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Introduction to the Podcast and Guest Speaker

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Tom: My guest today is Latimer Alder

Latimer: thanks, Tom. Thanks so much. And, uh, welcome everybody to, to the podcast today, which I've called Net Zero for Dummies.

Personal Background and Approach to Climate Data

Latimer: Um, just a few words of introduction about me. I'm an independent commentator on, on climate and energy and COVID and a few other things.

I'm not affiliated to any organization. I've never been much of a joiner of anything. Part of that is if I'm an organization's always want me to tell me what to do, and I'm not very good at being told what to do, and I'm certainly not very good at doing it. So I'm independent. And the approach I take to all this stuff is I go where the data takes me, not being a member of any organization.

There's nobody pressurizing me to do this or paying me to do this or whatever. I just, I'm interested in data and I go to make my conclusions from what that is.

Overview of Previous Podcasts and the Net Zero Concept

Latimer: Now, this is the third time Tom has been kind [00:01:00] enough to invite me on to his podcasts. And on the right hand side of the screen, ~you can see, Oh, I have to.~

You can see the two I've done before. The first one was called climate data for dummies and pretty obviously what it was about. We looked at some data about climate. The second one was energy data for dummies, and that's clearly about how we, how we get our energy. And net zero is really the place where climate and energy kind of intersect as to what people think they're doing about climate and energy and net zero and all those sorts of things.

If you want to know more about me, Please go and look at the first 10

minutes of climate data for dummies. I'll give a longer introduction in there. Um, and also just please do look at climate data for dummies, energy data for dummies. We'll go over a little bit of the same ground in this presentation, but not too much, because otherwise it [00:02:00] will last forever.

Net zero is a huge topic, and to get it down to a manageable podcast, we've had to, you know, rush through a little bit of stuff. Now you might be wondering, if you've not seen either of these before, why I'm calling them for dummies. And it's simple. You've probably seen in the bookshops, there used to be the great books about personal computing.

We're called on a windows 10 for dummies. And now they're called other things for dummies as well. Well, the, this podcast is kind of a tribute to that. What they try to do is to take fairly complicated technical subjects and make those accessible to ordinary people like you and me and the guy you meet down the pub and the lady in the shop and the nurse and anybody else that you can think of who is not a specialist in these topics.

I tried to do that with climate data and energy data and people tell me I came close to [00:03:00] getting it to get it right so I'm reasonably happy with that. And that's the name of it. It's not because I think you're dummies. I think that we, we're trying to explain it in a way that's accessible. Right.

Exploring the Science Behind Net Zero

Latimer: What are we going to talk about today?

Then this is sort of the agenda for net zero for dummies. And the first thing we'll look at some detail is the sort of science behind this net zero stuff. And we'll see how strong that science is and how much weight we should give it. After that, we'll look at a case study of a country that is actually trying to do net zero.

And that's the United Kingdom, which is where I'm based in, not far out of London in the Thames Valley. We'll look at that again in a little bit of detail, not because I want, I think everybody needs to know the exact details of the UK, but because it shows up some pointers about what may be going on in the rest of the world.

We'll look then at how the rest of the world is approaching net zero. And finally, we'll look at some [00:04:00] conclusions and maybe even a bit of speculating about the future.

Examining the Impact of Climate Change on the World

Latimer: So let's go ahead and the first question I'm sure everybody is dying to know is what is net zero? And I've tried to define it here, and if you see what I, what I've written, net zero is an idea.

It's not a program of work, it's not a scientific observation. It's a, it's basically a fear and it, it's a fear that the earth and everybody, everything on it that includes us humanity. is in so much peril from climate change, real, you know, existential peril that the only thing we can possibly do about it to save ourselves from death or species extinction or whatever is to eliminate all our fossil fuels.
[00:05:00]

That's what net zero says effectively means eliminate all fossil fuels. The idea also says it is so big a threat that we have to do this very quickly. More quickly, perhaps even in the technology will allow us to do it. We've got to do it completely and it doesn't matter how much it costs. It is such a grave emergency threat that it doesn't matter if societies collapse or countries go bankrupt or whatever, we just have to do it.

Well, those are big claims, and as always, if you've got big claims, we need to see some big evidence to go with it. So let's go and examine the science behind it. and see how, how much weight we can put on those. Let's start, if you saw my climate data video beforehand, you will have seen this guy before.

This is Richard Feynman, the great physicist, uh, winner of the Nobel Prize and a great science communicator. And [00:06:00] somebody once asked Richard, What is science, Richard? And he tried to summarize it like this, and he just says, If it disagrees with the experiment, it is wrong. What he says is, when you're doing science, you're making guesses about how you think Mother Nature works.

And then you need to go and test your guess against what Mother Nature does. It's no good having a great guess. If, if Mother Nature does not work. Adhere to your guess, your guess is wrong, and you have to do that by a process of experiment and by observation, and the way he kind of says it is better than me, it says, it doesn't make a difference how beautiful your guess is, it doesn't matter how smart you are, who made the guess or what his name is, if it disagrees with the experiment, it's wrong, and that's the guiding principle behind all science, all true science.

So, with [00:07:00] that as our watchword. Let's go and look at the claims of the need for net zero, um, against experiment. And wonderfully, we've done the experiment, we've been doing the experiment about climate change for the last 40 60 years. Way back when, when people first started to be concerned, let's say in the 60s

and 70s.

