

Transcript of 'From Climate Change to Politics, Ideas, Ideals, Badgers, and more'

Season 3, Episode 43, Transforming Tomorrow

[Theme music]

Paul: Hello and welcome to Transforming Tomorrow from the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business. I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

[Theme music]

Paul: Politics, personal experiences, weather, space, AI, badgers!

We've discussed it all this year. So which guests and topics have we enjoyed and been inspired by on Transforming Tomorrow?

[Theme music]

Paul: It's been a long year, Jan.

Jan: Oh, it is always a long year, Paul.

[Both laugh]

Paul: The way, the way you said 'Paul' at the end of that sentence makes me believe that maybe the fact it's been a long year for you has a lot to do with me.

Jan: No, not...

Paul: ...have I, have I dragged it out for you...

Jan: ...no...

Paul: ...has it been a nightmare...?

Jan: ...no, but I, I think, um, the last episode always feels a bit strange, because we've had so many fantastic conversations, and it's quite intensive to organise people and questions and to do the recordings and to, you know, look at them and then get them out there.

But it, but it feel, I feel like I'm gonna be bereft for the summer 'cause we won't get to have a chat.

Paul: Yes. 'Cause this is the last episode, for a couple of months, of Transforming Tomorrow. We've got a couple of months where we'll relax, not see each other, not strangle each other, et cetera, et cetera. [Jan laughs]

Where we won't be talking, unfortunately, to fascinating people for an hour at a time and discovering all about their work...

Jan: ...exactly...

Paul: ...and their insights, and their lives.

Jan: But what did we do in the last year then, Paul? What? Looking back...

Paul: ...well, funnily enough, Jan, I have a list of things that we have discussed on this podcast over the last year.

Now, all of these are true, apart from one.

Jan: Oh, and I'm supposed to remember? [laughs]

Paul: And you have to tell me which of these things we did *not* discuss on the podcast in the last year.

Jan: Grumble. Grumble,

Paul: Are you ready?

Jan: Yes.

Paul: Badgers. Square scones. Which is more dangerous, a sheep or a cow? Penguins versus polar bears, who would win in a fight? What football shirts are made out of. Whether the Moomins are sustainable? Taylor Swift. Australia against New Zealand. Your favourite shampoo. The differences of texture between cod and haddock. Kevin Bacon. And, Logan's Run.

Jan: Ah, well...

Paul: ...which of those did we *not* discuss on this podcast?

Jan: OK, I'm down to three that, that I'm not sure about. The Moomins?

Paul: We did discuss the Moomins...

Jan: ...aah...

Paul: ...when we had Nick Barter on, talking about legacy, we talked about the Moomins, and how sustainable they were as a family.

Jan: Ah, okay. Shampoo.

Paul: That's the right answer...

Jan: [triumphantly] ...aaah...! [laughs]

Paul: ...do you know what we did speak about, your favourite conditioner.

Jan: Ah, right, oh goodness...

Paul: ...yes...

Jan: ...that was a hard one...

Paul: ...we talked about where you got your conditioner from and how it was an ethical business, and it was one of your favourite things.

Jan: Ah.

Pau: What was your third choice? That might have been?

Jan: Um, I just wrote P and P down. What was that?

Paul: [laughing] I don't know! What could P and P mean?

I've got cod and haddock, uh, I've got Kevin Bacon. Penguins and polar bears!

Jan: Yeah, penguins and polar bears...

Paul: ...no, yeah, unfortunately in the episode about the Arctic...

Jan: ...yes...!

Paul: ...um, we got talking about polar bears, and you brought up a fight between penguins and polar bears. Normally it's me that brings these things up, [Jan laughs] but no, actually it was you.

Um, but also, do you want to know some of the other things we've spoken about?

Jan: Uh, eagles?

Paul: I was gonna be, yes, we have spoken about eagles and that actually is quite serious, but that was on my original list, but I thought that was too easy for you. [Jan laughs]

We've spoken about weather in space. We've talked about the connections between the Arctic and outer space and how that ties in with sustainability.

