

Campaign Strategy Newsletter 92 May 2015

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Post UK Election: Next Steps for Campaigners

Lots of UK campaigners are probably dismayed by the outcome of the recent General Election. What next / Read my 5 point suggestions [here](#).

The Media Museum Effect: A Growing Cause of Extinctions ?

Why's it matter if you never get to hear a nightingale ?

I've argued in previous articles that growing [blindness to nature](#) is now a significant driver of extinctions. In other words, what people can't distinguish, they can't really see (or hear), and so they don't notice it going. This is undoubtedly a reality in Britain and other highly urbanised societies. Even conservation minded folk, horrified at the concept of the variety of life disappearing, let it dwindle and vanish right under their noses because they can't recognize plants and animals. They are no longer nature-literate, and so can't see more or less 'biodiversity'. We need national efforts for eco-literacy.

But it's worse than that. Species can *remain* salient in our lives through a high profile in the media, and dwindle, even go extinct, in reality. Online makes this worse but any media can contribute to this 'Media Museum Effect'. The Nightingale is a prime example.

The Increasingly Virtual Nightingale

In Britain, the Nightingale has [reduced in numbers by over 90%](#) and the range in which it lives has shrunk over 40%. This much celebrated and once common bird, is on vicious downward spiral in which as it becomes rarer, fewer people ever hear one, and ever fewer notice when Nightingales disappear from their locality. The real thing has already vanished from the lives of maybe 99%, maybe 99.9% of Britons. It is on trend to vanish completely in as little as 20 years (and in decline across much of Europe). Yet it remains very present in our culture.

The nightingale is prominent in poetry and literature, in the works of Keats, Chaucer, Shakespeare and bookshelves of others. Thanks to the Anglo Saxons (nightingale means

'night-singer' in old English), there are also lots of people in Anglo countries called 'Nightingale'. One of their ancestors was once a great singer. Indeed now, there are more people in Britain named Nightingale than real live singing birds.

Then there are lots of pubs called The Nightingale and a lot of Nightingale Lanes, and Nightingale Closes and other place names. Plus of course there are [nightingales in songs](#), and on natural history TV or radio. The first of the BBC Radio 4's daily "[Tweet of the Day](#)" listened to by millions, was a nightingale, introduced by David Attenborough. Not to mention, nightingales on [YouTube](#) and DVD and birding guides.

Yet this an is increasingly *virtual* presence, and the more prominent and available nightingales are in this museum of the media, the less likely we are to think that they are actually not here at all. It's not out of sight, out of mind, but always there, only not in truth.

So rare are the real birds, that when one sang in Cambridgeshire, [there were 300 birdwatcher's](#) cars parked nearby. Most people of course, are not 'birders'. Nightingales are dying out but hardly anyone is noticing them go, and consequently rather [little is being done](#).

Connecting with A Live Bird

This is why I've been running a campaign (see www.nightingalenights.org.uk) to try and get the BBC to re-start it's old tradition (1924 – 1942) of an annual *live* nightingale 'Outside Broadcast' of the real, wild bird. So far over 2500 people have signed [this 38 Degrees petition. Please help by adding your name](#).

Many people have noted that humans are '[biophilic](#)': we like nature, indeed we need it to be healthy. When nature is missing, we put it back in design, decoration or in gardens but this is not authentic nature, only a crude facsimile, such as the countless cultivated varieties of garden plants which look superficially like their wild relatives but often contain no nectar or even pollen and do nothing for bees and other insects.

Some have spoken about the 'extinction of experience' when people live lives away from Nature. Yet the Media Museum Effect is more insidious. It is the creeping *substitution* of virtual experience for real experience. Our future children will still have [Nightingales on SoundCloud](#) or suspended elsewhere in the cultural media museum but they will all be dead.

Which is why being entertained by Tweet of the Day's recorded "nightingale" is not the same as the emotional connection people make with a real live singing nightingale heard by a wood, when only the night air separates bird and human.

Indeed back in 1924, the BBC's Lord Reith even feared that broadcasting a 'tinned nightingale' would not be the same as the real thing but the magic of radio proved otherwise, because it was live. A million people tuned in, and 50,000 wrote letters afterwards. Hearing a live broadcast is a verification that at least one bird still exists, and puts you in the same moment as the singer, even across hundreds of miles.