It might well have been legitimate for them to say, Well, we don't know what's going to happen. So we'll be very cautious and very frightened of this thing because it might be nasty. And that's fine, and I can sort of understand that. However, we've now done 60 or 70 years of climate change, and we can see that in the graph down here, which plots the temperature of the Earth, the global temperature of the Earth, for the last 60 [00:08:00] years.

very much. And we've taken that from something called the Hadcrut database, the Hadcrut dataset. Hadcrut is one of the big global datasets. It's kept in the UK by the UK met office and some university guys. And they all say roughly the same thing, that roughly in that 60 years, we've had about one degree centigrade of global warming.

It's about one 20, 000th of a degree per day. And so we are able, with some confidence, to say we know what global warming does because we've done it. And so we've got the test, Feynman's test, of we can look at an experiment, we've done it, and see how things pan out. So the sorts of things that climate catastrophists and net zeroists would like me to believe is that we've got a catastrophe and the world is coming to an end.

Well, let's look at what the data that we can collect over the last 60 years actually says. [00:09:00] And here, I think probably the most important chart is, we have a greener world. Everybody says they want, they want green, they're greens, they want a greener world, well here we are. This is a chart produced by NASA.

NASA have satellites whizzing around the world all the time. And they are looking at exactly that question, how green is the world? And you can do that with a sort of light meter and filters and so forth. And over the period here. Which is 1982 to 2015, so over 30 years, they have seen that the cha, the leaf area, the amount of greenery in the world has increased, and you can look here and you see nearly everywhere.

It's increased. It's not saying that all these areas that are colored in green are overwhelmed with forests. It's just saying they are greener than they were, even if there's only a tiny little bit of green in the Australian desert here, for [00:10:00] example, there is now a bigger tiny little bit of green. And the reason behind tiny little bit of green getting bigger is two things.

One, the world is warmer, and we saw that in the previous slide, and warmer, as you probably know if you're a gardener, plants grow better in the warmth, that's why we have greenhouses and all sorts of things like that, and just now in, even in the garden, my garden in the back garden here in Thames Valley, things are starting to grow much better

as the general temperature increases.

But the second thing is that We're using something called carbon dioxide, the carbon emissions that people want us to cut to stop them having. Carbon emissions are also ways of feeding plants. Plants grow using carbon emissions. That is their food. So with a combination of more food for the plant and warmer, we get a greener world.

This is not surprising [00:11:00] science. But it is the effect we've got, a warmer and greener world after 60 years of global warming. Now, I can't persuade myself either that these two things are a catastrophe, or are something that we need to do anything about. If it may be somebody else claiming to be green actually wants to, wants to stop the world in its tracks, but, but I'm not one of them.

Debunking Myths with Data: Agriculture and Natural Disasters

Latimer: Now, one of the other, one of the common themes people say is we must, We must stop global warming because otherwise we will starve. The world will come to an end. Nobody will be able to grow anything for all sorts of reasons of floods and fires, whatever. Well, let's see again. We've got 60 years worth of data now about crops and how they're growing in the world.

And this is a chart from the United Nations. So I think we can give, you know, some credit to it. And let's look at it, what it shows. It shows, first of all, the little green line here shows in 60 years, The [00:12:00] yield from our cereals has gone up. That means for every plant we plant, how much effective crop do we get from it?

And if the yield's gone up by 200%, we get twice as much, twice as much crop as we used to. We've planted a little more land. You can see just a little bit more land. Land used for cereal has gone up a little bit. So the production has gone up more than twice. It's more than twice cereal production than the crop yield because more, more of it and more, more of it and more per area gives you total greater yield.

And the population of the earth is also shown here. That's the line here at the bottom. And you can see that the yield and the production have both gone up faster than the population. And what that says is we all overall have more to eat than we've had before. We've [00:13:00] got more people, but the people are not growing as fast as the cereal production is.

So we got more, more to eat per person than ever before. And we've got more people than ever before. So that's a win and a win. More people, each of them having more to eat. Doesn't say. Yes, Tom, you're asking the question. Oh, could

Tom: I throw in one thing? Just that Sarah Lee, uh, yield being up by 200 percent.

It's actually a factor of three, right? That was one, is now three,

Latimer: right? Yeah, you're absolutely right.

Tom: Yeah. Anyway, that's it.

Latimer: My handsome assistant has corrected me. But, but in the, in the nice way that I'm wrong by underestimating. I'm always too generous to, to Those who wish to buy, buy, thanks, Tom. Thank you for pointing that out.

You're absolutely right. It is trebled in production. 200 percent is treble, not, not double. Um, so we were saying, yes, you've got, we have more to eat [00:14:00] and everybody has more to eat. Does not mean to say that nobody in the world goes hungry. Does not mean to say that there aren't pockets of famine and, and so forth.

But if they are, the reason is not climate change. is reducing the amount of food in the world. You can see the amount of food in the world is going up. It's not going up. Lots of reasons why people might go hungry and distribution of food is one of them. But that's well outside the topic of this debate.

And as I say, for different reasons, what else can we look at? Oh, people keep worrying that they're all going to die in hurricanes or wildfires or, you know, drown or something or another. Well, there's a great database kept in Belgium called the World Disaster Database, the International Disaster Database.

And people have been counting to give me to go back. [00:15:00]

People have been counting the number of people who've died from what you might call climate disasters over the last 100 years. And you can see it on the top here. It says floods, droughts, wildfires, hurricanes. and extreme weather. And these bars represent the average number dying each year by decade. So it's a little bit difficult to understand, but what it says is in the 1920s, on average, in that period, About 480, 000 people died of some form of climate dissolves.

In the 1960s, it was down to about 180, 000 per year, on average, in the 1960s. And you can see it comes down to 2010 and 2020, and we're down to about 20, 000 people. who die per year of each of the, of the total of all those things which people call climate disasters. Now, [00:16:00] first thing to know is of course that that trend is going rapidly down.

