

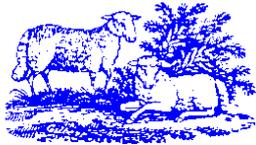


MOVING TIMES

An Occasional Newsletter from Dakin Estates

Winter 2009

DAKIN ESTATES NEWS



*Very Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year to all.*

The last unit at Wramplingham is now sold and Dakin Estates are, as cash buyers, actively seeking new sites for 2010.



Ready for Action!
Nick & James c.1961

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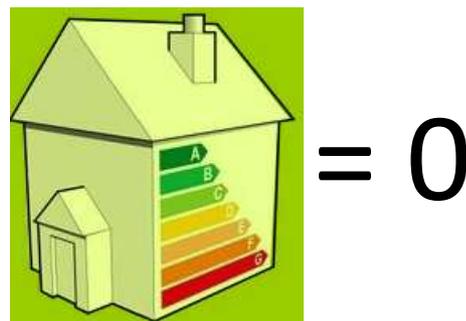
INDUSTRIES THAT PRODUCE NOTHING!

JD was peeved to notice an article on Home Information Packs talking about “The Energy Assessment Industry”. Damn cheek! That isn’t an industry! Industries are built over years with capital, investment and technical skill, industries produce things. Things or services that people actually want and need.

The Energy Assessment “Industry” isn’t an industry at all but an unnecessary layer of “jobs for the boys” bureaucracy foisted on a housing market that neither wants or needs it.

JD has only ever heard of one person, who when buying a house, asked for the energy assessment report and that one person worked in... yes, you have guessed it(!) The Energy Assessment “Industry”!

Energy Assessment is one of the many non-industries, like the Race Relations and Health and Safety “Industries” inflicted on the populace over recent years . “Industries” in which it is possible to forge an entire, highly paid career for producing..... absolutely nothing!



The Meaning of Christmas

The Gaffer sat foursquare on the pub bench in the Ancient Shepherds at Fen Ditton where he had been drinking for the past fifty years and swigged from his pint appreciatively. His large stomach was testament to the legions of pints poured into it over the years, and which, if anyone commented on, he would pat contentedly saying "this corporation is all bought and paid for".

"What are you doing for Christmas Day Nickboy?" he inquired using his usual mode of address.

I explained that, like an increased number of people, I didn't really "do" Christmas day as such and, in recent years, my Christmas day consists of running, riding or walking in the morning followed by a visit to The Ancient Shepherds where the Landlord, a mutual friend, dispensed generous quantities of free Champagne.

This being followed by tottering home at about 3pm for a light but luxurious lunch paella or lobster or smoked salmon – sometimes in company, sometimes alone – I'm not bothered either way. I've had enough socialising by Christmas day. Then a few phone calls around the world, a couple of DVDs and an early night " and he, the Gaffer?", I asked "What was he doing?"

"Full house of course, traditional Christmas. We've got eighteen people for lunch, we've got turkey, pheasant and beef. We've got Christmas pudding, trifle, stilton cheese, Champagne, white wine, red wine, port, beer, brandy, whatever anyone wants".

".....mm" I observed "I expect you'll be asleep on the sofa after that lot".

"Mustn't!" he cried "We've got another load of people coming for high tea in the evening. We've got pork pie, 'am, baked potatoes, French bread, pickles, coleslaw, salads, dates, chocolate – plenty for all....."

His voice trailed off as he contemplated the enormity of it all..... ".....and do you know something?" he added wistfully.....

".....I envy you".

N.D.



The Decade Theory

It is said that people woke up on January 1st 1970 worrying about the uncertain future now that the 1960s were over. What they didn't know was that the 1960s ended some months previously and the 1970s had already begun.

Every decade has its own distinctive feel and look but decades don't necessarily start punctually on January 1st or end at midnight on December 31st.

The Edwardian decade, for example, didn't start in 1900 but on the day of Victoria's funeral in 1901. Nor did it end promptly in 1910 or even with King Edward's death in 1912. No, the Edwardian decade ended in August 1914 with the start of World War One.

World War One was a decade in itself ending not with the armistice of 1918 but in 1920 when all fighting in odd spots around the world finished.

