



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

September 2024

We had a great speaker at our last meeting, possibly one of the best so far. He managed to talk about his experience with the team behind “Dad’s Army” and other British TV classics without notes or projector (and even without microphone) easily, fluently and perfectly tailored to his audience. Towards the end, we had some comments about the lesser quality of current programmes; broadcasting is at a turning point with online streaming creating a different communication world. Only the future will tell us if this change is for better or worse.

Humans generally remember good things better than painful ones. I will leave you to decide if that is by design or the result of some evolutionary advantage, but when you think about it, you can’t help but see examples of it all around us... a woman agrees to have a second child, it was always nice weather in summer when I was young, it snowed at Christmas every year...

This has an impact on many aspects of our lives, but generally, as we get older, it is hard to escape the feeling that the world is becoming a more dangerous and frightening place. We become more aware of things that are not as good as we remember, while so-called improvements are often confusing.

I am currently reading a book* that goes through the evidence showing all the ways the world has become a safer place in our lifetime and why we think it has all got worse. Fewer people die in terrorist attacks, riots, natural disasters, plane crashes, wars, preventable diseases, poverty and starvation than at any time before. But the media can catch your attention and sell more newspapers by focusing on the tragic, so we become more aware of every little incident, believing them to be more common than they are. Remember, you should start worrying when these dramatic events cease to be newsworthy.

In the meantime, we should rejoice in the fact that things are better (not perfect, things can simultaneously be bad and better than before) and listen to the hope and aspirations of younger and future generations.

Peter

* *Factfulness* by Hans Rosling