We've talked about human trafficking. We've talked about politics and how that comes together in sustainability.

We've talked about the economy. We've talked about the war in Ukraine. We've talked about football as a sustainable sport.

We've talked about just about *anything* you can think of: innovation, family, businesses, leadership, modern slavery, the Uzbek cotton industry.

We've covered so, so much over this last year.

Jan: So our knack then will be how we bring this together as, uh, thematically. Because of course we, you know, we have a long list, um, of people wondering what happens behind the scenes.

At the beginning of each season there's a long list that keeps on getting longer as the season goes by. And we try to think about, um, picking up on topics that we've heard something about before, but we have a different angle on them.

Likewise, we try to think of new topics and sometimes it's just purely accidental in that we bump into somebody, uh, on a train, for example - hello to Alfie out there - um, and, and think, oh, that'd make a good podcast.

But we do try to sort of curate it in a way

Paul: ...mm-hmm...

Jan: ...that there will be some kind of, um, you know, sort of common themes coming out of it.

Paul: I have three themes this year...

Jan: ...ooh...!

Paul: ...much as I had three themes last year. I, I like three as a number, you know, it's a magic number as they say. Um, so I've got three themes. How many themes have you got, 27?

Jan: Um, I've got a piece of paper which you can see if you glimpse at it.

Paul: Which is why I said 27. [Jan laughs] Uh, looking at this piece of paper, which includes so many diagrams, lists, arrows, circles, et cetera.

Jan: [laughs] And if you say your three, I suspect they'll be on here somewhere and then we can see what do, what other things are in there.

Paul: I've got politics and law. That's kind of one together. I originally thought they might be separate, but politics and law, they've come up as issues quite a few times.

Personal experience and how the people we've spoken to and their personal experiences have shaped their work, and also brought greater insight to their work.

And, AI.

Jan: Ah, yeah, AI's been all over it really, hasn't it.

Paul: Yes. No matter how positive some of our guests, recently and in the past, might have tried to be about AI. I'm still gonna say, [with a world-weary sigh] AI.

Jan: [laughs] Well, let's start with politics and law then.

Paul: Yes.

Jan: And I think that, I mean, I guess we've been in there because of the political headwinds have been much stronger this year than it feels for other years.

Um, but at the same time, the possibilities offered by political change are still there as well.

Paul: Mm-hmm. Yeah, we've had a couple of episodes that have really focused directly on politics, so that's been the discussion we've been having from the very start. So when we had Nik Nazmi in, um, from Malaysia, a former Malaysian minister, and he was talking to us about his experience working in politics with regards to it, and his experience internationally, and the people he'd met, and attitudes towards it, that was directly about politics.

We also had Lewis Nicholas talking about corporate political activism and how companies can take a political stance on an issue. And they were directly about politics, but then there was a certain man who got mentioned an awful lot, not always by me, but occasionally by me, occasionally by you.

Um, Donald Trump, he got mentioned quite a lot by various different people, whether that be, whether he wanted to overtake Greenland. Remember that?

Uh, almost a year ago, the, the whole talk was Donald Trump was gonna invade Greenland. That seems to have fallen off his to-do list. I'm sure it'll come back when he's bored and wants to find something else to talk to.

We've talked about how he influenced, and the Americans generally influenced, the shape of European politics and elements there. We've talked to Dan Lavinsky from his company Citera, who works with companies in North America. He's in Canada, but he works with companies in the US and the effect that Trump's had there.

We've had all those discussions where Trump has come up because of the influence of the shift in politics that there has been there.

Jan: But the retrenchment is also there under that politics and law element. And, and one of my, um, you know, really uplifting podcasts was the one from Camilo who talked about these judgments that have been made in international human rights settings, that actually have binding effect.

And, um, during, uh, you know, during this year, so since his podcast with us and, and before now, um, the UN has actually adopted some of those principles formally.

Now, some people abstained, but actually the majority of people took those forward. So the law is a way of holding some of those things, um, uh, in place no matter what the politics does.