It's going rapidly down because we as humanity are getting very much better at dealing with climate disasters. We, we, we have better houses, we have better warning systems, we have Uh, more boats in flooded areas, and, and, and, and, and. And that's an observation about humanity adapting to changing climate and adapting to things.

We're very good at adapting to things. And those who, you know, want us to take drastic action to stop it, rather than do adapting, are missing out on the fact that we're good at it. If you do the sums, you come out with a rate, You can work out how many people, what your chances of dying in a climate disaster in a year are, and there are 8, 000 [00:17:00] million people on earth, and 20, 000 die in a year of climate disasters.

And if you do the sums, That gives a rate of dying in climate disasters of one in 400, 000. That's all. That's your rate. If you're worried about dying in a climate disaster, your chances as an average human being is one in 400, 000. Put that in perspective. It's about 1 in 5, 000 to die on the roads. So if you're worried about climate disasters killing you, you should be terrified of moving outside your front door in case you get run over, or getting in a bus, or driving your car to the local supermarket, because they are much, much, much more dangerous.

And 400, 000 people for Brits, to find the one person you need, the one person who's going to die, 1 in 400, 000, is you. You would need [00:18:00] to fill out our national football stadium, Wembley, about five times over to find just the one person. So it's a very small number. And as you can see, it's a decreasing number.

This is not a catastrophe. None of the things I've shown you are a catastrophe. But if you watch the Energy Data podcast, you'll remember that the slide that said, there ain't no such thing as a free lunch. And indeed, that's a fundamental principle of Thermodynamics and its fundamental principles, lots of things.

And here we can see that there is a small price that we have to pay for all the good things that we've seen before.

The Reality of Sea Level Rise and Its Implications

Latimer: And the small price is the sea level around the world is rising. Once again, our friends in NASA have been measuring sea level. What they can do with satellites is they can measure absolute sea level, not by standing on somewhere that a piece of land that itself may be going up or down and [00:19:00] thereby complicating the subject.

They reckon they can measure absolute changes in sea level very precisely. What they've seen over 25, 30 years is that the rate of sea level rise is about 3.4 millimeters a year. If you translate that out, it comes out to a foot in a hundred years, if you're thinking in imperial terms. So sea level is rising at the rate of one foot in a hundred years.

The reasons behind the sea level rise are twofold, really. As I'm sure you've heard, there are some ice caps and glaciers and so forth that are slowly melting. And as they melt, their, their fresh water, their melted water goes into the sea and raises the sea level. And that's a small part of the 3.4 millimetres, probably about half a millimetre.

The rest is that Like many things, when you [00:20:00] heat up water, and we've seen the globe is already warming, the water expands a tiny little bit, and that's the majority of the thing you see here in the 3.0. But remember, this is one foot in a century. Now seriously folks, if you cannot handle one foot of sea level rise in a century, I'll do you a deal.

Send me a Twitter, and I'll lend you my Wellingtons. They won't even, it'll hardly get, in a hundred years, it'll hardly get over my wellies. So that is the general size of this catastrophe. So, there we are, we've done the, we've done Feynman's experiment. We've looked at the results of climate change over the last 60 years.

And have we seen a catastrophe as, as many people would like to think or mistakenly think is there? No, we haven't. And here's, here's the summary. In the 60 years, we've got a warmer world. [00:21:00] We've got a greener world. We've got a better fed world. We've got a safer world and the prices that sea level is rising at one foot per century.

None of this says to me, we have to do anything at all. None of this says catastrophe, but okay, let's move on to the next because A lot of people think we do really need to do something about this stuff. And they then get their ideas that, Ah, yeah, but there may be nothing actually happening now, but just around the next corner is the bogeyman or is the catastrophe and so forth.

The Misconceptions Around Climate Models and Consensus

Latimer: A lot of that is based on computer models. And it's quite surprising how much the world has become gripped by model fever over the last 10 And that people's [00:22:00] critical faculties seem to just glaze over when somebody says, I've got a computer model. The immediate assumption among so many people is that Oh, gee, that must be right, then.

There can be no argument. It's a computer model. This is, of course, bunkum. There is no reason to think that just because you've got a computer model, it's any righter than a model you could prepare by yourself. Uh, and it still contains that, that same difficulty that Feynman says here.

The test of all knowledge is experiment, as, as Richard Feynman says. So if we have a model, we need to test it against experiment, just like anything else. And it's arguable that because you could write for any particular problem, you could write, say, 100 models. And if you had written 100 models, only one of them is going to be right at maximum.

Really, I think we ought to say it should be down to the modeler to [00:23:00] prove that their model is right. rather than for anybody else to try and say that the model is wrong. The burden of proof should be with the modeler, not the assumption by everybody else that it's fantastic until we, until we can prove otherwise.

Over here on the left, I put the classic remarks from Yogi Berra, the American baseball coach. It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future. And that is absolutely.

Over here. I've shown you something about models from COVID days. I don't know if in other countries the name Neil Ferguson means very much, but Neil Ferguson was the modeler in the UK who, whose models were seized upon by our government to, um, produce all the COVID stuff of lockdowns and masks and social distancing and whatever it was. [00:24:00]

Um, and somehow nobody ever challenged his models, even though his track record was appallingly bad. And here's a chart I made after six months of COVID showing that when we look back at Ferguson's models, foot and mouth bird flu, swine flu, he was, you know, a hundred to a hundred thousand times wrong in his prediction.

