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Introduction and Catching Up with Rupert Darwall

Tom: My guest today is Rupert Darwall. It's been 11 months, I think, since we spoke last. Do you want to tell us a little bit about what's going

Rupert: on? Yeah, a lot's been going on since then, Tom.

The House of Lords and the Cost of Net Zero

Rupert: Um, we've, um, very interestingly, the House of Lords, which is like the Senate, Except they're emasculated.

The Lords don't actually, uh, they're unelected and emasculated, but they've just come out with, they've been doing hearings on net zero and a raft of eminent economists are basically saying it's going to cost an arm and a leg. And that is a really big, that is a big change, which we, we can come onto. I think that's the, that's the main, that's the main change.

Basically the wheels are coming off net zero, but we can get into that. That

Tom: is great news. Do you want to go ahead and fire up your presentation already? Let's do that.

Rupert: You can see that.

Presentation on the Folly of Climate Leadership

Rupert: So on the left, you've got a report I wrote for the Real Clear Foundation title, as you can see, is the folly of climate leadership. And the reason I for [00:01:00] that title is that Britain has made a great song and dance of being the first major economy to write net zero into law, that it's brought about the steepest cuts in carbon dioxide emissions, and all this is going swimmingly.

And so I thought I'd take a chance to debunk all that. I mean, it is true that Britain is the first. major country to write net zero into

law. But the idea that's going swimmingly is completely false. And here's something for you that that is not particularly well known. Guess when Britain's carbon dioxide emissions peak, Tom, have a guess.

Uh,

Tom: the year

Rupert: 1995. No, it was in, it was in the early 70s, early 1970s. So we're actually looking at an economy that's had, for structural reasons, has had declining emissions for decades before anyone got work. You know, the global warming thing started going [00:02:00] and decarbonisation and all. So part of what's been Part of what we're saying is what the economy was going to do anyway.

But, but since the Climate Change Act was passed in 2008 and, um, which happened to coincide with the global financial crisis. And you've then seen a big acceleration in, in, uh, CO2 emissions, the emissions reductions, a very big, uh, uh, acceleration. But what you've also seen, Tom, is basically the British economy has stagnated since 2008.

Now, partly that's the aftereffects of the global financial crisis, which led to a lot of scarring on, on the economy. Yeah, it's also the case that pushing the decarbonisation has had a very negative impact on [00:03:00] energy costs, and that's had an impact both on living standards and, uh, the productivity, labour and capital productivity of the economy, which have both, both have, um, have deteriorated.

Deep Dive into Energy Companies and Renewable vs Thermal Generation

Rupert: What I did in this study was do a deep dive into, in Britain has, had the big six energy companies which had 80 to 90 percent market share of the, of energy supply, and what I did was go into their, uh, filings that they had to give the regulator. And what those filings do is that they differentiate between, uh, renewables, nuclear, and thermal.

Thermal being, uh, gas and coal generation. And what you see in that chart is the average price. average revenue per megawatt hour, which is effectively equivalent to price and the top green lines, two green lines, you'll see. So that's the average price that the renewables, their wind and solar, [00:04:00] mostly wind we're getting, which is over a hundred pounds per megawatt hour.

And then at the bottom, you can see. The, the, uh, grey and red and, uh, ochre, I suppose it is, lines, are the, are the non, non renewable, so they were getting the, the, the red is the thermal

generation that was getting around 60 and then it was declining 60 pounds per megawatt hour. Nuclear was actually getting less than that.

So basically, What you are having was the, the, the renewables were getting twice the price of, twice the price of the electricity being generated from the generators that actually keep the lights on. Okay, that's the big, that's the big concept we've got to get in our heads. The stuff that's intermittent gets rewarded twice as much as the stuff that the capacity that you need to keep the lights on.

Then if you look at profitability, it's actually even worse than that, [00:05:00] because what you had with the thermal generators is you had a huge amount of environmental levies being placed on them. So they were actually making, they were losing money per megawatt hour. Every megawatt hour they were generating the average, the average cost, the average profitability was negative.

And you have the thermal generators taking enormous write downs on their, uh, coal fired power stations. They took a write down in 2014 of 1.4 billion pounds, which is, you can see at the bottom on 2014, how it zigzags down, meanwhile, the. Renewables were getting absolutely astronomical profits per megawatt hour.

And you can see in one year, they were actually getting their profits per megawatt hour exceeded the price per megawatt hour that [00:06:00] the, that the thermal generators were getting. So the result of that.

The Impact of Overinvestment in Wind and Solar

Rupert: The outcome of that is you've got massive overinvestment in wind and solar and unin underinvestment in dispatchable or non intermittent capacity.

And this is quite a neat chart, which shows you, uh, the, the, the, the decline in non intermittent capacity and the rise in, in wind and wind and solar. And the effect has been that. Um, the, the, the, the huge increase in wind and solar capacity, uh, since 2009 has meant that in 2009 for every one gigawatt, uh.

One every one gigawatt of wind and solar capacity. There was 18.6 gigawatts of dispatchable capacity. So in effect, the impact on the grid and the economics of the grid and wind and solar and particularly their intermittency. was very, very manageable. It was kind of is really [00:07:00] insignificant, but by 2020 that had all changed.

So for every one gigawatt of wind and solar capacity, you had only 1.7 gigawatts of non intermittent capacity. So basically, the, the management of the grid becomes a story of how to cope with

intermittency and that, that drives the. Drives up the costs of, of non intermittent capacity because they have to, they have to ramp up and down.

Uh, they're not, they'll, they're, they're not pretty generating electricity for a lot of the time, which is incredibly inefficient. It also means that their CO2 emissions per megawatt hour are higher because that, that, you know, that you have to keep the, um, turbine spinning just so that they, they're ready to ramp up.

