

## THE STATE OF THE NATION – 2000

During the last years of the millennium there seemed to be plenty of evidence to support the view that the world was heading for an apocalypse. There were wars, earthquakes and other natural disasters, tragic accidents, bombings and murders aplenty. The atrocities in Kosovo, closest to home, stunned the world. However, even this dark news was offset by a general buoyancy in British life. The country was entering the new millennium with a stronger economy and more optimistic attitudes than seen for many-a-year. GDP rose consistently during the 90's driven by strong growth in productivity second only to the USA.



Strongest growth was recorded in Distribution Services, Business Services, Electrical, Machinery, Post, Communications and Financial Services. Overall growth in GDP per Capita was better than any other G6 country. Unemployment at 5.56% was the lowest it had been for a decade and there was generally more money in people's pockets.

There were also constitutional changes giving people more say and sharpening the democratic process. Both Scotland and Wales acquired a Parliament of their own and finally hereditary peers bowed out of the House of Lords.

By the end of 1999 everybody was therefore ready for celebration as they approached the start of a new era; and some celebration it turned out to be. The British know how to let their hair down and enjoy a good time. The nation partied. Even the fear of the dreaded

'millennium 'bug' which threatened to destroy computers could not stay their joy of the occasion. The skies were ablaze with fireworks and rivers of alcohol flowed freely.