And yet, for some reason, gripped by this hypnosis that we had a model, the government seized upon everything he said and, and, and treated it as, as godlike stuff. We should not do the same with models about climate. We should force the models to, to be proved to be right before we even begin to look at them.

And sometimes you get really weird things where you look at a paper and it says, well I took a model of climate and on top of that I put a model of economics and beyond the one of economics I then took one of Crop yields and I've put them all together and I proved [00:25:00] that if nobody had burnt, I don't know, a ton of coal the rainfall in Nigeria would be 1 percent less or whatever and they claim that this is some sort of attribution science.

This is just Crazy. We really should be much, much harder on, on models and, and their proof. And on the right hand side, I put what happens if you start believing bad models. And this is a picture from 90, I think it's 1979, so just as I was leaving university. This is a picture from Mount Erebus in New Zealand.

And you will see that there are bits of an aeroplane here. Uh, sorry, Mount Erebus in this, in Antarctica. There's a bit of an aeroplane that had flown from New Zealand to look at, just as a sightseeing tour, Mount Erebus and Antarctica from above. Big long journey. [00:26:00] Unfortunately, the model they were using, effectively their guidance system, had been programmed badly.

And it all went horribly wrong, because The guys who are flying the airplane were faced with a choice. Do you believe what they see with their own eyes? Or do you believe the guidance, the model, the guidance system? And they chose to believe the guidance system. Unfortunately, the guidance system had it in the wrong place.

And so instead of flying into nice clean air, they flew into the side of Mount Erebus and 250 people were killed. Using a bad model, because you believe it right, is a very, very dangerous thing to do. And we need to be careful that we're not overwhelmed by believing bad models. Well, says people. Even if we haven't got models and even if we haven't got data, you must do something about, uh, net zero, because a [00:27:00] lot of us climate scientists think you should.

We have a consensus, and consensus is about as big about a bunker as some of the models are. Consensus is a political term. Consensus says we're going to count the heads of the people who say, They believe in it. There's a, the classic climate science thing is, you know, 97 percent of climate science believe in something or other.

Well, so what? It doesn't matter what they believe in. The whole point of science, as we saw from Richard Feynman, is to take the human element out of your researchers. It's the experiment that counts, not what people think. And this is a lovely quote from Michael Crichton, the American writer, who wrote a lot of good semi thrillers based on technology type.

Subjects. He says, consensus is invoked only in situations where the science is not solid enough. Yeah, exactly. It's a very weak idea. [00:28:00] But having got no evidence of catastrophe, having got models and consensus only, we see that the case for the net zero idea is very weak, and we should be cautious about making big changes because of that.

Now, let's move on and think.

Questioning the Control of Climate Through CO2

Latimer: Even if we could decide that we knew how to control the climate, and even if we could control the climate, as you see the picture here from, this is Spinal Tap from Nigel Tufnell, pointing proudly to his amplifier, looking, could he just twiddle this knob and set off The climate, the ideal climate that he wants everybody to have.

Wouldn't that be a lovely idea? Well, the idea is that carbon dioxide, the emissions, as mentioned earlier, are indeed the control knob for climate. [00:29:00] And all we have to do is set the right control knob, and the right climate that we want will appear. Fantastic, let's do it. Oh, but if we go back through history, you see, does this work?

You've got a chart here going back 600 million years. You can see that we, okay, estimates of how much carbon dioxide here is the black line, and estimates of the temperature is the blue line. And do they go up and down in sync? Does it look like carbon dioxide determines the blue line? Well, no, it doesn't really.

Sometimes they go up and down together. Sometimes they don't. Sometimes they're, they're in opposite ways. There's no great correlation even that says CO2 is the controlling of the climate. It may well be, and you know, greenhouse gas theory and all that says, it is part of the things that control climate.

But it is certainly not the thing that controls climate. And therefore you [00:30:00] can't just dial CO2 and thereby expect your climate to be whatever it is you want. And Then the big question comes, let's assume you could, let's assume that this was possible. The question then arises, where do you want to set the knob?

What level of carbon dioxide, and so what level of climate, is the one you want to strive? Answer to that question, nobody has, it's a philosophical question of course, nobody has ever come up with an answer. Is it the level it was before humans started burning carbon, or is it a level a hundred parts per million up from today where we're nearer the Garden of Eden, the paradise that we all started out within the old religion, or is it somewhere in between?

And then how do we determine what would be the best climate? [00:31:00] Then you can say, well, what's the best climate for whom or where or what? Big question. And nobody's ever even begun to answer that question. At the moment, the idea seems to be, well, whatever it is, we must stop it. And that's like my, my mum, when I was a child and it was, it was lunchtime and lunch was on the table.

She'd always say, see, Vladimir, go and find your dad. Tell him what,

tell him to stop what he's doing, whatever it is. And that seems to be like the climate change. Right.

Summarizing the Scientific Findings on Climate Change

Latimer: Spent quite a lot of time looking at those things, but let's summarize them. This is what we think of the science. So, there is no evidence for any climate catastrophe or emergency or crisis.

There is no evidence of any existential threat for anything. There is no scientific need for net zero. There's nothing there that says, "Because of this bit of data, we must do net zero. And [00:32:00] therefore I conclude it is purely political theatre."

The Political Landscape of Net Zero in the UK

Latimer: Net zero is a political idea, it's not a scientific one.

Fantastic! Let's look at what's a place where we are trying to do net zero. And that is the United Kingdom. And here, as you might expect, in the centre of the world, is the United Kingdom. It's a little red blob here, in case you're not too familiar with what we are, it's a little red blob on this island, the northern bit of the red blob on that island, that's Ireland, this is Great Britain, and the United Kingdom, our country, is the merger of all the red bits there.