Paul: Mm-hmm. And much more locally to us, um, in the north of England, um, in England generally. The River Wye, that's W-Y-E, not the why on Earth have they called the river Wye, um, has been given rights of nature. There was a charter recognising its rights across its whole span from England and Wales.

That's the first of its kind. And so that's an example of nature rights that goes way, way back to when we talked to Camilo in the first series...

Jan: ...yes...

Paul: ...about the rights of nature, but an example of an expansion of what's going on, and how what we talk about on this series can actually then come into play in the real world.

'Cause this isn't the real world, obviously, [Jan laughs] sat in a studio recording the podcast.

Jan: It's a version of the real world maybe. I think, um, yeah, there's lots of there in politics and law.

Paul: Yes. Uh, a couple, I want to go off a couple more before you move on, 'cause I can sense you want to move on. Because there's some examples of how things have changed, both within what we talked to people about, but also since then. So, Viktor Orbán was mentioned a few times.

Jan: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Paul: Um, the former president, or prime minister, I'm not quite sure, but the former leader of Hungary and right-wing, anti-sustainability, did a lot of things that maybe stopped the EU pushing too far one direction or the other on there, I think. He's now gone in Hungary. So we talked about him, and the influence he was having on how he might be affecting things. No longer a factor.

But then we've got the war in Ukraine. Because we had our guests from the Dniprotech University here with us in Lancaster, telling us really how they're affected as a university. Since then, the war hasn't stopped and Dniprotech University itself has been directly hit...

Jan: ...yes...

Paul: ...by strikes as part of the ongoing war there with Russia. And that's an example of what we were discussing about how it was affecting them, then becoming really more real.

Jan: Yeah. And then I think there was one of the things that I wrote on this random piece of paper was, um, hidden debts is what I wrote. [laughs]

Paul: Certainly wasn't about me then.

Jan: I think that's not true. Um, and that does relate to, particularly to the law, is that tucked away in the bottom of legal frameworks, whether it be the EU taxonomy or the various, um, EU regulations that both, um, Charika and Andreas talked about.

Um, that tucked away in there is a lot of technical detail that sets the basis for other things to be happening. So the law enables politics...

Paul: ...mm-hmm...

Jan: ...and obviously politics end up, you know, in laws. But I found some of those things really fascinating. I mean, at least in part 'cause they're in, within my field of corporate disclosure.

But I hope other people found them fascinating to realise that right down at that grassroots level, there's really technical, particular things going on that will lead to other outcomes we might be keen on.

Paul: And slightly similarly, Jemilah, when we spoke to her about her work regarding planetary health, and how in Malaysia they have charters and outlines, plans there for planetary health within them, and how that might lead to other people around the world and other countries having such considerations of, of health of the whole planet.

And then something that had already happened before we did the episode was Farmon and Uzbekistan...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...and seeing how the influence there of companies and people boycotting Uzbek cotton, and making changes at a company level or a, a sector level, then led to change at a national level in Uzbekistan, for how they were acting and behaving.

And now the forced labour there, that used to be the way that the cotton was harvested, has completely gone.

Jan: And I, I really, well, there's so many episodes I enjoyed, of course, but I really enjoyed his, because it's like, some of our episodes are a little bit, like, well here's this terrible problem and here's the start of some solutions.

But because we asked that consistent question of everyone, what's next? That one of the things I loved about his was that, well, what's next is it was sorted out and things are going forward.

And when we talked to Sanjay, we also talked about transformation and they, those elements came together in quite a few of these fields about things changing, developing, moving on, um, whether it be with Leanne and Killian about how businesses can be inclusive and how they think about who, who their, their customers might be, et cetera.

Paul: Yeah. Broadly, when we spoke to people about what was next, there was a whole lot of optimism and hope for what might come. Sometimes even

excitement for what they've already seen happening. A bit like you, you say, that Leanne and Killian, when we talked about their Marketplace and I project, what they've already seen happening in organisations they worked with to make them more accessible, Farmon a great example from what he's already seen happening in Uzbekistan in his lifetime.

