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The future is another country

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Summary:

More and more people hanker to move abroad. A 2006 BBC survey found that 13 per cent of 1,000

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Article Body:

It's grey and chilly. Throngs of thirty and forty somethings lumber through the drizzle to an

I join the queue of visitors who are eager to discover how to clinch the golden ticket: an Aus

At Emigrate, points win prizes. Later in the day, at stalls dotted around the fair, there are

Now, after admitting large numbers of Chinese and Indian scissor-hands, hairdressers are no lo

Myths about points swirl around the show. To demonstrate the abundant migration misinformation

The victim says confidently that he is an engineer, aware Australia is desperate for them. "Do

The volunteer's face falls. The presenter looks vindicated: "My main message is: don't assume

Registering the wavering mood in the audience, he attempts to gee them up: "It's worth going t

To keep wannabe migrants' eyes fixed on the prize, we are introduced by video link-ups to Brit

It's a gold rush for the emigration industry. The Office for National Statistics' figures show

More and more people hanker to move abroad. A 2006 BBC survey found that 13 per cent of 1,000

Yet the British press and politicians have been so mesmerised by the rising number of non-Brit

Of course, emigrating Brits are nothing new. At the height of its imperial power in the 19th c

Professor Tim Hatton, a labour market economist from Essex University, estimates the annual em

Even today, according to Jim Hammerton, emeritus professor at Melbourne's La Trobe University,

A couple at the Emigrate fair support Professor Hammerton's observation. The woman, in her lat

Brits are departing their home country in greater numbers than the French or Americans.

The Institute for Public Policy Research estimated that 5.5m British nationals, or just over 9

Yet even the French eclipse the Americans: the OECD finds 1.2m US-born citizens, out of a popu

While the legacy of empire has provided Brits with some choice destinations, this alone can't

If Brits, as Sriskandarajah says, do have a wider view of the world, then cheap travel and imp

In fact, for many middle-class families across the world, living abroad is a rite of passage,

Dr Sam Scott, a lecturer in social geography at Liverpool University who has researched Europe

The pursuit of this badge of distinction increases the likelihood of accidental migration, which is a problem for many people. How, for example, to define Ian Corfield? He is a 35-year-old chief executive of Bank West's London office. For the moment they're keeping their London house but think they might sell up and make Australia their home. I ask Paul Beasley, editor of Emigrate, a magazine offering migration news and advice, why so many people are migrating. Indeed, everyone I speak to at the fair raises the issue. At one stand, I ask what I could buy in Australia. Foreign homes allow us to experiment with migration. A survey by Barclays bank showed that 35% of British professionals on overseas postings and Brits in possession of foreign properties are making Britain their home. Prof Hammerton also says that migrants are both more wealthy and skilled than was the case in the past. However, if some Brits are migrating by accident after relaxing in their Provence holiday home, it's not always by choice. Some of the would-be emigrants say they are fed up with Britain's "uncontrolled immigration". The Elstons, a couple in their 30s from Nottingham, have been thinking of moving to Australia. According to Paul Beasley, Gordon Brown's decision not to call an election until 2009 might encourage more people to migrate. But talk around the fair isn't just of policy and property. People at Emigrate speak of their frustration with life in Britain. Beasley sums it up: "People just feel that life in Britain is becoming more stressful, more difficult." I talk to Paul, a 43-year-old graphic designer who is planning to move to Australia with his wife. Paul's remarks appear to confirm Prof Hammerton's verdict that the "migration of prosperity" has become a trend. Stress has become a "virulent epidemic" in British society, according to David Wainwright and others. Some people I met at the fair lusted for adventure but most were fed up and desperate for sunshine.

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