Overall, in terms of carbon emissions and therefore amount of climate change that's induced. We are about 1 percent of the world and we'll see that a little bit later on. And our politicians, with no [00:33:00] false modesty, think we are leading the world to net zero, that the world is in awe and following our lead.

Well, I think the politicians are rather deluded in that environment, but let's see.

The Evolution of Climate Legislation in the UK

Latimer: From the political point of view, it's worth looking at how did we get to this idea of net zero. And it's a little bit of, um, hmm, a little bit underhand to my mind. Way back when, in 2008, the then government passed a Act of Parliament, a Climate Change Act.

And that means a law, in British terms, an Act of Parliament is a law, that said we will make a, reduce our carbon emissions by 80 percent by

2050. And that might just about have been possible. by 2050. But it did [00:34:00] two other things as well. So one other thing as well that was important, and it took away almost any decisions about climate from Parliament and lawmaking body.

And it set up something called the Climate Change Committee, which was still is a committee of the great and the good and eminent people, you know, the usual, the usual suspects who are given the task of defining the climate budget for the country for the next few years. And the government is obliged to act upon it.

They, we no longer have Parliamentary scrutiny of climate stuff. It's given to this committee and I read some of the debate. They did, they did actually have a parliamentary debate and a parliamentary vote. Um, so we might think it was inadequate, but at least it happened. And I read a lovely speech by one of the MPs who said, wasn't it [00:35:00] wonderful that, uh, you know, Parliament and democracy could no longer interfere in, uh, in climate things.

It was divorce. Such a big problem is divorced from our democratic system. It wasn't that great. And he was over excited about this. And then I discovered that three years later, he became the chairman of the new Climate Change Committee. Well, what a big surprise. Those of you who, know anything about British politics will remember this guy.

He was John Selwyn Gummer, the guy with the beef burger from the beef burger scandal, who changed his name when he got promoted to Lord Deben and served for 11 years as chairman of the Climate Change Committee. So that was one thing, and we were ticking over and we were sort of doing some emissions reductions.

We'll look at a chart of it later on.

The Shift to 100% Emissions Reduction and Its Implications

Latimer: In 2018, so five years ago now, six years ago now, it was a myth. This. 80 [00:36:00] percent emissions, which might have been doable, was amended to 100%. And 100 percent says, absolutely have to stop all emissions of anything. That means stop all fossil fuels for, for, for anything.

And this was done not by parliamentary debate, not by Act of Parliament, but purely by the relevant minister, signing a piece of paper that said, Oh, we'll change 80 percent to 100%. So big change to net zero, done at the stroke of a pen. Thank you. There was no parliamentary debate. There was no vote taken.

It's true to say there was a discussion about it. The discussion in

parliament lasted 88 minutes. Of our 650 MPs, 25 spoke. 22 were overwhelmed with excitement that now we were leaving the world. Three of them had mild reservations and nobody else [00:37:00] bothered to turn up for what is effectively the biggest change in our lives, probably since the Second World War.

And then in 2019, there was a general election. Uh, the prime, the then prime minister is a guy called Boris Johnson, who you probably may have heard of, the guy with the flyaway hair. Um, and. We'd had a big political debate over the previous five years about a thing called Brexit, about us leaving the European Union.

Johnson's manifesto basically was get Brexit done, do, carry out the wishes of the people. And somewhere in that manifesto, it said, in small print, it said, oh, and by the way, we're going full steam ahead for net zero. And so anybody who voted for get Brexit done also discovered that even though they probably didn't know they'd done it, they'd voted for Uh, doing net zero in, in the country.

And that all leaves a bit of a nasty taste in the mouth, because we've never had a [00:38:00] popular debate on this subject, even though it is so far reaching. And there's no real democratic mandate for net zero in the UK. It's all been done by the great and the good, and the parliamentary committees and so forth.

Um, and I suspect that's the same in many other countries. Yeah, I, I, I talk on Twitter a lot to people in Canada, and I think certainly they're getting, um, around that, that idea. Uh, in Australia, it seems to be popular. Can't quite work my way around. But, we'll see, well, we wonder if that continues. Now, let's look at how these emission things were going.

We passed the Climate Change Act here, 2008. And that was when we said we wanted to reduce our emissions from 600 million, 550 million tons, To about 110, so that will get us down here. And we're ticking over quite nicely. In twenty nine, twenty eighteen, we said we're going to do net [00:39:00] zero. And that says we have to bring these all down to nothing.

In that period between 2008 and 2018, there was progress made in reducing emissions. And there's one basic thing that the government were able to do, excuse me, and that was to close down coal fired, coal fired power stations to make our electricity and replace them with gas fired power stations. Now, Simple bit of chemistry says, to get the same amount of electricity out of coal and gas, you get fewer carbon emissions from the gas.

So simply by changing coal to gas, you reduced your emissions. And that's fine, and you can carry on doing that until you run out of coal power. And when you've got none left to change, then your emissions

reduction comes up. And there's some [00:40:00] fairly, I think, disgraceful pictures of energy secretaries trees.

Supposedly, there to maintain the energy security, you go gleefully blowing up power stations because they'll never be needed anymore and aren't we wonderful in saving the world. Um, only for us to find last year, for example, that while the last one was due to be decommissioned, the government went cap in hand to the operator, said, please keep it open another year so that we can get through the winter without the lights going out.

It wasn't a very clever thing to do. And you can see in Germany, they had very similar sorts of things. When they closed down their nuclear power stations, for ideological reasons, they had to restart some coal powered stations. And I think there's a wonderful thing where they actually knocked down a wind farm to get at the coal underneath it so they could burn it.