But there's also a lot of determination. A lot of people determined to keep pushing and making sure that issues don't go away. We've talked to Sophie Alkhaled recently, uh, about refugees and also about gender, and she was making the key point about gender that we can believe that the gender issue is solved and done, but it isn't. And therefore we need to keep it there at the forefront of people's minds.

And we've spoken to so many people who are very good at that. At being the right level of forceful in making sure that issues do not go away.

Jan: And, um, on my random bits of paper here, I, I almost combined them in under three headings.

Paul: You've got three as well...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...now, now, now that I've told you I've got three, suddenly...

Jan: [laughs] ...no, three on this is justice and the pursuit of justice and the, the, you know, justice battles aren't solved overnight. They're ongoing multi-generational activity. Um, care, and then also compassion as well.

So in terms of the, the hearts of some of the people that we've spoken to, I mean, I've, I've, you know, been quite close to having wee cry in some of our podcasts just to hear both the situations that people are working within and seeking to bring change.

But also the extent to which, you know, there, there's hope and there's kindness, whether it be for refugee, entrepreneurial woman through to people who are in refugee camps, for maybe generational elements through to, um, particularly like Jemilah's description of, of, you know, seeing women who have given birth on their own, um, stuck above, um, you know, flooded, flooded, uh, areas.

And just, you know, I, I really liked the way she sort of said that it *hurt* her, and I think, well, yes it does. Anyone who's sensible, it hurts, but actually, okay, so

where, what do you do with that hurt? You take it, you build, you make something of it, and you take it forward.

Paul: This really ties in with the, the second area I said, which is the personal experiences. And we've got Jemilah, like you say that, and who had as a doctor helped deliver 15,000 babies?

Jan: So cool.

Paul: Yes. 15 thou, maybe it's 16,000 since we last spoke, [Jan laughs] although I don't think she's directly involved in that anymore, but you never know.

Um, we had Farmon Asadov, who we talked about, and his experience of the cotton industry in Uzbekistan, as someone who was in forced labour and then researched it.

We had Cliff Shelton who talked to us about the NHS, National Health Service, here in the UK. Its levels of sustainability, as someone who works here at Lancaster teaching, but also as someone who is a surgeon on the factory floor, if you will.

Uh, the operating room floor doesn't quite have the same effect [Jan laughs] as a, as a phrase in that. Then the two recent episodes we had in refugees-related where Sophie Alkhaled and Nonhlanhla Dube both had been to those camps, but they're also both from countries that are affected by refugee issues.

Nonhlanhla from Zimbabwe, and having a big refugee camp there, Sophie from Syria and having lots of people from her homeland becoming refugees in Jordan, in Lebanon, in other countries like that.

You had Kyla, right at the start of the series, that in a similar, Kyla Raby, and her visits to the various refugee camps around the world looking at issues around human trafficking.

And that personal experience of being there on the ground and speaking to these people, hearing from these people, learning from these people, knowing about their experiences, provides so much more expertise to them.

Jan: Yes, 'cause I think if you're not at that, you know, grassroots, as it were, then you don't know. And I, Christina, uh, Hicks really strikes me as a really good example of that with, uh, looking at West Africa and particularly people in West Africa that rely on, you know, nice nutritious fish, uh, for their, for

their micronutrients and for protein and for that to be whisked away and, you know, fed to...

Paul: ...mm-hmm...

Jan: ...to other fish for us to have as one of our many choices.

So I think that was also very, a very powerful articulation of, of what was happening in West Africa. Not that she comes from West Africa, but if you like, that's where her research sits.

Paul: Yes, that's, yeah. Christina's from Kenya from over on the opposite side of Africa. But, yeah, that's something as well. We've had people from so many countries, and I've got a list here of all the countries...

Jan: ...oh, really...?

Paul: ...we've had guests from...

Jan: ...oh, well done, well done...

Paul: ...this is alphabetical order, so I am not, um, trying to, you know, put certain countries first or last. And also, I, I apologise if I've missed anyone. I really hope I haven't, but I apologise if I had.

