



Dee Caffari Dee is the first woman to have sailed solo, non-stop, around the world against the prevailing winds and currents (Credit: Rich Edwards)

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Dee Caffari: Time to end complacency about lack of safe water for one-third of humanity

In western civilisation we take it for granted that we can turn on a tap and fresh, safe drinking water will be delivered to us whenever it is needed. Therefore, it is shocking that a report carried out by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF in 2017 revealed that 1.2 billion people lack safe drinking water at home and more than twice as many lack safe sanitation. To put this in context, that is 3 in 10 people worldwide.

The sad fact is that we have become complacent and waste significant amounts of water that would be so precious to people who are not as fortunate as us. I read recently that if 1 million people turned the tap off whilst cleaning their teeth in the morning and at night, we could save 8 million litres of water! That is incredible for what is a very small change in a daily habit. Ironically, despite easy access to tap water in the west, many of us continue to consume bottled water believing it to be healthier or perhaps more convenient than tap water for various reasons.

More recent research has shown that plastic from the bottles in which this water is contained is actually leaching into the water with the long-term effects of this as yet unknown. In addition, purchasing water in this way simply adds to the plastic pollution blighting the planet since the more we consume, the greater the demand to produce it. Although figures vary depending on the process, it is thought that it takes around 1.4 litres of water to produce the plastic bottle and cap and another 1.6 litres (an industry standard figure) to extract and convey the 1 litre of water from source to bottle, so to produce a 1 litre bottle of water it actually requires just over 3 litres of water.

As we approach the summer events season here in the UK, we know that hundreds of thousands of disposable drink bottles will be sold and subsequently discarded in the coming months. Although change is happening, events could and should take a much firmer stance in this area and ban all bottled water onsite. Of course, they can only do this if suitable filtered drinking water is made available onsite as was the case in the Ocean Race (formerly Volvo Ocean Race) villages.

In the UK, and as with all islands, we are surrounded by water but in the words of, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', "water, water, everywhere and not a drop to drink." Seawater doesn't taste so great and won't actually quench your thirst!

As an offshore sailor, I am used to drinking desalinated water whilst at sea and the water system we carry onboard is an integral part of our equipment, supplying both our drinking water and water to rehydrate our food. I was delighted to hear that [Bluewater](#) have the technology that can convert brackish, sea and grey water into pure drinking water and that this system is available to consumers in a similar way to the water stations they provide to events. This not only means that drinking water can be produced in more

extreme environments where there is a lack of traditional sources of water, it also significantly lessens the reject water stemming from the filtration process. It should also be mentioned that the water stations can provide not only fresh drinking water but you get to choose if you would like to fill your bottle with still or sparkling, now that is impressive and good news all round.

This new technology also has positive implications for business and the bottom line. Mobile hydration stations for construction workers or mining communities based in remote areas are now able to cut costs and improve environmental performance by removing the need for costly single-use plastic bottles. With technology like this and solutions now being made available, governments will find it easier to legislate against the use of single use plastics and the serious change can begin.

Founded 2013 in Stockholm, Sweden, Bluewater has set its sights on being the world's most planet-friendly water purification and beverage company by innovating and marketing disruptive hydration solutions for home, work, and play. Bluewater products are available globally to consumers, hotel and catering operations, event and venue organizations, and educational institutions. www.bluewatergroup.com^[IG1]

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