Climate policy brings up some really weird things that people do. [00:41:00] So, that's coal and gas. That's done now. There are no more coal power stations that we can decommission. So we're stuck with where we are.

The Real Costs of Achieving Net Zero for Households

Latimer: And to get to the rest of that chart, to bring that all down to zero, we have to get to zero, let's look at where all the energy currently goes.

And you can see from here, this is a figure, these are figures from 2022. Electricity renewable is about 6%. It may have gone up by now, it might be renewable electricity. So that's wind, wind and solar and hydro and so forth. Might be up to 7 or 8 percent now. Electricity non renewable will be decreased a little bit.

And this is the segment for electricity. It's about 20 percent of the UK's total energy goes into making electricity. Probably the same [00:42:00] in other countries. I think the world average is 16. But, but so, you know, if you want to think 15 to 20 is, is typical for most countries. But everything else, the rest 450.

Four fifths of the total energy of the country comes from fossil fuels, comes from oil, and comes from gas. And, to hit net zero, these have to disappear. These numbers, oil must go to zero percent, gas must go to zero percent. Coal must go to zero percent, there's still a tiny little bit of coal being used.

And we've got twenty four, twenty six years, twenty five and a half

years to do that. Hmm. That's a bit of a challenge. Big challenge, because Those are still big numbers of energy, and this is where it gets really interesting, because if you now look at where are the, where is that energy used, you come to a very surprising and unpleasant condition, uh, conclusion if you're the government.
[00:43:00]

And it comes to things. Energy supply, 25%. We've done most of that. That's not going to go down very much more. You probably don't want to harm businesses and industry. An awful lot of it has already offshored itself. And in the days of recession and post Covid, you probably want to keep those going quite high.

So you're left with two segments you can attack. Transport. That's mostly People's private cars, people's, uh, buses, lorries and so forth, but mostly private cars. Hmm, that means you're attacking people's private cars to get them down to, you know, so. That'll be, you know, everybody must have an electric vehicle type thing.

And the one that I think is the most exciting is residential. What does that mean?

In the UK, the norm for heating our homes is gas. [00:44:00] gas central heating. Not everybody has gas central heating, but they are, it is by far the biggest segment. And we've had it for, we've had gas central heating for 40 years. It's installed, it works and everybody's happy with it. It's never been a political issue.

Problem with burning gas is it gives off carbon emissions. So they have, the idea is you must have to somehow get people, everybody in the country effectively off gas central heating onto something else. The something else they talk about is heat pumps. And heat pumps are only electrically powered. way of heating your house that from all accounts I can read are not as good as gas central heating.

So the idea is you will now as a government have to force your own people to spend their own money and it's a lot of money on changing their heating system to meet the target That the government have set themselves. Ooh, not sure the people are going to like that [00:45:00] very much. And in transport, it says your private car has to be replaced by an electric vehicle.

And maybe there are some good reasons for electric vehicles. But they're stonkingly expensive compared with the petrol vehicles that we all have today. The government says, well, what we're going to do is ban new sales of petrol vehicles. But if they do that, they will never get to their 2050 targets.

It's far too near to be able to. Effectively wipe out the vehicles you've got already, and then the bills are going to start coming in.

Effectively you're electrifying everything, so you want the electric vehicle for transport, you want these heat pumps for domestic. To do that you need to add in a much bigger electricity grid, and that has to be paid for by somebody.

The only people who can pay for it are the users, [00:46:00] even if they, even if it goes via taxes. And just looking at these sorts of numbers. For every household, we're looking at something between 70, 000 and 100, 000 to hit this net zero target. And arguably, there are no benefits to the people. None whatsoever.

You are not better off by having a heat pump rather than gas centric heating. You are not better off by spending 40, 000 on a heat pump. Electric vehicle and in fact you've got a vastly expanded electricity grid will be entirely invisible to you. There's no No, no It makes no sense So people being asked to pay 70 000 pounds a household for nothing as they would perceive it Now you might know that in the uk we are very fond of our national health service And we pay quite a lot of money for that.

Um, it's a bit of a Uh, what's the word I'm [00:47:00] looking for? A national icon. But all this lot put together adds up to ten to twenty years worth of budget for the National Health Service. So you're basically saying, here you are, here's your choice, Mr. Taxpayer. You can either pay for ten years of the NHS, or you can spend all your money on stuff you don't want to hit an arbitrary net zero target.

And I think that's just not going to fly as people start to see these big bills coming home to them.

The Unintended Consequences of Climate Policies

Latimer: Now let's look at some other stuff. This is, I really don't expect you to look at this chart, but, but in detail, but the, the government had one set of advisors and they called themselves the fires project, not because I can't remember what it stands for, not because they're setting things on fire, but because that was how the acronym worked out.

And these guys actually looked in detail how you could get to 2050 and net [00:48:00] zero. They, they made it absolute zero. The only way to do it is to say there are no carbon emissions. And a couple of interesting things come out here, if you read the chart, some fairly frightening things. You know, you'll drive 60 percent less, but your car will be a ton lighter, which is very strange because battery powered cars are notoriously much heavier than, than petrol powered cars.

You'll eat less meat. You won't go, um, we won't make so much stuff. You won't All your appliances at home will be clever and they can be shut off at the government's, uh, whim. But the two ones I find most interesting is the, along here. The big no entry sign says no more flying. They kindly suggest we will be allowed to keep the airports in the three national capitals.