So, we have had people from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Pakistan, Syria, Thailand, Ukraine, USA, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe.

Jan: Nineteen.

Paul: Nineteen. N-n-n-n-n-n-n-nineteen. [Jan laughs] Um, yes. So, we've brought all those different perspectives, and that's a really important thing. You're from New Zealand, you may not have noticed. Um, I'm from, not New Zealand, I'm from here, [Jan laughs] near Lancaster.

We have got so many different viewpoints and different backgrounds that people bring to us when they talk to us about issues. We're not trying to present a singular view from here in Lancaster. We want to hear from people all around the world.

And that's a really important thing. Bringing those personal experiences and backgrounds together.

Jan: Yeah. Context matters, as they say...

Paul: ...it really does.

Jan: Context really matters.

I think from that personal experience, as well, we've had some, uh, some local and some graduate heroes, um, and also some non-local heroes as well.

So here I'm thinking of, it was really nice to welcome Richard Mason back to his, um, his university, and your friend Ben on the buses. He's...

Paul: ...Ben on the buses. Yes, as in fact he will now be forever known. [Jan laughs] Thank you I'm writing that down. Next time I speak to him, Ben from the buses...

Jan: ...Ben on the buses...

Paul: ...oh, Ben on the buses, yeah...

Jan: ...so, we have LU graduates who we've, we've, you know, made contact with in a variety of ways, who've come back and talked about what's, what they've been doing since they graduated.

Paul: Yes.

Jan: And I suppose Dan is a, is a St. Andrews graduate and one of my students, again, what's happened after their graduation and what kind of path they've taken through.

Paul: And two people you haven't mentioned who are on that, who you probably maybe don't even think of this, one of them is your very good friend of yours, Idlan, who talked to us about football...

Jan: ...oh, yes, yeah...

Paul: ...you know, your very good friend Idlan, who's now been offended that you've forgotten [Jan laughs] that she's a Lancaster graduate, but also Qisha Quarina, who came from Indonesia to speak to us about, um, old age and, uh, the effects that has on the economies and people generally.

Yeah. They're, they're coming back. We're sending people out into the world from Lancaster and occasionally bringing them back if they're okay. [Jan laughs] And of course, the, the episode with Ben was the first one that carried a language warning, which maybe tells you something about the, the danger of having my friends as guests on this show, [Jan laughs] as opposed to your friends.

Jan: Yes. But there are other heroes. So, um, Alfie, uh, working as his way in conservation architecture to, to make things happen. Um, Brett, who's, who's working in Manchester in around linens, and the provision of linens and other materials for, for businesses.

Anna, who's sorting out our energy system with this huge project at Lancaster University, Laura, who came back to tell us how the Lake District Farmers project came through to an end, um, and, and developed going forward.

So there's, there's people who are, from their personal experience, that commitment, are doing really interesting things.

Paul: Now I'm wary of bringing this particular area up because you, twice during this season, have described yourself as a Luddite. [Jan laughs]

Not once, but listening back, twice...

Jan: ...really...

Paul: ...twice, you've described yourself as Luddite. One of which you didn't comment on whether it was an offensive term or not. And the second time you said, actually, I don't think Luddites are all that bad.

Um, but AI technology. So when we talked about what comes next, a lot of people have said about technological and scientific advantages are gonna help with it.

Space weather, earth weather, both of those...

Jan: ...yes, yep...

Paul: ...we've spoken about with Jim Wild and James Heath, and both of them have given us really interesting insights into the weather.

And we're recording this episode during yet another heat wave here in the UK where temperature records have been broken. And James will no doubt have been doing lots of work, re saying, oh, actually, yep, no, this is now the new highest temperature for Lancaster.

But yeah, AI has come up an awful lot. The good and the bad. If I've been talking about it, generally the bad.

But we have heard some positives about it. And it's been a good thread that's run through things. From specific episodes, again, Adrian Friday, talking about data centres, energy usage that comes from them. And that's, that was right

near the start of the season, but really good to get our heads around how much energy they're using and, like, the size of not even a small country, that the energy was being used. And I dare say, given the amount of new data centres...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...that will have been built since then, it's probably now, uh, the size of a really big country, the amount of energy, and water, of course, lest we forget.