Cont'd.....

(The Decade Theory continued)

The roaring twenties therefore started fairly punctually in 1920 ending only slightly prematurely with the Wall Street Crash in October 1929 and the 30s began.

If you are British the 30s ended on September 3rd 1939 but, if American, the 30s overran until December 1941 with Pearl Harbour and America's entry into the war.

The 1940s didn't end until 1954 when food rationing ceased in Britain and the 50s could get under way lasting right up until 1963 with the release of the first Beatles record and the start of the Swinging 60s.

The 1970s, (the decade that style passed by), finished in 1979 with the election of Mrs Thatcher and the start of the "loads a money" 80s which lasted until Black Monday on October 19th 1989 and the start of the early 90s recession.

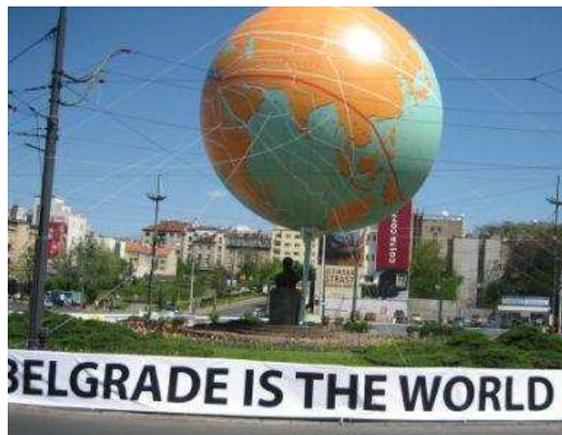
And when did the 90s end? We know to the second when the 90s finished and it wasn't with the damp squib of the Millennium. The 90s ended in the morning of September 11th 2001 when we entered a different decade and a very different world.

So, when according to The Decade Theory did the 60s end? The 1960s ended at its absolute apogee, (on a high you might say) at the Woodstock Festival in August 1969.... but of course, if you can remember that – you weren't there!

BELGRADE CALLING.....

Jerome K Jerome (Three Men in a Boat) once wrote a story about a man on holiday in an Edwardian seaside hotel who planned his days' activities according to the daily weather prognosis of the barometer in the hotel hallway.

When it showed "sunny" he went out for the day and invariably got soaked and when it pronounced "rain" he would spend the day in the hotel, watching the other guests trooping down to the beach in bright sunshine and blue skies, smugly determined that he, at least, was not going to get caught in the forecast deluge that was to come. The deluge, of course, never came.



Weather forecasting has of course moved on since those days, (yeah, right!), but ND was reminded of this story when he had his computer upgraded.

Not unlike the man in the hotel, ND consults the BBC weather online forecast on a daily basis and, to a certain extent, plans his days' activities based on its prognostication and, like the man in the hotel, frequently gets caught out by rain when only sun was forecast and arranges indoor activities on what, contrary to all forecast, turn out to be the hottest days of the year.

These are the vagaries of weather forecasting, but, then a funny thing happened. Some four months after having his computer upgraded, ND noticed that, due to some glitch, his BBC online weather homepage no longer read "Cambridge" but had, during the configuration four months before, mysteriously been switched to "Belgrade, Serbia".

This meant that for four months ND had been planning his activities according to the weather forecast for "Belgrade, Serbia" rather than "Cambridge, England". The funny thing was he was unaware of having been caught out any more than usual and, thinking about it; the forecast for Belgrade didn't appear to have been any more or less accurate when applied to Cambridge than did the forecast for Cambridge itself!

Of course, weather forecasting has moved on since the days of the barometer in the hallway.....

The Lancer's Tale.....

Decades later, the officer who had lead The 8th Lancers in the cavalry charge during the forgotten war that saved the world died in obscurity in a shabby London flat in Mrs Thatcher's Britain.

In his epic novel "Poland" the American author James Michener described one of the final battles of this war, in Poland in 1920, thus, "The crazy collection of tired Polish cavalry, peasants and gentry who seemed not to know what fear was, had saved Zamosc, but they had also saved Berlin, Stuttgart and Paris". Another, (real life), observer is quoted in the book as saying the victory over the Soviet Army at Zamosc prevented them "from sweeping on to Paris and converting the entire continent into a communist prison camp" it was "one of the most decisive battles of the world".