And, uh, Deliver electricity, supply electricity to the grid.

The Iron Law of the Energy Transition

Rupert: So, and I think this is the most, in some ways, this is the most important slide of all, is [00:08:00] what I would call the iron law of the so called energy transition, Tom, which is producing less with more is the essential fact of the energy transition. So what you're seeing there is That graph is showing output per megawatt of generating capacity, so that is wind and solar plus the thermal plus the nuclear, and what you see there is that there has been a 28 percent decline in the output or per unit per unit of generating capacity, so in 2009.

87. 3 gigawatts of generating capacity was producing 376 terawatt hours of electricity. In 2020, just over 100 gigawatts of generating capacity was producing only 312 terawatt hours of, of electricity. So you have more generating capacity producing less electricity. [00:09:00] And wherever you go, If, if you get, if decarbonization in the U.

S. and having more renewables on the grid will have the same effect, this, this effect of you need more resources to generate lesser, less electricity, less energy.

The High Cost of Net Zero and its Impact on the Economy

Rupert: That's the long and short of, of the paper, but there's a lot more in it, which I'm sure we can talk about.

Okay,

Tom: and that is a 76 page PDF we're talking about, right? And I put a link to it in the show notes so people can read all the details of that,

Rupert: right? Fantastic.

The Current Political Climate and Net Zero

Tom: So, um, what is happening right now then? You mentioned just this week there's been, uh, some pretty high profile blowback against Net Zero in the UK, right?

Rupert: Um, I would wouldn't say blowback. I would describe it as as truth telling. So the House of Lords have a, uh, an economic affairs committee. They've been holding hearings, much like the Senate and the House in the U. S. hold hearings. And they've, they have people up to [00:10:00] give testimony. And they've had the former chief economist of the IMF, Olivier Blanchard, who basically told them it's a fairy tale that That, uh, net zero costs next to nothing.

There was Dieter Helm, Sir Dieter Helm, who's one of Britain's best known energy economists, who said very much the same thing, and he's taken a real blast at the idea that net zero pays for itself, which is the story being being spun by politicians. You know, and I'm, you know, that happens in the US.

Basically, net zero pays for itself. That is completely, that is completely untrue. It is, net zero is extraordinarily expensive. In the British context, we're talking about trillions, several, several trillions. I think in the US context, you'll be talking 10 to 20 trillion dollars or something like that. You know, you're talking absolutely astronomical amounts of Of of capital that needs to be deployed to producers.

I've indicated [00:11:00] from that chart to produce less. That is the key fact. All that capital produces less electricity. You have a less reliable grid as well into the bargain for paying a lot more for it. And you'll see you see much higher electricity rates. So if you're looking at British households are paying around 75 percent more per kilowatt hour for the electricity.

British businesses, compared to US businesses, the differential is British businesses are paying three to four times what US businesses are paying. Now if you think that some of them are competing against each other, either as importers or exporters or whatever, or competing in world markets, it's basically leading to the to, to accelerating the de industrialization of Britain.

So you'll be, we're basically exporting manufacturing jobs to China. You know, that, that's where they're going.

Tom: Do you think reality is sinking in with [00:12:00] politicians in

the UK? Like I see a headline here, Starmer's net zero U turn is his most shameful yet. And do you think the political class is starting to get it?

Rupert: Um, I think the thing about that's a hard question to answer because you can't it's very difficult to get into the minds of these people and it's not clear that there's coherent reasoned economic thinking going on. I think with the. With the Labour Party and the 28 billion, it was two things. First of all, the fiscal situation is, is quite tight.

And secondly, they didn't want, they don't want to go into the next election, which will be held sometime this year, um, with the Conservatives saying, well, there's this 28 billion, which means, uh, a tax bombshell. They could, Labour's going to raise taxes. So I think it was more, if you like, pragmatic rather than a realization that net zero is a disaster.

[00:13:00] The problem for all pol, all main political parties, where they stand now is that they, they wrote into law, they all supported writing into law after an 88 minute debate, no less in, in the house of conference, after which there was no vote. So there was 88 minutes of, of debate on net zero. There was, there was no vote at the end of it.

And then the minister signed a statutory instrument and the net zero target became law, which is something that for all the faults of the way Congress makes laws and stuff like that, you can't, you guys can't do that. That will never happen. So here we effectively we've got, I don't know what's said, but basically you've got Parliament was a rubber stamp for that.

And. Because all parties are signed up to that effectively, they can't go and question it. They have, the government of the day has a legal duty, a statutory duty, to meet [00:14:00] the net zero target. So net zero emissions, uh, by by 2050. So they're all trapped in this. And the smart thing for Sunak to have done, and in fact, I think what Liz, Liz trusts that her, his predecessor had the opportunity as a former foreign secretary.

She could have said, look, The, the war in Ukraine has fundamentally changed the energy outlook. Um, we can't go on. We've either, we, we've got a choice. We can either do net zero or we can help Ukraine beat the Russians. We can't do both. We can't, you know, you could frame it like that, but she did, she, if she, if it, if the thought had occurred to her, she didn't do anything, and furthermore, she appointed as her chancellor at Exchequer, um, a politician whose previous job was enforcing net zero, so there was really no chance, so you basically got the British political class really up to their necks in net zero, [00:15:00] will that change after the next election when

the next election.

The Conservatives go into opposition. I think, I think then the political calculus changes quite a lot. Once they're freed from being in government, uh, they can have second thoughts about the wisdom of net zero. And it's obviously looking worse, you know, net zero is looking worse by the day. So they can actually come to it a bit fresh.