But then we had some people who were talking about it in other ways. Barbara Salopek, who joined us from Norway, talked about how AI can help with innovation and how AI isn't necessarily a bad thing. It just means that we could, if we use it well, it can help us innovate properly.

Mahmoud Gad...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...we talked about AI when it came to modern slavery reporting and other reporting as well. Analysing reports, making sure that reports that go together that do well.

And Pentland, do you remember?

Jan: Yes, I do...

Paul: ...when We spoke to Richard at Pentland, who obviously pay your wages in some way, shape or form [Jan laughs] so we can't say anything bad about Richard. Um, talked about how using AI has allowed them to free up people's time so that rather than doing endless audits, they can actually work with suppliers to ensure that practises and changes are taking place in reality rather than just on paper.

'Cause they were spending so much time doing, obviously there's still some manual input into it, but there were positives about AI beyond the negatives that we talked about of the amount of energy it uses and the, complete chaos it can cause, et cetera.

Jan: And I think maybe we'll become more sophisticated about AI over time...

Paul: ...I have no confidence in that at all...

Jan: ...well...

Paul: ...seeing how people continue to use it in such frivolous ways...

Jan: Yes, and I suppose that's what I'm, what I'm getting at is that any new technology does the, the frivolous stuff. And if that becomes the, the main use of technology, I think that's, that's a great wasted opportunity. Um, because some of the things that it could do well becomes really important.

But I suppose one of the things, um, I've been listening to a lot of podcasts myself on, you know, what is AI, future AI, will AI become sentient? Which I don't think it will, but some people worry about it. Whether, whether we will use it to guide bombs, which I truly hope we don't, but I suspect we already do.

So there's a sense in which that AI question, I think, is gonna keep on, keep on coming at us.

Paul: Yes. I wouldn't describe guiding bombs as frivolous, but misuse of it would be what I would say there...

Jan: Yes, yeah. It's super scary.

Paul: Yeah. And it's almost like you wanna say *stop*. Which is a few things, I dunno if you remember the episode with Alfie...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...when, what needs to happen next, we talked about, and Alfie was just plain, right on there when we talked about architecture, architecture being more sustainable, what we need to do is just stop.

Jan: Yeah.

Paul: We shouldn't be building as much. We shouldn't be doing as much work when it comes to expanding, knocking things down, putting them back up again. You just need to stop.

Jan: Yeah.

Paul: And you need to do renovation and think properly about what you are doing. And that's not just the case for architecture. That's the case for so much.

I mean, if we all stop doing lots of things, then the climate crisis, the massive heat waves that we have been having several times already this year across various parts of Europe, wouldn't be happening as much in the future.

Jan: And I suppose that comes down to the, the really fantastic, um, idea that was brought to the fore: Persuadables...

Paul: ...yes.

Jan: So, I remember being very taken by that and, and working with the Persuadables...

Paul: ...before you move on, have you watched the Roger Moore and Tony Curtis series since?

Jan: No.

Paul: The Persuaders? You've already forgotten about it. [Jan laughs]

I should have had that on the list of things that we, uh, discussed this year...

Jan: ...yeah, The Persuaders...

Paul: ...yes, yeah, The Persuaders. Yes, that's, and I had to stress that the Persuadables were not Roger Moore and Tony Curtis in very big, collared outfits, dashing around the Côte d'Azur, um, solving crimes, et cetera.

Jan: [laughs] I should I, I'll put that back on my list.

Paul: Yes, you'll, I'll, ask you in a year's time and you still won't have watched it. Carry on.

Jan: [laughs] You've really caused me to completely lose my train of thought, which was...

Paul: ...we were talking about the Persuadables and how you were really taken by the concept, not The Persuaders, and how you were really taken by Roger Moore's sideburns...

Jan: ...yes, yes indeed. Um, I can't now get Roger Moore sideburns out of my head.

