

Beenham Wind Orchestra sounds great after 20 years

The 20th anniversary concert by the Beenham Wind Orchestra last night was tremendous entertainment. From the first bars of Sparke's Yorkshire Overture to the final chords of John Williams the orchestra sustained a great sound and showed their enthusiasm for the music they make.

The Suite of English folk songs was particularly fine, with the subtle and haunting melodies of Nonesuch my favourite. Karl Jenkins's Palladio was a modern classic with its memorable proportions, and Derek Bourgeois's Serenade put us all in party mood.

It was a pleasure to attend and to see such a lively and positive group of musicians playing items they obviously love. I wish them every success for their next twenty years.

Zero carbon in 2030?

Labour and Green campaigners say the UK needs to get to zero net carbon dioxide output by 2030. The government says this will take another twenty years to 2050. What do you think about the idea? What would be required to get to zero by 2030?

Let's start with surface transport. Does it entail phasing out all diesel and petrol cars within ten years? How many of us are prepared to give up a car altogether? Is it feasible to assume a complete fleet of electric cars by 2030 all running on power from renewables? How many people will switch to bikes and walking for how many journeys?

What actions need to be taken to curb air transport? Experts and governments wanting to get to zero carbon dioxide emissions all say there has to be a big reduction in jet travel. How high would tax need to go on airfares? What alternatives to current planes burning oil based fuels are there? How feasible are sailing boats as an alternative? What are the implications for holidays and foreign travel?

What should be done about shipping? The UK is dependent on a lot of traditionally powered ships for a wide range of imports from all round the world. Will action be taken by tax, or regulation or both?

What would a 2030 carbon free home look like? How easy will it be to retrofit all existing older homes? What will it require in terms of insulation, new heating systems, water husbandry and controls? Will government subsidise this

work, or will it require householders to carry it out at their own expense?

Conservative Conference 2019

My current plan is to attend the Conference on Monday, subject to events in Parliament. I have been given permission by the Whips to be absent on Monday to honour speaking engagements in Manchester.

If all goes to plan I will be speaking

11.00am "Problem debt and poverty" Centre for Social Justice Panel discussion Room 15/16 Radisson Blu Hotel, Free Trade Hall Peter Street

13.00 Bruges Group Panel Discussion with Arlene Foster, Martin Howe and Mark Francois on trade, Irish backstop and related matters

The Comedy Store Arches 3 and 4, Deansgate Locks Whitworth Street West

18.30 "Leaving in a month, no ifs, no buts " Politeia The Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street

Jacob Rees Mogg also down to speak

Why is the Bank of England standing aside from global action to stimulate economies?

This year many Central Banks and some governments have been taking action to prevent a world recession later this year or next. Recognising the sharp downturn in the worldwide car industry, the lower levels of investment confidence and the general manufacturing slowdown, they have been keen to take action to stop it spreading into the consumer and service sector areas that represent the largest part of a modern economy.

Many Central Banks have cut interest rates. The Fed, despite a much faster pace of US growth than EU growth, has reduced rates twice, back to 1.75-2%. The Bank of Australia has cut rates from 12.5% to 1%, and the New Zealand Central Bank from 1.75% to 1%. India has reduced from 6.5% to 5.4%, Turkey from 24% to 16.5% and Brazil down to 5.5%.

The European Central Bank already has a zero interest rate, so they have now resumed money creation at a pace of Euro 20 billion a month, to buy up more bonds. The Japanese authorities are also buying in more bonds and aiming to keep their ten year rate of interest at zero, with negative shorter rates. The People's Bank of China has relaxed the amount of money commercial banks need to deposit with it., to encourage them to lend more. These actions are likely to prevent a general global recession.

Meanwhile the Bank of England has taken no such action. This is surprising as the UK car industry is suffering from the same problems as the rest of the world motor industry, and there has been a manufacturing slowdown in the UK although not as pronounced as Germany. UK growth is well below US growth.

It is true that the new government is embarking on some fiscal reflation but on nothing like the scale of the US. There was no Bank of England response under the previous Chancellor who announced a progressive fiscal squeeze. It would be good to hear from the Bank more about this global trend and why they think the UK should not be part of this general move to keep growth going.

CAB ANNIVERSARY

Today I attended the visit by HRH the Princess Royal to Wokingham CAB offices and to the Borough Council.

The Princess Royal thanked the volunteers and staff of the CAB for all their excellent service over the years and talked a little about the 80th anniversary of the national CAB.

The CAB introduced her to three people who had found CAB services most valuable, to staff, supporters and many of the past and present volunteers who make it all possible.

It was a pleasure to join in the day's celebration and to associate myself with the Princess Royal's words for the CAB both local and national.