

Editorial

The Silent World

Jacques Cousteau was pushing it a bit with his description of life underwater. The invention of the 'aqualung' enabled an increasing number of ordinary people to sample the underwater world but, with the exhaled bubbles, silent it was not; however in a strange sort of a way, in between breaths, it felt so. Here we were, able to stay down and observe this new life in an alien environment comparatively unfettered for the first time. It was bound to be revolutionary.

What Cousteau saw, filmed and communicated was truly groundbreaking but it was in a different era. The footage he transmitted was sometimes barbaric (dynamiting reefs in the name of science to see what the effect would be?!) but this was accepted by the viewing audience of the day because the overall perception of the 50 minute movies was that the underwater world was full of adventure, beauty and, more importantly, capable of limitless supply.

Fast forward 50 years and we have a dwindling situation but with the same perception still existing. The general public can't see what has happened and what is being done to the underwater world by mankind's activities in general.

Renewable energy

Then there's the race for renewable energy; solar, wind and tidal being the front runners. Mark Webster's excellent article about the threat to The Manacles Reef area in Cornwall is just one example of how the good lord giveth with one hand and taketh away with the other.

A tidal lagoon in Swansea Bay, Wales has been given the go ahead and money and company executives are swarming to the honey pot.

"The return of British Sea Power: Consent for world's first Tidal Lagoon Power Plant opens new door in global effort to address climate change" is what Mark Shorrocks, chief executive of Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay Plc said.

Yes, you can't deny that harnessing the power of the sea seems the obvious solution to renewable energy but when you consider that the Manacles Reef area next to where 5 million tonnes of ideal construction rock will be dug out and transported by sea from a newly built harbour, this pristine reef will certainly be affected and possibly even smothered to extinction.

Now that doesn't sound as green or renewable as was first thought, does it?

Fortunately, or unfortunately, actually, the voting public can't see what's going on underwater.

Video lights

Anyway, enough of all this doom and gloom; we have an energy success story in our own world with the emergence of the LED (light emitting diode) which is providing more output than energy consumed to create it, if you get my drift.

Traditional lighting from halogen

bulbs required large rechargeable battery packs to provide the ampage to drive the wattage output of these heat generating bulbs whose colour temperature was too warm for daylight balance films. Not ideal.

Fast forward a decade or so and ignoring the slight detour into HID bulb technology, we have the humble LED which when developed into 'arrays' can produce the amount of light output to equal and even surpass the halogen bulb. Add that their light output is the 'colour' of daylight, that they generate far less heat (but still significant amounts) and that they require far less power and you have a technology which provides benefits all round.

Who knows? If they are developed even further they may even challenge the performance of strobes for still photography.

There. I've left you with a good news story :-)

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