Anyway. The Persuadables. So some of the 'what next' and the whole sort of law and politics element of it. You know, the, the task of sustainability in business and sustainability more generally remains political, but it also remains, um, dependent upon citizens also having views and acting upon them.

And I really like the two glimpses that we got into citizens' assemblies and the way that, that was a technique to work with those who want to be able to

shape what would be happening next and how persuadable people will be, um, in terms of what they might be, um, happy to do.

Paul: Mm-hmm.

Jan: And I was really struck, I was, um, in a, a seminar a couple days ago and there was a presentation on people's perception of climate change risk.

And what they said is that three out of four people were really worried. But when asked whether or not they thought other people were as worried as they were, they always underestimated the number of other people that were also worried.

And that made me think back to this idea of the Persuadables, 'cause if you think you are worried and no one else is you, you'll be, you know, your possibilities for change are one thing. But if you're worried, you know other people are, you know you've got some political levers that you can draw from, you've got legal frameworks to help you get there. Um, then actually the 'what next' and how to progress becomes much less, sort of, downbeat.

Paul: Yes. And we've talked about the importance of communication with various people on the back of that episode where we talked about the Persuadables with Florencia.

There's been so many interesting ways that communication can be important, whether you are trying to get across messages about modern slavery, where you are trying to get across messages about employment rights.

Jan: Yes.

Paul: You need to communicate it well. You need to be able to tell things to people in a way that they're going to both be interested in, and understand.

Jan: Yeah.

Paul: Yeah. Which is hopefully what we do. Although, [Jan laughs] you, you apparently fall asleep whenever I mention The Persuaders. So, maybe not interested in everything.

Jan: No, there's just too many things in my mind. Far too many things.

Paul: There's also, there's a couple of concrete things that have happened since we recorded episodes with people. Way, way back, the first episode of

the series with Jim Wild, when we talked about space weather. Uh, Jim has now become the President of the Royal Astronomical Society...

Jan: ...woohoo...!

Paul: ...yeah. And, um, his face has been everywhere recently...

Jan: ...I have seen him...

Paul: ...talking about science and the importance of funding science, and talking about, um, the possibility of a future Carrington event and what that might mean, which is something he spoke to about us, which is where rays from the Sun caused various issues with electronics and what that might mean. So he was on the BBC.

Jan: He was.

Paul: He was, yes. It, so, you know, he, he's gone down in the world, but he's still talking about it. [Jan laughs] Um, yeah, that's it.

We spoke to Anna Cockman about the Net Zero Energy Centre and that. Since then the solar plant at Lancaster, fully operational and for large parts of the spring, providing 100% of the power needs of the university here at Lancaster...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...that's happened. And the Net Zero Energy Centre itself, which is still being constructed, but if you look at it now, it looks like a Net Zero Energy Centre rather than just a flat building site.

So much has changed, and by the time we record this wrap-up episode next year...

Jan: ...we'll be off...

Paul: ...it'll be there, it'll be done.

Jan: Yeah. Yeah, I tell you the other thing that happened, uh, while we're there is, um, thinking of uh, James and the weather centre up at Hazelrigg. The May record of 29.3 degrees has been set.

Paul: Yes. I already mentioned that. Which again, shows to the point that you are not paying attention to me...

Jan: ...no, I was paying attention...

Paul: ...but you just wanted to emphasise it...

Jan: ...well, that was a May record...

Paul: ...yes, alright, there's been, there've been various records broken...

Jan: ...there have indeed...

Paul: ...I didn't want to just go for one, [Jan laughs] but no, there, there have. We spoke to James late last year, and...

Jan: ...yes, yeah...

Paul: ...in that time there's been winter, spring, and summer records of various kinds that have been broken and will continue to be so in the, the years ahead.

Yes. Um, hopefully encouraging more people to take action. Because it's so, although there are still the loud voices that will say whenever there's a case of a heat wave, oh, we used to get this in the 1970s, you just coped through it.

It's nothing like that. It's nothing like that at all. It's far more sustained and widespread, and more repetitive.