So

Tom: I'm way behind you on what's happening politically with the election coming up, but is it a matter of throwing out the old and bringing in new people who are not into net zero?

Rupert: Um, no, what, what it will be is you, we've had the conservatives got elected in 2020 and they've had now had basically the first term was a coalition.

There was then There have been two elections. There was an election in 2015, which the Conservatives won outright. There was another election in 2017, which the [00:16:00] Conservatives very narrowly won. And then Boris Johnson had that scorch of an election in December 2019, when he got got a, an 80 seat majority had, you know, he, the world Britain still was at his feet in terms of, of what are you going, but the Conservatives completely blown that for a number of reasons.

And so we're due another general election by, by the end of this year, essentially. And the Conservatives are way behind. In the opinion polls, they basically don't stand a chance. They've shot their bolt. Everyone's fed up with them. They've got nothing new to offer the country. On the other hand, labor is not a, not the public is not excited by the labor proposition.

And basically, labor is completely trapped by net zero by the commitment that I've talked previously talked about, about the commitment to net zero, the legal commitment to produce to to pursue net zero. So It's not like, voters want the Conservatives out, but there's very, [00:17:00] very little enthusiasm for Labour.

But once the Conservatives are out, it is a chance for them to think, what did we really screw up on? And net zero would be one of the things that they will reflect and think, well actually this was a terrible idea. And they can have, they can come back to it with, um, you know, with much clearer vision of, of what, what went wrong.

The Future of the Power Grid in the UK

Tom: What is happening with the power grid in the UK? Are you under

threat of it going out if the wind doesn't blow, etc., for a long enough period of time? Well,

Rupert: that, that, uh, risk increases because, um, basically all the coal fired, all but one or two coal fired power stations have been taken off the grid.

They've actually been, you can go onto, if you Google and look at British coal fired power stations, you'll see pictures of them being blown up. I mean, they took, they took, Politicians took absolute relish in blowing in this extraordinary acts of industrial vandalism, blowing up coal fired power stations, because coal has been completely [00:18:00] demonized.

It's a really important thing to understand that coal was, is, and will remain the cheapest way and most reliable way to generate electricity. And that, that, that goes for the U. S. as well. The idea that fracking fundamentally made natural gas generation cheaper than, um, than cheaper than coal fired power.

Coal, coal is the cheapest fuel source. uh, for, for, for electricity. But so Britain basically has no more coal. Labour has pledged to make, uh, the grid carbon neutral from 2030, the Conservatives from 20, 2035. Both, both targets are absolutely pie in the sky. Obviously Labour's is, is more so because they don't.

attempting to do it in, in, um, in six years. It's impossible. It can't be done. But to your point, yes, it does make, when you take dispatchable capacity off the grid, you make the grid and you, you [00:19:00] put in more, um, intermittent generation, you make the grid less, you make the grid far less stable. So the risk of, of blackouts, brownouts, whatever you care to call them, is high.

But what does happen, the answer to that is, is, is They just throw money at the problem. So to give you an idea, a couple of years ago, we have a capacity market, um, system, so you basically pay power stations just to be on standby, and the cost of the electricity, I think it was in 2020 or 2021, something like that, was 224 pounds per megawatt hour, so you're talking about 280 dollars per megawatt hour, which is a colossal, it's a colossal amount to be paying for electricity, an incredibly inefficient way to, to run a generating fleet.

Tom: So I'm just wondering, it seems like this whole idea of politicians celebrating themselves for blowing up their own local power station is about as [00:20:00] crazy as it gets. And do you think they're going to scrub those photos and videos from the internet so people can't look at them 10 years from now?

Rupert: Um, that's a hard one.

I mean, they take Tom, they take great pride in this. So, so, Alok Sharma, who was the president of the Glasgow Climate Conference, was that 2021? He, you can find a picture of him on the web of blowing up, I can't remember which power station it is, and being very proud and, you know, doing the plunger thing and the thing going, just collapsing in a cloud of dust.

Um, Coal, it is absolutely extraordinary the extent to which coal has been demonized, and particularly in the Labour Party, the Labour used to be the party of the coal miners, right, the National Union of Mine Workers was affiliated to the Labour Party, um, mine workers were considered, coal miners were considered, you know, they were the aristocracy of [00:21:00] the working class.

And all that's changed now. So unbelievably, um, there was a planning application for a new coal mine, um, in Cumbria, which would produce coal, very high quality coal for use in steelmaking. And the Labour Party opposed that. They, they, they opposed and so, and it was very clear this coal won't be used in, in to pass.

No, no, no. You can't use coal for power station, but it would be used in steel making and ev labor even opposed that opposed that. And then Labour, the politicians are all very puzzled when the Indian owners of Port Talbot, the Port Talbot Steelworks in South Wales, um, are closing down, closing down the steelworks because they're paying a massive carbon tax on, on the, the coke they use for smelting, which obviously makes it uneconomic.

So, you know, the idea of green steel, you know, [00:22:00] Green steel is incredibly expensive. Plus you've got to pay the electricity, which is, has carbon taxes on top of it and environmental levies and so forth. So it's basically uneconomic. So we basically lost the steelmaking industry. It's not just coal mining and the coal, which completely gone.

It's also steelmaking.

The Impact of Net Zero on Manufacturing and Industry

Rupert: So as I sort of indicated earlier, what you're doing, you're basically driving out your Well, you know, you're manufacturing, it goes, you can see there's a hierarchy, so heavy manufacturing, which is more energy intensive, goes out first, and then, then as you go down. And of course, then you've got the thing with the, the problems with the automotive industry, what remains of the British car making industry is under threat from mandates to stop selling, um, internal combustion engine cars.

