Twitter Thread by AukeHoekstra

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I am sick and tired of of people who proclaim anti-renewable nonsense as fact and get away with it.

I think @mattwridley misunderstands @borisjohnson's green agenda on all 10 points but allow me to focus on the points regarding electric vehicles that are my academic specialty. https://t.co/jk2LkEUc5T

> It takes a lot more emissions to make an electric car than a petrol one because of the battery. https://t.co/BdJxAOaQvr
>
> — Matt Ridley (@mattwridley) November 25, 2020

Matt Ridley is a journalist, biologist and viscount who owns coal mines on his family estate. He's (unsurprisingly) pro fossil fuels.

Matt 'King Coal' Ridley

Matt Ridley is a powerhouse of climate science denial in Britain. The self-styled 'Rational Optimist' is an advisor to Lord Nigel Lawson's secretly funded charity, the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), and acts as a one-man think tank to his brother-in-law, the sacked environment secretary Owen Paterson. Ridley writes frequently in the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Times* promoting fossil fuels while at the same time earning considerable wealth from coal mining.

At the beginning of 2015, the landed aristocrat started work on two new profitable opencast coal mines. These are situated close to his Grade I listed stately home and acres of beautiful national park that make up a 8,500-acre estate which the White-Ridley family has owned in Northumbria since 1700. The peer's Blagdon Estate, held by a family trust, today covers a significant part of the open mines at Shotton and Brenkley Lane, north of Newcastle, which together contain 8.3m tonnes of coal, worth an estimated £336m on the spot market. This *DeSmog UK* investigative series exposes these vested interests.

In this piece he gives ten things that are wrong with Johnsons green plans that I think mostly show how wrong he is himself.

Our fearless leader has descended from the mountain with a 10-commandment plan for a green industrial revolution. At a cost of £12 billion, he will have all Britons driving electric cars powered by North Sea wind turbines and giving up their gas boilers to heat their homes with ground-source heat pumps. He will invent zero-emission planes and ships. This vast enterprise will create 250,000 jobs. I am a loyal supporter of the prime minister, but this Ed Miliband policy makes no sense any way you look at it. Here are 10 reasons why.

First, if it's jobs we are after then spending £48,000 per job is a lot. Cheaper, as Lord Lawson put it, to create the same employment erecting a statue of Boris in every town. Anyway, it's backwards: it's not jobs in the generating of energy that count but jobs that use it. Providing cheap, reliable energy enables the private sector to create jobs for free as far as the taxpayer is concerned.

Second, he misreads how innovation works, a topic on which I've just written a book. Innovation will create marvellous, unexpected things in the next 10 years. But if you could summon up innovations to order in any sector you want, such as electric planes and cheap ways of making hydrogen, just by spending money, then the promises of my childhood would have come true: routine space travel, personal jetpacks and flying cars. Instead, we flew in 747s for more than 50 years.

Third, he is hugely underestimating the cost. The wind industry claims that its cost is coming down. But the accounts of wind energy companies show that both capital and operating expenditures of offshore wind farms continue to rise, as Gordon Hughes of Edinburgh University and John Aldersey-Williams of Aberdeen Busines School have found. Wind firms sign contracts to deliver cheap electricity, but the penalties for walking away from those contracts, demanding higher prices from a desperate grid in the future, are minimal and their investors know it. Britain already has among the highest electricity prices for business in Europe because of the £10 billion a year that electricity-bill payers spend on subsidising the rich capitalists who own wind farms; raising them further will kill a lot more than 250,000 jobs.

Fourth, these policies will not significantly reduce the nation's emissions, let alone the world's. It takes a lot more emissions to make an electric car than a petrol one because of the battery. This is usually made in China. If the battery lasts for 100,000 miles – which is optimistic – and the electricity with which it is recharged is made partly with gas, then there is only a small saving in emissions over the lifetime of the car, according to Gautam Kalghatgi of Oxford University.

I want to focus on my academic specialty: in his tweet and in his column in the @Telegraph he claims that the electric car emits more CO2 over its lifetime than a diesel car because of the battery production.

Let's look at the facts.