Jozef Pilsudski

In 1920, following the Russian Revolution Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin considered that, with Western Europe weakened after WW1 and with revolutions in Austria and Germany, there would be no better time to spread the revolution westwards to the rest of Europe. To counter this the Polish leader, Pilsudski, assembled a National Army - an extraordinary collection of different units and people who had just been left in Polish territory at the end of the Great War. Units of the former Austro Hungarian Cavalry, soldiers of the Polish Legion, a militia formed by Pilsudski, White Russians and Germans, Poles in French uniforms who had fought with the French on the Western Front as well as irregular units consisting of Polish nobles who had come along with their tenantry, mediaeval style, to join the fight for survival.

They were joined by volunteers from all over the world including a squadron of American pilots one of whom would be the future director of the movie "King Kong". The Soviet army was similarly disparate. Many dressed in a weird variety of clothing including ladies hats, Polish uniforms and one even seen in a bowler hat. Their Commander, Tukhachevsky, was only 27 years of age but his officers included General Boudeny the ferocious commander of the greatly feared 1st Cavalry Army who killed, smashed and burnt everything in their path.

Soldiers on both sides were in hastily assembled units, often composed of men who had fought on different sides in The Great War. Some soldiers hadn't been home for years and felt no particular loyalty to their side or commanders - whole units frequently changed sides - and they had become so brutalised that atrocities were commonplace with frustrations being taken out on civilians and prisoners. Areas were vast with poor roads and bridges and, although both sides had aeroplanes, tanks and armoured trains, huge cavalry formations armed with lances and sabres were widely used. The Poles struck first but, after some initial success, finding themselves in a desperate fighting retreat took a bold decision and disengaged on all fronts retiring towards Warsaw to regroup "buying time with ground".

As the Soviet army advanced Lenin suggested to Stalin that they should push through Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary towards Italy. Stalin agreed - victory seemed assured and by August the Soviet Army was within 20 kilometres of Warsaw and it appeared the end was nigh. In Warsaw rumours of sightings of Russian Cossacks in the suburbs abounded as the city filled with refugees. Diplomats were evacuated. Communist agitators started fires. Grenades were piled up on the streets for a last stand. Artillery could be heard. In Moscow, Lenin was having propaganda leaflets printed in German in anticipation of his army crossing the German frontier. The churches of Warsaw were crammed with people praying for deliverance.

Then it came, "The Miracle of the Vistula". The Soviet Army halted. It had simply run out of steam, its supply line too stretched and its soldiers too exhausted. The Poles, regrouped and refreshed, outmanoeuvred and defeated the Russians at the very gates of Warsaw whilst, at Zamosc, the Soviet General Boudeny and the feared 1st Cavalry found their retreat rapidly being cut - it was here that the 8th Lancers' charge took place in what some sources say was the biggest cavalry battle in history forcing Boudeny to turn east and head for home while he still could.

Poland, and, arguably the free world, had been saved,.....for the moment.

Much of what followed stemmed from the war of 1920. Britain's guarantee of Polish neutrality and the joint Nazi Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939. The massacre of 8,000 Polish officers at Katyn and the post war spread of communism right across East Europe - Stalin succeeded in 1945 where he had failed in 1920. Many participants of the 1920 war were to meet violent ends in later years - Trotsky was murdered in Mexico on Stalin's orders. Many Russian officers from 1920 were murdered in the Stalinist Great Terror of the 1930s and many Polish officers still serving in 1939 were murdered in the Katyn Massacre.

The feared Soviet General, Boudeny of The 1st Cavalry, hero of the Soviet Union, survived everything.

Boudeny died in bed in 1973 being outlived by the Polish officer who had lead The 8th Lancers in the cavalry charge against the Soviet army. He died in obscurity in London a decade later.

It was over sixty years since the war that saved the world.....

.....and he was a long way from Poland.

Acknowledgements: "Poland" James Michener, "Warsaw 1920" Adam Zamoyski.