London, [00:49:00] Scotland and Northern Ireland together, so that the politicians can fly between the three. But they're going to stop all the old regional airports, and in England we have Gatwick and Manchester and Glasgow and, and, and, and, and effectively stop people going on holiday. So not only can you have to spend your 70, 000 quid on the net zero appliances and cars and stuff you don't want, You can't even go on holiday to enjoy whatever money you've got left.

Don't think that's going to go down well. And they say stop shipping. That's an interesting one, but it has to be, has to happen. Ships run on diesel, or similar things to diesel, and there's no prospect that anybody's going to be able to make a suitably sized battery powered electric ship for cargo. That basically says, UK has only one way [00:50:00] of doing imports, and that's through the Channel Tunnel, which you can do in a train, and the train can be done as a, uh, uh, uh, is electrified.

So that's fine, assuming you've got the electricity. The Channel Tunnel is a very narrow pinch point, and all the ports we have in the UK, Southampton, Liverpool, Tilbury, Drangemouth up in Scotland, and, and, and, we'll all have to shut as well. And what we'll do for imports and exports, I have no idea, but to meet the net zero target, that has to happen.

And, and, and, and so it goes on. The more you look at this in detail, the more you realise that from a political point of view, this is going to be a disaster, as people realise. Now, some of you may have seen the work of Josh the cartoonist before, he pops up on some of the climate sceptic websites. And I very happily had a cup of coffee with Josh not long ago in the Houses of Parliament and he's [00:51:00] great at coming up with things and this is his take taken from the old, um, Nuclear disarmament movie about snowmen, I think it was.

I can't remember the exact title. But here we are. What does net zero mean for you in the UK? It means you're not going to have any heating because you can't afford a heat pump, and you can't replace your gas boiler. You pay so much money in tax you won't have any. You can't afford an electric vehicle because it's too expensive.

You not only can't afford to fly, you're not allowed to fly. And the costs and so forth will be so much more that there'll be no jobs. And like they say, zero chance. Here is our poor, poor little chap, the average man in the street. That's you and me with no chance from net

zero. And that's where we are.

That's where we're going towards. There's no proper democratic amendment. There are no benefits to it. It's just costs and inconveniences. And when I wrote this chart, I said, [00:52:00] how long can this last from a political perspective? And just almost. Almost they must have read my mind because the big three political parties in the UK still say they are committed to net zero and all that stuff, though in fact they're rapidly running away from it, but they keep keeping the fiction that it's on.

There is a smaller party called the Reform Party. Which is coming up in the polls, so it was a small party, it's now polling at 15 to 20%, which is not enough to make a big influence in British politics, but it's enough to be noticeable. And they're starting to say, well actually we'll have a proper referendum about this, or we'll just drop net zero entirely.

And I think that will be something that eventually the other parties will have to, uh, have to follow. There will be an enormous hoo ha, because there's an awful lot of people, In [00:53:00] the UK, making a lot of money and a lot of careers out of net zero. But I think in the end, the sheer lack of political will to do it will, will triumph.

So that's the UK.

Global Perspectives on Net Zero and Climate Conferences

Latimer: How does net zero go down in the world? Well, the world's a big place. And let's try and just spend a couple of minutes on this. The world does net zero and does all this stuff by climate conferences. You probably have heard of all these. They're sometimes called COPS, C O P, Conferences of the Parties.

And the idea is that you go to a conference of the party and your country makes some global commitment to say, We will cut emissions by this or that much or that much, and this country over here will Do it by 2050, and that one will do it by 2060, and at the end, they all pat each other on the back, sing Auld Lang Syne, go home, and do absolutely nothing at all about it.

And here, some people have carefully plotted for [00:54:00] us the rate, the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere, and they plotted against the number of climate conferences we've had and the grand declarations and all that. And you can see, the first one was in Rio in about 1990, the most recent. Bar one in fact was in Glasgow, bar two was in Glasgow in 2020, triumph of the world, Mr.

Boris Johnson strutting his stuff. We've saved the world, et cetera. But none of them have had the slightest influence on emission. The world's carbon dioxide emissions are continuing to rise and whatever the diplomats say, you know, they go home from the conferences and do nothing. The reason is people like carbon emissions because they like what it gives them.

They like energy and they like power and they like controllability and all those things that fossil fuels are notorious for.

Why does that happen? Well, we [00:55:00] can, we can sum this all up. Why, where the quotes problem or where the, in this chart, this shows broken down by continent. And you can see North America and Europe and have been slowly decreasing their emissions over time. Not very much, but they, they could say we've decreased a bit.

Africa, South America, Oceania, Small places, about the same omega B increase, but the big, the big winner in the emissions race is Asia. Asia continue to put out carbon, and we, we are foolish if we don't understand how big Asia is. More than half the people of the world live in Asia. It's about 53%, I think, last time.

And it's pretty clear if you talk to people who live there, they don't give a flying fig about emissions, they don't give a flying fig about climate change. They would like to [00:56:00] be rich and prosperous, like they see the people of North America and Europe were, and they can work out, because they're clever and industrious people, that the reason we get rich and prosperous here is we use a lot of energy.

And they will say, well, let's get more energy for us, And we use it and we too can become rich and prosperous and, you know, let, let the strange Westerners worry about these emission things because we ain't going to. And only today, China announced they were going to be opening more coal mines so they could get more coal to burn, to make more power, to put in the air, to make more emission.

Until that changes and we see absolutely no reason at all going back 20 years that Asia is ever going to do anything differently. India is coming up fast on China and between them they're three eighths of the world just about, then that's going to stay the same all the time. So that's, that's the Achilles heel. [00:57:00]

And I thought I'd just put this one in, um, H. L. Mencken was a philosopher, Canadian philosopher I believe, from, um, political commentator from about 1910. And he had, see if you read his stuff, he has some wonderful aphorisms. And here he says, The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed and hence clamorous to be led to safety.

By menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, so nasty, fatal,

mystical things, all of them imaginary. And you might, if you were very, very cynical, you might think that applied to COVID. But you don't have to be very, very cynical to work out that applies to net zero. It is really just a hobgoblin to frighten the people.

So, getting to the end now. Net zero is purely political. There is no great scientific reason for it. It is unachievable in [00:58:00] any realistic time scale. You can see what, you know, the UK has no hope of getting to net zero by 2050. It's got no benefits to ordinary people like you or me, and therefore my prognosis is it is doomed to fail.

My corollary from that really is that fighting climate change is really a waste of time and effort. We don't know what we're fighting. We don't know if we don't even know if the method we're trying to use to fight it is going to work. Um, and we're just wasting our time and effort. What we should be doing to my mind is use these resources to adapt to any climate change.

Not, not start to do big major programs for saying that are 50 years out, a hundred years out. But if the sea level in your local area starts rising, build a seawall, get some boulders, stick it in front of it. This is not difficult [00:59:00] stuff. You've probably been adapting to climate change for the last 40 years without even noticing it.

I know my garden has, it's, it's slightly different, it's much greener than it was, I have to mow the lawnmower. I didn't need a big program of government intervention to notice that. Tom, I know, will be pleased to see this plug for his movie. Tom made, uh, Tom produced this wonderful movie, *Climb at the Movie*, with Martin Durkin.

If you haven't seen it already, watch it on YouTube or Rumble or wherever it is, I think Tom was saying there's, somewhere on the internet there are more than a hundred copies of this now, so it'd be very difficult for it to get suppressed. It's a great movie, and it talks a lot more about the behind the scenes politics of climate science.

And, I suspect to nobody's great surprise, my final thought is that Net Zero really is for dummies, and I hope I've been able to show you some of the reasons why I think that during this hour long presentation. [01:00:00] So, thank you for your time, and, uh, if you need to contact me, you want to put comments on the YouTube, I do try to respond to all the ones that aren't just, you know, You're a lying bastard or whatever it might be or you can talk to me a little bit on twitter.

Thanks for your time

The Public's Perception and Future of Net Zero

Tom: i'm just curious as you go about your daily life there in the uk
Do people know what net zero is do you think

Latimer: strange enough on the way? Here the way to tonight I took the
dog for a walk to the cricket club and there were only two other
people in the club and they said what?

Are you doing tonight? And I said no Doing a podcast with Tom Nelson.
Ooh, he's the guy who made Climb at the Movie, isn't he? One of them
did, so I thought that was when I'd shown him that. Anyway, do people
know? No. They, they hear about it. It's on the news quite a lot, and
our BBC is Uh, very much a net zero propagandist, so almost anything
you watch, there will be climate change, there'll be David
Attenborough weeping over [01:01:00] something, and, uh, Chris Packham
there and things, and, you know, net zero is essential.

So they know something about it, what they don't understand is what it
is. Say that again. They've heard of it, but they don't understand it.
And this kind of podcast is there to help.

Tom: Okay, and do you think there's any enthusiasm by the ordinary
voter that we have to live in a 15 minute city and eat the bugs and
not fly, all that type of stuff, because they think they really need
to absorb pain in order to prevent bad weather?

Latimer: There is no enthusiasm among people. There is great
enthusiasm among activists that somebody else should absorb the pain,
but that's a different thing. 15 minute cities is interesting. Oxford,
the university city just further up the valley of the Thames, um, they
have a manic green type council and they are trying to introduce 15
minute cities by traffic controls and things like that.

I'm not sure how well that's going. [01:02:00] Oxford is notoriously
Residentially, it will be a green place because there's a lot of
students. It's a youngish university town and many of the people there
are university, if they're not students, then they work at the
university and they're almost required to, to, if they ever bring it
in, I don't know how long it will last.

They've been doing in London, something they call low traffic zones
and low traffic zones basically says you cannot drive down this street
between hours of this or you cannot drive down this street, whatever,
because. It's saving you from having traffic, and that's great
because, oh, we don't want traffic.

But of course, people do actually live in these roads, and they would

like to be able to drive in them. And those are slowly, many of those are slowly being withdrawn. You know, introduced with great fanfare, the council says, We'll have a cycle path, I'm all for cycle paths, as you know. We'll have a cycle path, and we'll have a road block, and so forth, and we spent a million pounds on it, [01:03:00] isn't it great?

And then three months later, you look for, well, where's this, oh, well, the council demolished it yesterday quietly because they discovered that all they'd done was they'd moved the traffic congestion so that the ambulances can't get into the hospital anymore. Or whatever it might have been. So, these things are being done, but they're not being done with great popular support.

And I don't, I think, as I hope I pointed out in the video, as people start to see the bills coming home, then they will wake up. And as that particular political party, Reform Party, is starting to say we'll have a debate and a referendum on it. That will also open more people's minds to it. Personally, the last referendum, I thoroughly enjoyed.

So if we have one on this one, I'm gonna have a ball and we're gonna win it. But we did it last time. We had a ball at that as well.

Tom: Okay.

Closing Thoughts and Q&A

Tom: Any other points you want to make [01:04:00] before we finish this one up?

Latimer: I think that's it, Tom, from me. Thank you for your time and thanks for asking me again.

Tom: All right. Thanks a ton for doing this.

I always appreciate the hearing from you. Latimer Alder. Talk to you next time. Cheers.

Latimer: Thanks.