Jan: And you've already mentioned elements of these, but I thought I'd quite like to tie them together.

Paul: The Moomins. You want to tie up The Moomins...

Jan: [laughs] ...I don't think it's...

Paul: ...with a penguin and a polar bear...

Jan: [laughs] ...that's, uh, quite a vision, but it could be done, I'm sure.

Is that there were sort of ideas and ideals that had came through quite often, whether it be entrepreneurship, innovation, strategy, transition, leadership. Um, these kind of notions and ideas that are, are, you know, deeply contextual and change as they go along kept on coming up as being ways of, um, becoming good at these things so you could address the issues that you're trying to deal with.

And I quite like Nick Barter's contribution to us, which is thinking again further on his future normal ideas about whether or not generational governance, and then Alfredo with family firms and their governance, might also be ways of actually targeting the transition, heading to something quite different.

Paul: Yeah. I, I totally agree. We haven't had quite so much this season hearing from the people who are working with students, directly, and the next generation, but we've heard a lot about the next generation...

Jan: ...yeah...

Paul: ...and yeah, the, the succession side of it. Um, Ellie Hamilton talked to us a little bit about succession and what happens there and also talked about a new way of thinking about entrepreneurship and regional development, which both tie in more with sustainability.

Yeah. So looking ahead to the next generation, how they might change things and how entrepreneurship might change things is really good.

Jan: And, um, should we, should we look forward to season four? Or do still want...

Paul: ...I've got one more question...

Jan: ...one more question...

Paul: ...one more question. At the very start of this season, Jan, you accused me of being insulting, to which I said, actually, I think I can be a lot more insulting. [Jan laughs]

So I want to know, over the course of this season, have I been more insulting?

Jan: What, to me personally? [laughs]

Paul: I don't care. Just generally.

Jan: [laughs] Um, I think you remain robust, but I think you're now in awe of the fact that I'm the Taylor Swift of the accounting world and so, so treat me with the, the respect that I might be due.

Paul: I don't think you're even the tailored suit of the accounting world. [Jan laughs] I don't know what you are.

Yeah, yes, yes. There you go. [Jan laughs] Yeah, just to prove that. Yes, that's it.

And also at the start of our season, one last thing, we said we hadn't been cancelled, but having had our first language warning this year, do you think we'll be cancelled before we come back for season four?

Jan: I don't think we will be. We've got, we've got good plans to, to have some more conversations, I think.

Paul: Yes. Where those conversations take us, who knows? There's lots of issues we do want to speak to. There's colleagues we want to speak to, more colleagues in Malaysia, more colleagues in Germany, all around the world.

Many issues that tie in across things such as climate markets where you're gambling almost on what the future climate change is going to be. Whether this is talking about how you teach sustainability to small children. There's lots of things. I'm sure you've got other topics you'd like to talk to as well.

Jan: And I don't know if we're going to be able to replicate our, our previous, um, forays into space. I'm not sure what our next space conversation is, but, um, because we, in season two we started with asteroid mining and in season three we started with space weather, I feel like we, we are almost obliged to do something in the space area...

Paul: ...we'll find out.

So yeah, we're gonna be away now for a couple of months. We'll be returning in October with season four. When we do, we'll find out if we are in outer space or if we're more earthbound.

Jan: It is indeed. But in the meantime, I suppose, I mean, I'd like to add a, a voter thanks to everyone who's listened. Uh, you know who you are 'cause you're out there listening to this. Um, we really appreciate that you listen. We're always really happy to have suggestions for topics or people you think might be great to hear from. And, um, yeah, it's been, it's been good. Thank you. Thank you, Paul.

Paul: And I'll say thank you to our production company, Rethink Audio...

Jan: ...absolutely...

Paul: ...who've produced us over the course of the last year. And our various producers, Ffion, Matt, and mostly Jo who has had to put up with so much from us over this, course of this season.

[Theme music]

Paul: Thanks very much for listening. Until the autumn, it's goodbye from me, Paul Turner.

Jan: And from me, Jan Bebbington.

[Theme music]