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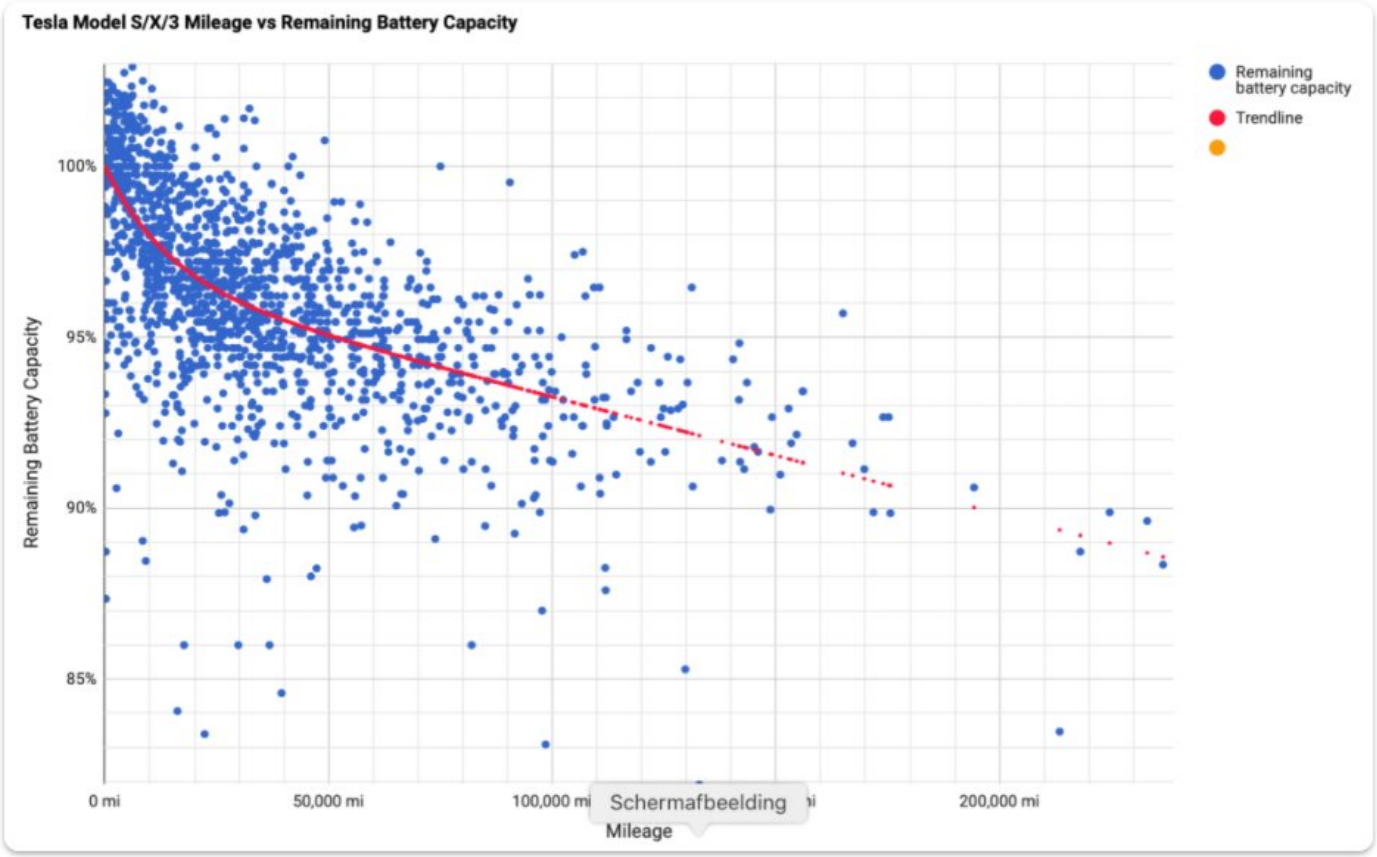
First the claim that the battery lasts less than 100k miles.
Here's the blog from my good friend @M_Steinbuch showing what hundreds of @Tesla drivers measure. And to the right what Tesla reports. Over 300k miles is closer to the truth. No idea where he gets this 100k nonsense.



Then he refers to Gautam Kalghatgi of Oxford University for production.

Oxford! Then it must be true, doesn't it?

Well, maybe it's relevant Kalghatgi is from the 'Clean Combustion Research Center', is paid by Saudi Aramco, and that he (like Ridley) is related to @thegwpfcom.

I had a dust-up with Kalghatgi (organised by @thegwpfcom) that was captured in this PDF (https://t.co/C5qe38Iflx).

Bottom line: Gautam knows a lot about combustion engines and oil, but very little about batteries or the electricity grid.