And they have to, they have to increase car, car manufacturers have to, to every year from this year, they have to sell an [00:23:00] increasing proportion of their car sales, their vehicle sales have to be EVs. And if they don't, if they don't make it, they, they basically have a, have to pay a fine. So basically you're paying a tax, you'd be basically paying a tax.

on your internal combustion engine sales. So, and that, that, of course, that, then that, that drives that, that further drives de industrialization. Then politicians wonder, they kind of turn around and they blame, they blame companies for, why are you making these people redundant? You know, why are you closing these factories?

Well, it's actually your policies that, it's net zero that is causing, is, is driving, is, is driving these closures.

Tom: Do these politicians, though, really have a vision of just transitioning so you're building electric cars using just wind and solar? That's it? That's what they're thinking? What are they

Rupert: thinking?

And they think, they think the, uh, rare earths and lithium and all that sort of thing comes, you know, gets conjured up on the ground, there are no supply chain [00:24:00] problems, that the enormous increase in demand for these, these minerals won't affect prices. No, there is no, when it comes to net zero, there is no capacity for rational thought.

They just kind of, they just swallow green make believe, Tom.

Tom: Yeah, do you think it's that they're just coming from a world of, uh, academic, uh, of, uh, academics and, uh, models and the, uh, have these people had real jobs in the real world so they know? How things are made.

Rupert: Um, it's partly that, but I think there's also, you can't, I think the thing is, as you know, Tom, from the climate wars, that you can't question any element of the program, otherwise you're, you're, you're a denier, or you're, you're, You're impeding net zero, you're doing terrible things, you're putting the survival of the planet at risk.

So that means you can't have any critical assessment of the, [00:25:00] of the, this nonsense that's coming out. And I've seen, so in my report I've got, I, one of the things I do is I look at, we have a, We have the Treasury. The Treasury did a net zero assessment and our equivalent of the Congressional Budget, Budget Office, which is the Office of Budget Responsibility, also did a net zero assessment.

And I go through those, and they make believe in that, in those. It's just extraordinary. So you have the treasury saying, Oh, well, the new investment should increase productivity growth. As I've shown you in that slide, you can see capital productivity is on a downward slope, you know, and they just ignore the data.

They don't even look for the data. They just. Happy to go on or make believe on on green make believe. They never challenged. So we have under the Climate Change Act that this body, this independent, so called independent body called the Climate Change Committee was created to advise the government.

Actually, it basically tells [00:26:00] the government what to do on decarbonisation and energy policy. And not once has the government criticised or analysed or done any due diligence on. Basically, the rubbish this, this, uh, this green body, I mean, it's completely taken over by environmentalists that they come out with.

So it's, they never challenged, they never questioned its costs on net, on net zero. Because if you do that, you get It's just the wrong thing. It's wrong think. Basically, it's wrong think to say, well, actually, this is going to have a big cost. That's why when we started this discussion, that what mainstream economists like Olivier Blanchard are now saying is really consequential, because it's putting into the public domain these forbidden thoughts.

The Public Perception and Political Response to Net Zero

Rupert: These impermissible thoughts that actually net zero has a huge, huge cost tag on it. And that's going to start making people think. [00:27:00] The other thing to bear in mind, and we talked about the costs of net zero, um, what, what no one talks about are the benefits, the so called benefits. So, again, what I, what I looked at, is in the 11 years since passage of the Climate Change Act in 2008.

Um, there's a table in there which says, um, by how much Britain's, uh, emissions have, have fallen, whilst the rest of the world's have increased. And basically, Tom, 11 years of Britain's emissions reductions, which are quite substantial for a country like Britain, were wiped out by the increase from the rest of the world.

in 140 days, right? 11 years worth. So you're basically doing all this to have a pinprick impact on global emissions.

Tom: Um, what do you think of this dynamic that I'm seeing in my life that five years ago, generally people were just, uh, if they [00:28:00] saw it on cable news or CNN, they were believing it, not

asking questions, but all of a sudden, all sorts of people that I know personally are starting to say, I don't believe what they told us about the pandemic.

And I don't believe all sorts of other stuff. I'm seeing a lot of awakening like that myself, but just in my life, are you seeing anything like that?

I'm

Rupert: not, it's not come, I haven't seen, I haven't seen anything like that. I,

I thought the Ukraine war and our, and Europe's dependence on Russian. natural gas, uh, exports of natural gas, um, by Gazprom would lead to an awakening. But actually what the climate industrial complex did very successfully is they said, well, look, we, if we have natural gas, we're relying on Vladimir Putin, this [00:29:00] evil dictator, but he can't stop the wind blowing and the sun shining.

Right? That's the logic. I mean, can you beat that? And they kind of said, this is our, this is how we get energy independence. We make ourselves totally rely on the weather to generate our electricity and we're going to be better off. And that lip, that is the, that is the extent of the thing, the, the, the thinking on that.

Now that may, that may, may change a bit, but I don't, I don't really see it. I think in the, I think where, You've seen it in the U. S. is the EVs are getting the thumbs down big, big time. And that is a real, I think that that's an eye opener. We haven't got there yet on the EV thing. Basically, what's happened is, in terms of vehicles, is that private, uh, private car buyers are at a declining share of the market.

They can't afford new cars. Um, The [00:30:00] cost of an entry level car has gone up in the last 10 years has gone up, I think it was about 28, 20 or 30 percent over the last 10 years. And that's before all the EV stuff has come in. And so what you're seeing is that the people who are buying cars are businesses who buy it for their employees.

