

[Standing up for Scotland: Fighting for progressive change at Westminster](#)

In the last Westminster Parliament, SNP MPs passed the first ever SNP [Private Members Bill](#) – aimed at combating violence against women and domestic violence.

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[Help GB Work Well case study highlights ISTR's new research for working with arthropods](#)

As we near the end of British Science Week, we're sharing how the Institute of Safety in Technology and Research's (ISTR) commitment to managing risk and keeping pace with change as part of their contribution to Help GB Work Well, has led to the delivery of internationally-significant research.

A collaborative project between research scientists and the Institute has produced the first industry guidance on working safely with a variety of insect vectors of disease as well as genetically modified (GM) insects.

Following the rise in emerging and re-emerging infections including Zika, Bluetongue and West Nile, there has been a surge in research into the causes and carriers of these diseases. Due to the impact on public health, the economy and animal health and welfare, understanding these diseases has become both a national and international priority.

The need for a common approach to the management, design and operation of UK research facilities was identified by the |Institutes members who raised the issue with the Biosafety Steering Group (BSG). Previous guidance focussed on the requirements of biosafety legislation regarding work with infected animals, but there was no comprehensive or specific guidance available for working safely with infected arthropods.

Given the specialist nature of the work, and following discussions with HSE, it was agreed that the need could be addressed by preparing guidance to supplement and complement the official guidance available and to provide practical guidance for the community.

The project involved a range of different research organisations, biosafety specialists and research scientists from the public and private sectors.

The new guidance includes a range of good practice approaches to containment and control and is based on the real-life experience of those working in these facilities and formalises this in a way so that others can learn and benefit from them.

Acknowledging that there is more than one way to achieve safe working is a key message and means that the guidance can meet the needs of a broad range of users while ensuring work is managed safely and facilitating the delivery of research of national and international importance. The aim of the Institute is to enhance the knowledge, competence and professional development of its members. The Institutes Biosafety Steering Group represents the interests of UK biosafety nationally and internationally.

Making a commitment to Helping Great Britain Work Well demonstrates the willingness of the Institute's members to share their personal knowledge, skills and experience both among the membership and with academic and scientific colleagues.

Indicative programme – Foreign Affairs Council of 19 March 2018

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Friends of Wighton – latest update

With thanks to Sheena Wellington, here's the latest update from Friends of Wighton :

Wighton Heritage Centre, Central Library

Saturday 17th March, 11am (doors open at 10.30am)

Cappuccino Concert with Heather Innes, singer, & Kate Kramer, fiddler



Heather's forte is unaccompanied song and she sings with great feeling and delicacy in her fine clear voice. Her singing has been described as peaceful and calming to listen to and her solo concerts sheer relaxation after a hard day at the office!

Heather began singing professionally in 1990 after performing as the resident singer at the Sunflower Folk Club in Belfast for several years and recording her first album *All's Fair in Love and War* at Spring Records, Rostrevor, Northern Ireland in 1989.

In 1990 she moved to Scotland and toured folk clubs and pubs in Scotland and Ireland in duo Donegal Folk Weave (later to become Irish gaelic band *Dúlamán*) and gigged solo as an a capella singer and with various backing musicians for six years in Scottish and English folk clubs and festivals.

Since then she's toured with various bands and duos in the UK, Australia, Thailand, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Canada and USA.

Accompanying Heather will be Kentucky born fiddle player Kate Kramer. Kate has been a familiar and highly respected player on the Scottish scene for more than 20 years, working both as a solo musician and in various line-ups including the band *Arran Bede* with Ciaran Dorris. She toured extensively with the legendary folk musician, wit and raconteur Hamish Imlach and features on his album *"More & Merrier"*.

Admission £5 – tea/coffee available for small donation.

The tax revenue pours in – but not from all taxes

Mr Osborne's policy of cutting the budget deficit always relied primarily on a big boost to tax revenues. That is also the policy of his successor, Mr Hammond. Total tax revenue of £604bn in 2014-15 is expected to rise to £699bn in 2017-18. By 2022-23 they want to be taking £815bn from us. In 2009-10, the last Labour year, they collected just £476.4bn. Tax revenue in 2017-18 will be a massive 47% higher.

They expect Capital Gains tax receipts, Stamp duty on shares and self assessment Income tax to fall in 2017-18. The main gains in 2017-18 are forecast to come from National Insurance and environmental levies assisted by PAYE Income Tax and VAT. There is a substantial reduction in forecast for all years for Capital Gains Tax, reaching a £2.3bn fall in 2022-23. Capital Gains will bring in not much more than in the last Labour year before the crash, when rates were lower. There is a reduction in the Stamp Duty land tax forecast revenue in every year as well, reaching a £0.6bn cut in 2022-23.

This is no surprise. The Treasury underestimates how sensitive to the rate of tax these sources of revenue are. Rich people who pay much of the CGT and all of the top end Stamp Duty do not have to undertake a transaction, and are clearly in many cases not doing so because they do not intend to pay the combined high CGT and Stamp Duty charge. The higher rates of Stamp Duty and the maintained higher rate of CGT on property have brought about a substantial reduction in higher priced property turnover, hitting the revenues.

If you want to follow a higher tax revenue strategy on this scale successfully it is important to fix rates that maximise the revenue from each tax source. The Treasury is still struggling with finding out that revenue maximising rates are lower than they think.