

Machine gaming

The government decided to cut the maximum stakes allowed on gaming machines from £100 to £2. It is very worried about addiction to these machines by people who cannot afford the scale of losses some run up.

The Treasury has decided to delay the implementation of this measure to give the gambling companies more time to adjust to this change. The many campaigners to stop this particular problem are unhappy about the delay. Some MPs will move amendments to the Finance Bill to put pressure on the government to change its mind and get on with earlier implementation of the measure.

I would be interested in your views as I consider adding my name to these proposed amendments. As the government accepts the argument that this type of gambling can become addictive and does harm, there is a case for getting on with implementation as soon as possible. Others defend the right of the gambling industry to offer a range of bets and challenges to people, and think all the time some forms of gambling are legal there will be a risk that some people do it to excess. So far I have had more writing in in favour of the ban.

Remembrance in Wokingham

This year's service in All Saints was unusually well attended. The Church showed flexibility to fit people in, inviting the many children from the various scouting organisations to sit on the cushions and prayer mats and around the altar to make more space.

The service was modelled around traditional hymns and readings, with the special references to 100 years ago and the peace that broke out on the Western front. We then returned to the Town Hall for wreath laying by the War Memorial inside the building.

I would like to thank all who came, and especially to thank the organisers. I am grateful to All Saints for doing well as hosts faced with a multitude of people wishing to be in the congregation.

Remembrance Day service at Burghfield

There was a large attendance yesterday for the wreath laying in the Churchyard and for the service, with many not managing a seat in the Church. I would like to thank all those who came, and all those who helped organise the event. It was a dignified and well thought through service to remember the dead and to learn the lessons of the conflict.

Beenham Wind orchestra remembers 1918

I attended the Beenham Wind Orchestra to hear their Poppies and Peace concert on Saturday. They were magnificent. After two years in the planning, they delivered a moving and well orchestrated programme of music.

The concert began with the powerful and threatening music from Holst's Mars, reminding us of the terrors of war and the sounds of the violence. Dartmoor 1912 evoked the happy relations between man and horse before they went to war with suffering for both. Music from Noel Coward's Cavalcade sent us trying to identify the popular songs of the First World War. I think I heard Tipperary, Keep the Home Fires burning, Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and Take me back to dear old Blighty. David Tredici's alarming Wartime told us how the sounds of the bugle and the intense fighting that ensued swamped the strains of Abide with Me that the soldiers sang before battle.

Later in the concert we were lulled by the softer tones of Holst's Venus. The haunting strains of the Benedictus from the Armed Man by Karl Jenkins were memorably played. A newer piece, Sunset, by Richard Saucedo served to remind us that conflict and death carries through to our own era. The evening was finished off with the much happier and optimistic English country garden. Chris Guy our compere kept us well informed of what we were to hear. Robert Roscoe conducted it all in good humour and with great skill.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the musicians for a wonderful concert, and to the organisers for making us welcome.

Getting out of the EU is not mainly

about trade – which has been doing badly with the EU anyway

The Remain media seem to think EU membership was just about trading arrangements, and that you cannot trade successfully outside the EU. Both these assumptions are completely wrong.

Leave voters voted to take back control of our money, our borders and our laws. We want the government to set out the enhanced spending plans, the tax cuts we can afford, the better migration policy and the improved laws that being independent will bring. We are the optimists. We think the UK can be better making her own decisions. We want to abolish VAT on domestic fuel and green products, we want to rebuild our fishing industry, and we want a fair migration system which controls numbers without giving preferences to some countries over others.

Remain seem to think sacrificing any of these freedoms is just fine if they can help us recreate the current trading and customs arrangements we have with the EU. Why are they so keen on the high tariff barriers the EU makes us impose on non EU imports? Why so keen on having to give away much of our fishery to foreign vessels? Why so keen to value EU trade more than non EU trade?

I have been sent an extract from official figures to remind me that our trade with the rest of the world, largely conducted under WTO rules with no special Agreements or FTAs, has been growing far faster than trade to the EU. Since 1998 our exports of goods to the EU have grown at just 0.2% a year, whereas our goods export to non EU has grown sixteen times faster at 3.3%. Our services exports have also grown faster to non EU than to EU. Last year we ran an overall deficit of £72 billion with the EU, but a surplus of £42 bn with the rest of the world.

If this single market and customs union is such a great boon to us, how come our goods trade has scarcely grown with it for almost twenty years? And if trading under WTO rules is difficult, how come our non EU trade is bigger than our EU trade and growing much faster?

It isn't worth paying £39bn to stay in this customs union.