So it's fleet, it's mainly fleet buyers. So. The whole EV thing hasn't, I don't think has quite, it doesn't have that consciousness that I see in the US where basically private, private owners are shunning EVs and saying this is not for me, these don't work, you know, you get, you drive it in a blizzard and the battery goes flat, that's great, you know, that's, that's really not the thing, you know, we're not seeing that yet.

Tom: Is there still a dynamic though, in the UK where, uh, if people are buying school buses or the post office is buying vehicles, that

they're saving the planet by buying electric vehicles? Yeah,

Rupert: there's, there's quite, there's a, there, there's quite, quite a bit of, bit of that. [00:31:00] Yeah.

The Reality of Net Zero and Its Impact on the Economy

Rupert: I think the main thing, Tom, is just the wishful thinking and duplicity involved in net zero and. Eventually, as you say, reality comes. comes and bite, bites you and, um, that reality, there is some, you know, the, the reality is, is now catching up and particularly the costs and the fact that British economy has been essentially treading water since 2008, which is a very, very long time.

There was a. There was an article in one of the papers the other day saying British living standards have been stagnating for, for the longest or fallen by, fallen by more than, than in, in recorded history kind of thing. So there's this thing of the, the populous, pop, uh, households being squeezed and squeezed and squeezed.

And, but I would say [00:32:00] that. With the political classes, the penny hasn't dropped yet.

Political Climate and Media Influence in the US and UK

Rupert: And whereas in, in the US, you have a much more open political system. Because,

you, you kind of, the party grip is much, much weaker. Uh, Individuals go out, they win primaries, and then they go and compete for votes and so forth. And also, Republicans are far more, uh, there are very few Republicans now who, who, who, who kind of, who are, who are advocating this climate stuff. And so, it's a much more, there's much more debate in the U.

S. Here, it's really There's very, very little debates.

The Role of BBC in Shaping Public Opinion

Rupert: To give you an idea, the BBC, the BBC has a market share of news shows, around about 70%. I mean, it is the leading, it's the leading broadcaster, it's where people get, most people get their news from, and it is totally, it's totally wedded to the net zero climate, uh, climate, [00:33:00] Uh, story alignment.

And so you've got, you've got a lot of suppression of, of debate, essentially. You won't have, you won't have people critical of the so called energy transition on any BBC, on any BBC show.

The State of Climate Realism in UK Politics

Tom: So, do you have any active politicians in the UK right now that come right out and say this is a cult and a scam, it's completely crazy?

Because we're getting that in the US, yeah.

Rupert: We've always, and really you've had that in, I mean, Donald Trump, for example, has always gone on, you know, been saying that. There is no front rank politician in Britain who has come close to saying that. You have them saying, someone like Jacob Rees Mogg might be the closest, um, and he says, well if.

Net zero makes poor people poorer. We should really think again. Right? Which is a bit wet, isn't it? Isn't that a bit wet? Just sort of, we, we know it makes people [00:34:00] poorer. Just get on with it. Just say it, go out and say it. Um, this is a formula for Ameer, the vast majority of families in this country. But they won't.

They're not, they haven't got there yet. And until they get there, I don't think there is a, um. you're not really going to open up the debate. I mean, as I said earlier, there, there are these small, I think the, I think economists saying, well, actually net zero comes with a huge price tag. Um, that is beginning.

That is a trend that is a move in the right direction and there will be more debate. And I think things will change after the election, but not, not before then there won't be. Net zero will not be an issue at the next election, unless someone like Nigel Farage and Reform UK makes it one. So they're one of the, they're the successor to the Brexit party.

Nigel Farage is the closest thing Britain has to Donald Trump. [00:35:00] And If he decided to have a go on that, you know, I think that could, I think that could stir things up quite a lot. But so far, he's not showing a great deal of inclination. I'd like to get back,

The Influence of Media on Climate Change Perception

Tom: I'd like to get back to what you said about the BBC.

It sounds like that the mainstream media might be doing a lot better in, over there than it is in the U. S. Because I hear numbers about how Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson are getting maybe 10 to 100 times the ratings of CNN, or the viewership of CNN on some days. That, uh, CNN, I don't know if that's at all an equivalent of the BBC, but, uh, our mainstream media, to me, it looks like it's dying pretty quickly over here.

Um,

Rupert: yeah, we've, so, we have, first of all, um, free to air broadcasting is regulated by, um, By a media regulator called Ofcom, and they're all, so basically we've got [00:36:00] BBC, ITV and Sky, and they're all saying that on climate and energy, they're all saying the same thing. They're all singing from the Climate Industrial Complex hymn sheet.

Um, the pay, the newspapers, newspapers are now kind of less important, but so the Telegraph is sceptical, is hostile to Net Zero, I'd say, uh, more or less. Um, but most of the media, most of the media is, is in favour of it. I mean, Net Zero is seen as this sort of thing that we all believe in, and it's something that Britain's good at, and it's what I call climate jingoism.

Right. You know, this, and they still, they still go on about it.

Tom: Just assume that everybody believes in it, I guess.

The Role of GB News in Promoting Climate Realism

Tom: How about GB News? Is that making any more inroads or no?

Rupert: Yeah, GB News is making inroads, but its market share is quite small. And I think I think, come a Labour government, um, they'll find, they, they, they will find a way to neuter, uh, [00:37:00] GB News.

I think Ofcom, which is, as I mentioned, is basically a censorship body when it comes to broadcast news, um, I think they'll do what they can to terminate it. It's clearly, it's, it's, it sticks out. Uh, GB News is the one, is, is the one, uh, that, that, that, that, It's really questioning, it's really questioning, and it has voices, permits voices to be on its shows that question it, otherwise you don't, you don't, you don't get it.

