful; the description of people's horror also suggests that this was a big fire, the damage described as catastrophic.

V: The city was growing and becoming very successful.

V: sumptuous

V: Playful, strange, fanciful, imaginative

I: He was not credited for his work on The Glasgow School of Art, he was not accepted in Suffolk, his work was out of fashion.



Answers - Four Nations In One:

1. It has a lot of money, influence and power.
2. Autonomy
3. Remote
4. It is wild, rocky, hard to travel over, uneven.
5. It was not peaceful. There were disagreements and fighting.

R: Glasgow

R:1999

E: The writer thinks highly of Scotland. She describes Edinburgh as stunning, calls the beaches 'picturesque' and refers to Scotland having it all. The only thing she doesn't like is the weather.

R: The Good Friday Agreement

S: England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland.

Answers - The River Severn:

1. Afon Hafren
2. In the Cambrian Mountains in Wales
3. A dam
4. 1779
5. The River Avon

V: saturated

V: looks like

V: fighting, battling

S: The Hafren Forest, Llanidloes, Shrewsbury, Ironbridge, Bridgenorth, Gloucester

E: powerful tides, sweep, harnessed, mighty force, pouring

#### Answers - Who's In Charge:

1. The monarch represents the country, host foreign visitors and attend events. They approve new laws.
2. The electorate vote for who will represent them in parliament. These MPs belong to a political party. The leader of the party with the most MPs is the prime minister.
3. A slim majority is when the party that is leading the country only has a few more MPs than the opposing party. It means they might find it hard to get their laws agreed, especially if some of the MPs in their own party stop supporting them.
4. Various answers with evidence from the text.

I: The monarch hasn't refused approval for a law in over 300 years.

V: Implement

V: Give a job or role to someone

I: They don't always support the prime minister's laws. They sometimes turn them down. (Also accept reference to them representing the voters not the PM).

R: At Least every 5 years.