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Eightsome reel [1]

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I appeared on Sky News on Saturday talking about welfare reform. As the technical preparations were made to do it via a satellite uplink from a public park in Cambridge, I found myself thinking of interviews I used to do with BBC and ITV. Then it took a full team taking over my house. There were two people on lighting, carrying and setting up the spotlights. There was one on sound. There were two on camera, one presenter and a producer or producer's assistant. Those seven had to be driven there, of course, by an eighth.

On Saturday Gary drove the van, found his destination by sat-nav. Then he set the equipment that searched for the satellite and established the uplink. He set up the camera and mike, kitted me out to hear the feed from London, and conducted the whole interview sequence by himself. He overcame several technical problems on the spot, and single handedly did what it used to take eight people to do.

In many ways he is representative of the modern economy. We use each person more efficiently, cut down the overhead costs, and produce a product or service that costs far less to generate that its predecessors did. We all get more added value for our money, and have cash left over to spend on other things. This is how wealth is created. Adam Smith would have heartily approved.

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