

Mock greenery

There is a rogue element and an extreme element amongst the carbon campaigners. The rogue element trades in pardons and offers false reassurances that their goods and services are green. The extreme advocates demand lifestyle sacrifices well beyond what most people are prepared to consider, whilst often themselves disobeying their own strictures in order to attend another global conference or a City demo. They expect others to give up the foreign holiday in the sun and to abandon the family car, whilst they jet or drive to their important climate change events.

It is emerging that some people who claim to offer renewable energy in practice supply electricity from the general grid supply like everyone else, which still has a majority of power generated from non renewable sources. The attempts to hypothecate some renewable supply may entitle the renewable generator to earn a little more by offering a made from renewables certificate, but in most cases there is no dedicated cable to take that particular electricity to the end user.

The whole carbon trading scheme is designed to let companies that need to burn gas or oil to buy in or to be given permits to do so. The movement to "price carbon" can make things dearer and deprive more low income people of good products but it cannot transform the current state of technology or make people fall in love with green solutions they think are inferior. There is a danger that the richer people buy in to green theory in the knowledge they can still afford their petrol car and their jet flights whilst seeing the higher prices for carbon based travel or heating as the way to ration lower income families away from them.

The carbon revolution needs iconic and good products that people want to buy. Governments do not need to legislate or to subsidise to get people to buy smart phones and tablets. They do so because they like these products and the services they allow. Meanwhile in the UK many people will not even accept a smart meter offered with no specific charge to them for having one, such is the suspicion of the establishment motives. We still do not see the iconic Mini or Beetle of the electric car world. Nor do we yet have the ubiquitous replacement for the domestic gas boiler that will take over our homes in the way tvs and washing machines did in the 1960s and 1970s. Revolutionaries need willing tidal waves of supporters which will only come from having superior products with something better more people want.