Yeah,

Tom: there's a Paul Burgess, he's been on my podcast, I think he is regularly on Sunday shows there talking about climate realism on GB News.

Rupert: Yeah, that is, so GB News is the exception to the otherwise blanket media ban on people who question, who question net zero.

Tom: So I'm just looked it up here. It's kind of interesting to me that I can look at my YouTube analytics and right now and last month, 25 percent of my audience is from the U. S. and 22 is from the U. K. I'm kind of surprised there's that many [00:38:00] people in the U. K. that, uh, that are, uh, That's terrific. That's,

Rupert: that is absolutely terrific that you've got that reach.

I think, um.

The Impact of Climate Change Narratives on Public Opinion

Rupert: In my, um, last book, Green Tyranny, the penultimate chapter was called Spiral of Silence, and That, the, the concept of the spiral of silence, I don't know if I talked to you about this before. It was, it came from this, the concept came from this German pollster called Elisabeth Noelle Neumann.

Absolutely brilliant pollster, probably the most important polling expert in the second half of the 20th century. She studied in the U. S. in about the 1930s. She studied in the U. S., I think, with George Gallup. She was, she was really on top of it. And the interesting thing, Tom, is she worked at the, during the Nazi period, she had a brief spell working at the, what was it, the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment or whatever, under Dr.

Joseph Goebbels. But [00:39:00] she understood propaganda and she understood the impact of what she called She called people's views in there and what they think is their social skin and people are very conscious of having an opinion that can't be uttered. And the concept of the spiral of silence is if people don't hear.

People are, other people agreeing with their opinions, they fall silent, and eventually those opinions get so marginalized, they lose, people actually can't, they can't even think, think those things because the words aren't being articulated. And so you can just push. You can just push, if you like, climate skepticism and energy realism right to the margins until it disappears.

And that has been, that is the strategy of the climate industrial complex, that we see time and time again is to, this is what Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse said, is basically to close [00:40:00] down debate, because they know if there's debate. They lose. So how your show in your show in giving people so that people know that actually these, these are ideas that they also believe in and gives them the words and the concepts to articulate their, their beliefs and opinions are there.

It's incredible and incredibly important functionally or performing.

Tom: Thank you.

The Upcoming Climate Change Movie and Its Potential Impact

Tom: Uh, there is this movie coming out, the great global warming swindle, uh, sequel called climate. The movie will be out in the next month or so, and I think it's coming out at just the right time because I keep saying, I think the worm is already turning.

I think people are already, at least the people I know, I feel more free to speak out against this. I think there's huge strength in numbers, and as a few people speak out, it'll snowball. I could see this falling apart pretty quickly when that happens. But maybe I'm over optimistic. No, I don't

Rupert: think you're being over optimistic.

I wrote an, uh, I wrote an [00:41:00] article. Actually, I pinched someone else's idea on this. Um, I think it, I think it would be like the collapse of communism. It'll be something that happens, you know, for, for, for, for, with communism for years and decades. People had to subscribe to this and even though they knew it was, they knew it was false and they didn't like it.

And then overnight, almost overnight. It shattered and it just, and I think it, I think, I think with climate, I think climate and energy, it will, it could well be like that. The thing that, the thing that resists that in a way is that the elites in particularly in Britain are going to look really bad, having got it so badly wrong.

And whereas in the American political system, more or less half. are already realists. That's not, that's not the case. That's not the case here. I mean, I would say you're talking about 80 to 90 [00:42:00] percent of them are these you know, signed up to net zero or sort of mouth net zero platitudes. Won't confront net zero and say actually net zero is net zero is why One of the big reasons why the British economy is performing so, so badly.

I'll give you a case in point. So if you go to today's Financial

Times, there's a big article by, by the chief economics writer, uh, Chris Giles in the Financial Times, and it's going on about Europe's productivity challenge and what it needs to do and this, that and the other. There is not a single mention of net zero in there and the so called energy transition.

I mean, how you can write about European, the performance of European economies and not whether you support net zero or not, and not see actually this is a really important factor that is driving economic outcomes and changing the structure of Europe's economy. How you could do that? It just, but that it's, [00:43:00] is it self censorship or is it some kind of refusal?

that people refuse to acknowledge what is patently staring them in the face. I just don't know, Tom, but all I can do is observe it and say it's there.

Tom: Another thing that makes me happy is I listen to a wide range of podcasts on all sorts of different subjects. And, uh, for years when climate change would come up as an aside, they would kind of say, uh, yeah, we are probably all going to fry, blah, blah, blah.

And now over and over in the last recent months, when it comes up. They're consistently scoffing at it. Joe Rogan is scoffing at it. And, uh, Aaron Rodgers and all these medical freedom people. Tons of people now, suddenly, they're, they're not, like, focused on it for minutes on end. But when it comes up, it's, uh, we don't really believe in it.

It's kind of a joke. I'm loving that. Yeah,

Rupert: I think, I think what you said about the pandemic and public health policies and the link with climate and Net Zero is absolutely right, [00:44:00] that, that, There is clearly a linkage in we were sold a bill of goods over the pandemic and that puts a big question mark about what experts are telling us on, on climate.

I think that's absolutely right. I would say that that I think that natural, that natural instinct to question and challenge is much more present in, in the, in the US. Okay. Than it is here. I think that's a cultural thing and, you know, all credit to Merrick for having that, except of, except of course for the, the, uh, the, the verdict in the, uh, Michael Mann, uh, defamation case, which is really something else.

That's

Tom: right. I wanted to mention that you wrote a great article about that case and I'm putting a link to that article so people can read up on it. Do you want to mention anything here about that case?