Of course the nightingale is not the only species affected in this way. Development but especially intensive farming is sterilising our environment but it's a dumbing down, a 'great thinning' as Michael McCarthy calls it in his new book [The Moth Snowstorm](#), that we get used to. With each generation, younger people grow up accepting less and less nature as normal: older people forget, or struggle to explain. As someone once said: "you can get used to almost anything. So you have to be very careful what you choose to get used to". Or chose not to get used to it.

Visit the [website](#) to read more, or [this blog](#). [Songs and recordings](#).

Sign to keep nightingales live [here](#).

@NgaleNights

Evidence That Values Determine The Pattern of Attitudes to Climate Change

The [Pope is on the case](#) and [Paris is on the horizon](#) as the next big climate change conference but will the media framing still focus on 'scepticism' and will climate scientist still try to 'change minds' with more information? I hope not in both cases.

A Campaign Strategy Paper [Climate Change: Surveys From Fifteen Countries](#) posted at my website presents data from surveys conducted for Greenpeace in 15 countries from 2011-2015, using values-based segmentation. It concludes:

1. There is no evidence that 'climate change disbelief' or scepticism is a significant problem in public opinion (as opposed to politics and media). In 15 of 15 countries surveyed, climate 'believers' outweigh 'sceptics'.
2. In no case in 15 countries does 'strong scepticism' (strongly agreeing with the statement "Climate Change – I don't believe in it") reach more than 20%. In the US it is under 12% despite a majority of Republican politicians (but not Republican voters) being 'sceptic'.
3. In all countries surveyed, more people believe in climate change than do not believe in it.
4. Polls run in the US and UK do not represent the rest of the world: the public in the great majority of countries are much less climate sceptic than those in a country like Britain. Strong 'believers' outweigh 'strong sceptics' in Argentina more than 10:1, in the Philippines more than 8:1, and even in the UK 4:1, in the US about 3:1 and in Turkey, the most 'sceptic' of the 15, by more than 2:1.
5. A majority in all countries (eight tested) agree they have noticed the climate changing. Significantly more agree with this than agree that they 'believe in' climate change. This apparent paradox is due to both questions being assessed intuitively not analytically but in different ways.
6. There is majority support for increasing renewable energy as the main source of electricity in all eight countries where questions were asked (in most cases over 70%).
7. Values segmented responses show that unconsciously-held motivational values are determining differences in public opinion on 'climate change' within countries, and the willingness to engage in the steps required to tackle it.

8. The Now People Prospectors and the Transcender Pioneers are consistently the 'climate leader' Values Modes. The Golden Dreamer Prospectors and Brave New World Settlers lead the sceptics.
9. This is true across countries with very different cultures, political and social systems and at different stages of development.
10. Opinion polls that do not take values into account are blind to these insights and communications campaigns drawn up on the basis of 'normal' opinion polls can easily be wrongly framed or targeted at as a result.
11. The underlying values biases or skews are consistent across countries despite the big differences in the overall level of climate belief or scepticism (and although not much explored here, when it comes to taking action such as supporting renewables, unless the ask/offer is reformulated to match Settler or Golden Dreamer Prospector values).
12. Other unconscious (Kahneman System 1) factors such as framing and heuristics, intersect with values to drive behaviour and opinion, even leading to people saying they have noticed the climate changing is happening, while also saying that climate change does not exist.
13. Climate advocates and communicators need to utilise values insights to improve their communications and avoid perpetuating redundant frames such as societies divided over climate change. This only plays into the hands of their opponents in the fossil fuel lobby. They also need to influence climate scientists not to inadvertently create the same effect.

Climate and Values Papers

For those who want more, to save you searching through my website (yes I know it's a bit ramshackle) I have posted a list of links to relevant Campaign Strategy papers and blogs [here](#).

No Alarm, No Reaction. No reaction, no action

[This blog](#) explores what happened on one day earlier this year when air pollution in London and SE England 'went through the roof'. Basically nothing happened. Why? Because the 'alarm system' has long since been disconnected.

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Books By Chris Rose:

[How to Win Campaigns: Communications For Change](#) (edn 2) Earthscan/Taylor and Francis 2010

[What Makes People Tick: The Three Hidden Worlds of Settlers, Prospectors, and Pioneers](#), Troubador

(2011) at <http://www.campaignstrategy.org/threeworlds/> post and packaging free in the UK

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