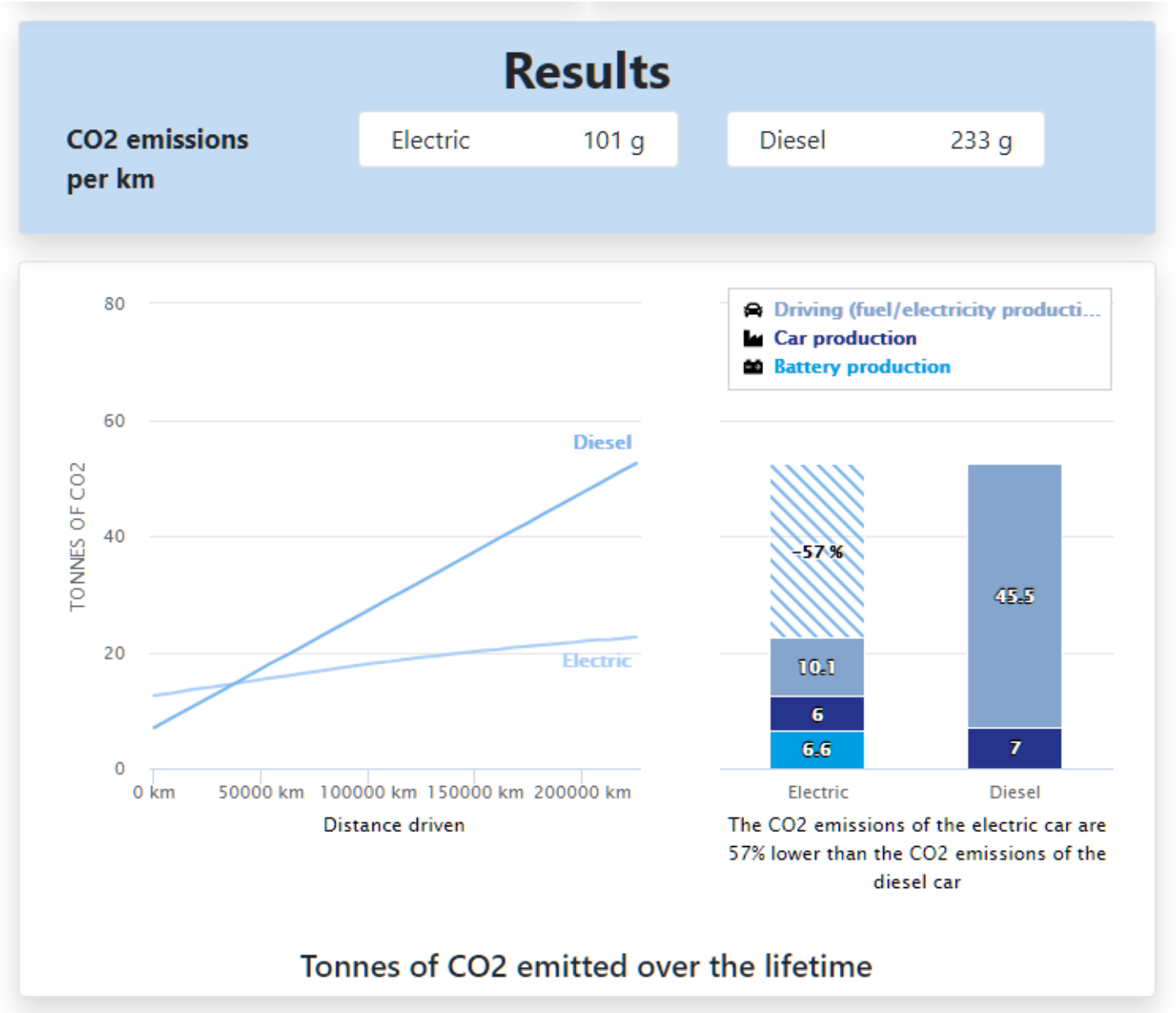
As I say in the dust-up: regarding battery production he only mentions one questionable source that he provably misprepresends.

For a list of and debate about 17 recent sources see my publication here: https://t.co/sgu1FooeJo

And before you say: your report was for a left wing political party so you are just as biased as this combustion engine professor: here is a shorter and earlier scientific article I wrote about it with the same outcome: https://t.co/GxVQDj1G0E

And here is a tool that I gave input to that you can use to see for yourself what happens under realistic assumptions. https://t.co/WgICL1C21v

The graph shows the reality that Ridley wants to bamboozle us/himself away from. (I even chose battery production in China.)



I could go into how most batteries sold in Europe are not made in China and other implicit misunderstandings but I think by now you get the drift: only non-experts without good scientific sources and/or a good conscience conclude a combustion engine in the UK emits more.

Also this hilarious tid-bit "smart meters that drain your electric car's battery".

Firstly, smart meters are only in use when you car is connected to a charger so they don't drain your car battery AT ALL.

> reliance on renewables. Smart meters that drain your electric car's battery to help keep other people's lights on may help. But if you think that will be popular, Boris, good luck, and wait till the lights go out or the cost of heating your home goes through the roof.

Secondly, smart meters are not separate devices but use meters already in your car or charge point and their energy use is truly negligible. (I have designed such charge points.)

For a primer on the joys of smart charging see here:
https://t.co/HCkPFRh271

So I hope you don't believe this article just because it pretends to report facts. Regarding my specialty I can say all its opinions are actually at odds with the facts.

And if I had time I could show you the same for the other anti-renewable nonsense presented as fact.

The reality is that solar, wind and electric vehicles not only help to reduce global warming but are also becoming cheaper than fossil fuels, and coal barons, oil companies and combustion engine researchers don't like it one bit. That's all there's to this I think.

/end rant

PS A tweep pointed out the "smart meter draining your car battery" might refer to vehicle to grid or V2G. My students have done multiple simulations on this future tech. and it's awesome: stable grids with 100% solar and wind while you make extra money with your battery.