The Influence of the Hockey Stick Graph on Climate Change Perception

Rupert: Yeah, I said, I mean, I mean, it's worth recalling that [00:45:00] Michael Mann's hockey stick paid an enormous had an enormous impact on the development of the climate change orthodoxy, because what it purported to show is it purported to show two things.

First of all, that the Industrial Revolution caused this huge spike, it caused a huge spike in, in global temperature. And secondly, that from the, uh, from AD 10, uh, 1000, uh, and the temperatures were declining, and they erased the medieval warm period. And the medieval warm period, uh, before Michael Mann came on the scene, the medieval warm period was absolutely accepted by climatologists.

And There's a case, so, during this, the medieval warm period, which now, uh, the modern orthodoxy says didn't exist, the Vikings, as you know, settled Greenland, um, and one of the [00:46:00] Vikings, Eric the Red's nephew, uh, swam a mile or two across a Greenland fjord. Well, you think, I mean, would, even today, with these, you know, sort of nicely warm temperatures that were apparently, would, would you, Tom, would you swim across a Greenland fjord?

And they weren't such good swimmers in those days, they didn't. Anyway, um, so they, so Michael Mann achieved two things. He, he, he, he basically gave the modern, uh, view, the, the contemporary view of, of climate change. The medieval warm period went away and the medieval warm period was a really big problem for the climate crowd because it showed that.

That the amplitude of natural variability was much greater than they want us to believe now. And it also showed that actually societies could do very well in a period of, of unusual warmth. You know, I mean, we're made to believe against the against our own instincts, really, that, that having a warming climate is [00:47:00] a, is a, is a terrible, terrible thing because most of us prefer summer to winter, you know, more, more people die, you know, the cold death versus warm death thing.

Now, so what happened, Michael Mann took Rand, uh, uh, Simberg and Mark Stein to court over two things, two articles that they published in, in 2012. Um, And the verdict came out a couple of weeks ago, basically saying the jury said two things. First of all, they couldn't really find that Michael Mann had been damaged in any way by these articles.

So they awarded him 2 in damage to compensate him for the damage to his reputation. But they found Sinberg I think at 1, 000. And Mark Stein, a million dollars. And what that jury, what I should say, this, this trial was in, uh, in [00:48:00] Washington, D. C. with, uh, six

good and true Washingtonians, you know, of, I'm sure, completely politically unbiased Washingtonians, you, you know, is it 80 or 90%?

uh, Democrat there. Might be over

Tom: 90 maybe, I don't know.

Rupert: Well, maybe 110 percent Democrat. Anyway, and they basically meted out punitive damages as a, not just to, uh, really to, to, to, to, to, to, to finish off Mark Stein because they clearly, he's an incredibly accomplished conservative commentator, absolutely brilliant, a brilliant speaker, brilliant mind.

So they just wanted to really, really go for him, but also to deter anyone from speaking out against being climate heretics, basically. And, and this is the land of the first amendment. Tom, this is one of the first moments [00:49:00] where this has happened. So, in my view, it's a complete travesty. Um, so I've written that all up.

The stuff about the medieval war periods in there, the stuff that Michael Mann did to get his hockey stick, you know, one of the things in there, in a later version of the hockey stick, There were these Finnish geologists who looked at sediment from a lake in Iceland and they did a temperature reconstruction, which did show a medieval warm period.

You know what the Michael Mann and his co authors did to erase the medieval warm period? They turned that graph upside down. Was that an accident or was it on purpose? They did

Tom: it twice, right? They turned it upside down twice. They did

Rupert: it more, they did it, they did it more than once. Yes, they did it more.

The quotes are in there. You can see that. I just said that and, and, and whoever, you know, readers, you can make up your own mind about what you think [00:50:00] about what Michael Mann was up to.

Tom: I'm going to read an entire paragraph from your, uh, from your article, if that's all right, super interesting to me, I quote, the trial closed with man's counsel, John Williams, making a naked appeal to the jurors political prejudices.

Williams urged the jury to award punitive damages so that no one will dare engage in quote climate denialism, just as Donald Trump's quote election by denialism needs to be suppressed. I. In 41 years of trying cases to juries, John Hinderacher wrote on the Powerline blog, I have never heard such an outrageously improper appeal.

So they actually mentioned Trump, right? This is John Williams, who was Joe Camel's lawyer as well, right? Same guy.

Rupert: I mean, it's blatant. It's absolutely blatant. You really don't have to be, you know, you don't have, it's there in black and white what happened in that courtroom. And it is designed to [00:51:00] do what we're, what actually we're challenging, which is, it's designed to suppress debate. And when there's, the more debate we have on it, the weaker this, this thing will be.

Tom: I do have one more quote I'd like to read here talking about the influence of the hockey stick. This one's from Gerald North. A, uh, leading atmospheric physicist, back at a time he said, quote, The planet has been cooling slowly until 120 years ago when, bam, it jumps up, end quote. It's pretty amazing that, uh, that is not what the temperature record did.

Then he also said, Quote, we've been breaking our backs on greenhouse detection, but I found the 1, 000 year records more convincing than any of our detection studies, end quote. For man, the hockey stick was his ticket to climate superstardom. Some excellent stuff there.

Rupert: Yeah, I think that's what, the importance of the hockey stick, it's very, very hard to overstate how, how important it was in, [00:52:00] if you like, not brainwashing about it.

So when we, when, when, when we hear, when climatologists say 2023 was the highest, was the warmest year ever recorded, you know, they're talking about, they're talking about the hockey, they don't, we don't know, we don't know what global temperatures were in, during, during the medieval medieval, uh, centuries, yet there is, they're basically relying on the hockey stick to come out with these, with these statements.

