

Micro-Campaigning

by Howard Anderson

Not so long ago, I looked forward to when my neighbours were out so that I could enjoy the simple experience of being nude in the garden. Such prized periods were rare and although enjoyable, were tinged with the apprehension of being caught and the regret that I should be driven to such behaviour. It fostered a strong resentment that I had to live in a manner that suited them; I could not simply be myself. It all seemed very one-sided.

To some extent that has changed and has shown that a bigger goal is achievable. As I can now stand fully nude chatting to at least one of my neighbours without the least worry, how about thinking what was unthinkable just a few seasons ago, perhaps it is possible with all of them. Not that doing so the goal, it is not, but should it become possible then I could get on with my life whilst the neighbours get on with theirs. No longer having to wait for them to be out and fearing their return, not always worrying about whether a particular tree or bush provides sufficient screening etc. It may yet be possible.

Some people fear nudity. They fear their own association of nudity with sex and assume that everyone thinks the same way. They fear seediness or smuttiness, they fear poor hygiene and they fear that children will be frightened. They feared fear itself. Naturists fear upsetting people, confrontation or even arrest.

Fear is a good thing, fear of being burnt, falling off a cliff or being hit by a vehicle all lead us to take precautions, but these eventualities are proven to be bad, worth avoiding, but nudity does no harm. This means that we must show that fear of nudity is baseless and that none of the bad things so often feared will come about. We cannot wait for others to do that, for society to somehow become less nude-fearful, it is up to us.

But how is such fear to be reduced? There are the national campaigns, lobbying of Parliament, appearances on TV and Radio, all vital in this effort, but these are best done by people know how they are done. For the rest of us there is the social media, but this may be of limited use as audiences tend to be those interested in social nudity already, we need to speak to those who have never thought about it.

OK it is a small beginning, but speaking to one's neighbours, work mates, family and friends are all a good start, especially as it solves a key problem, it helps to overcome the fear in the mind of the naturist. It is not logical to address other people's assumed fear of nudity without first finding out if the problem is mainly with the naturist's own assumptions.

It is clear that a significant number of people in the UK are not bothered at all with nudity so a first step is to find out what people do think. Here we are our own worst enemy, being secretive stops any of our neighbours even knowing there is a problem to be addressed, if they see me fully dressed pulling up a few weeds they will of course think nothing about nudity. Should I chance discovery and be caught nude, what will they think then? Will they think I have something to hide, i.e. something shameful? They may well do and by then it is too late, any protestations of innocence will be tinged by their fear that I thought that my behaviour had to be secretive. It is clearly far better to make it known beforehand, but how?

There are many ways but one must be ready to take advantage of any opportunity that crops up, have a plan ready. In one case, I had just returned with my bike from riding in the London WNBR when I met a neighbour outside. What a golden opportunity, where had I been, why, was it fun etc? The ice was broken and she was very supportive. Capitalising on that, it led on to a more general discussion. No, she had no worries about nudity, it would be best to be discrete if they had visitors but in general, all was fine. As everything, if a balance can be found, fewer problems will arise, but the golden prize for me was that even if I was discrete, should I be seen nude in the garden it would no longer cause a problem.

This of course does little or nothing to help the national cause except that people talk, ideas move around and society changes, people's views so often align with those of others so if we can move one or two, more will follow.

The subject of nudity can crop up in a number of ways but being ready to take advantage is key, having some BN leaflets available helps as the key ideas are well set out. It is vital we follow up any opportunity in order to end the counter-productive secrecy.

Since doing this I have been delighted with the outcome, I cut the grass without looking to see if the neighbours are in or out and they are all still very friendly and good result from micro campaigning.