So we're kind of, they are acclimatizing us to this is a period of exceptional, never before, not for a hundred thousand, you know all the stuff that they, and it's based on very, very, very dodgy statistical analysis, which I go into in that, in, in that article.

Tom: And there's these whole questions like, [00:53:00] what, there's a 5, 000 year old tree stump and it's located way north of the current tree line in the northern hemisphere.

Why, you know, it seems like it has to have been warmed in.

Rupert: Yeah, and then you read these occasional stories in the press about how a retreating glacier in Greenland, right, a retreating glacier in Greenland uncovers a Viking settlement. Well, how did they, Tom, how did they build villages under glaciers?

Yeah, it's pretty amazing. I mean, it's pretty, the technology they must have had to do that.

Tom: I have heard that there are some areas that have been melting lately that, uh, smell like sheep that you can smell if there were sheep that lived there way before it froze up and now you can

Rupert: smell them again.

That's very true.

The Role of Tipping Points in Climate Change Narratives

Rupert: Oh, the other thing, the other thing that, um, I touch on, on the report we've been discussing, not the, uh, hockey stick, um, is when so you get official analyses of climate financial risk. Okay. And, and, you know, the [00:54:00] risk to the, to the economy and of climate catastrophe. Um, so what they do is they posit these.

tipping points. You know, the climate tipping points. And once there's been a tipping point, we're into catastrophe. We're into this new climate regime, and no one knows what it will be like, except all the oceanside town will be inundated, all that kind of stuff. And the earliest tipping point is the melting of the green and ice sheet, right?

Anyhow, if you go to the IPCC's most recent assessment report, the sixth assessment report, you look up when this is likely to happen, a total melting of the Greenland ice sheet, they're talking about, Tom, multiple millennia, multiple millennia. So this is kind of, and if you think where we are now, if we're talking multiple millennia back, we're talking about the Egyptian times.

Right? Do you see what I mean? So it's that far in time. [00:55:00] So how on earth can we, and yet what they do, so when they do um, stress modelling for, climate stress modelling for banks and insurers of the financial system, you've got to incorporate a climate tipping point like the Green and Ice Sheet, which 2050.

They'll say, well you've got to, there's a risk it'll happen, you know, mid century. I mean, is, It's, it's not just bonkers, Tom. It's dishonest. It's incredibly dishonest. Uh,

Tom: when you mentioned tipping points, I thought you might mention that they told us that at 1.5 there's a tipping point and then it runs away and we all die quite quickly or something.

But then they said, hey, we just hit the 1.5 tipping point and

nothing, nothing happened, of course. Yeah, those,

Rupert: well, those of course, so we had the giveaway with the tip, with the two degree and the one and a half degree. so called limits is it's the baseline is the pre industrial era. And we don't really, first of all, we don't really know what the global [00:56:00] temperature was then.

So you've got a very uncertain baseline, which renders the whole, but the give, the reason it's a giveaway is it's because it's ideological because the original sin of modern civilization is the industrial revolution. So we've got to go back to when the planet was pure and before it had been was spoiled but besmirched by the industrial revolution.

So that's what it's about. And it wasn't scientists that came up with the two degree limit. It was actually European environment ministers that came up with the two degree. And then you have the small island states, um, Going around saying, Oh, well, our islands are all going to be inundated, uh, by rising sea levels by the two degree limit.

So we've got to go for one and a half degree. And, and this, this is even more, this is, as well, this is completely bogus. Because you know how coral atolls are formed? By the slow substance of the ocean bed. They actually benefit from a rise, [00:57:00] from rising sea levels. Because coral, you basically, they get more coral buildup.

And they're formed out of, out of dead coral, as the coral dies, it gets piled up, and that, that, that's why they've got lovely white sandy beaches. And so it's completely, it is completely fraudulent of the small island states to go, but they, they are the sort of, it's, they're the climate change sob story stuff.

So that's how we ended up with one and a half degrees, which is how we end up with net zero by twenty. By 2050, by mid century, it is completely, that is completely bogus and spurious, completely made up. And then of course, then they say, Oh, scientists tell us there'll be these two. Having the politicians, having decided this, then the scientists are called in to say, oh well, yeah, it's good.

There's a tipping point there.

The Financial Incentives Behind Climate Change Narratives

Tom: It's kind of interesting that we're not supposed to listen to anything from anybody connected with hydrocarbon fuels because they have financial incentives. But then we're supposed to listen to these small island state people who get enormous amounts of [00:58:00] money

if we believe this tale and they get nothing if this tale is found out to be bogus.

So they have a pretty big, they have a huge financial incentive to sell this, of course. And that's why they're

Rupert: doing it. Yeah. And also it's given them a standing in the world because it makes them really important. We are the victims of climate change, you know, feel sorry for us. And we turn up to the UN climate conference, everyone.

We're the ones who are going to, and, um, President Macron of France, he had a. I had a climate conference to celebrate, I think it was the five years or something after of the Paris Agreement and he said six of the heads of state behind me aren't going to be here in 10 or 20 years time because they're going to be dry.

I mean, you know, they love all that stuff, don't they?

Tom: They absolutely love it.

Conclusion: The Farce of Climate Change Narratives

Tom: Yeah, it's uh, it's pretty farcical. Um, anything else you want to cover here?

Rupert: I think that's, I think we've covered quite a lot.

Tom: I've really enjoyed it. Thank you for taking the time. This is, this is great stuff. I hope to do it again.

Yeah, I look [00:59:00] forward to it. I'll talk to you next time.
Rupert Darwall.