

## Daily Telegraph

### **Bear Grylls: How are we going to face up to energy crisis?**

**As the world economies battle for air, all of us are facing challenging times. But what lies behind the crisis, and what about beyond it?**

#### **Bear Grylls**

Beneath the surface of world instability bubbles a much more fundamental issue. How are we going to face up to the earth's energy crisis? And at what cost do we ignore that question?

When we are fighting for basic economic survival it is hard to look beyond our front door, but we must. If we are to have a world worth handing on to our children, we must have the courage to look beyond oil and conventional fossil fuelled power solutions. We must also fight against the cynicism that questions global warming and we must fight against a lethargy that says it is too late or that isn't our problem. It is not someone else's problem.

We all have a chance to make a difference to our struggling planet, and it is our generations time to stand up and be counted. I want to do exactly that. I want my children in the future to know that I didn't stand back and observe, but rather I made steps, however small they were, to bring about change.

I read recently how European Union officials say they're considering an ambitious plan to draw energy from the sun that beats down relentlessly on the Sahara. They say that by building a solar power plant the size of Wales (a small area, compared to the vastness of the Sahara that is almost as large as mainland USA) and laying down high-voltage transmission cables, the EU could potentially capture enough clean energy to power the entire continent. Wow! Why aren't they building this now?

It's very hard for any one of us to save the earth alone. I understand that. But this is about a determination to contribute.

Part of each year my young family and me live on a small remote Welsh island. It is a few miles offshore with no mains electricity or running water. We power the island with a small wind turbine and we collect rain water off the roof. It works. Powering the future is about trying to think outside the box and it's about encouraging the pioneers.

In a weeks time I leave for an expedition I am leading down to Antarctica. We are aiming, first of all, to explore part of the remote Antarctic coastline where the great Southern Ocean meets the vast ice continental shelf. We will be doing this using a small bio-ethanol powered jetski and small inflatable. I don't expect it to be exactly easy. We will then aim to scale one of these ice shelves (many of which are over 600ft high). Less easy still, I predict. We will sleep in hanging bivouacs half way up this vertical ice wall before eventually hauling the jetski and inflatable up over the ice face to continue on the mission. We will then be using kite-skis to harness the wind to move across the vast ice plateaus. The team then heads inland to Queen Maud Land in the Antarctic interior and the mighty peaks of one of the least explored regions of the huge continent. Here we set our sights on an attempt on one of the great unclimbed peaks on earth, as of yet un-named. From here we will use electric powered paragliders as a means of escape. These electric engined flying machines have been the holy grail of powered paragliding development – unlike the current fossil fuel burning smoky back-pack engines, these are whisper quiet and un-polluting. On top of this, the entire expedition base camp is powered by renewable energy, using solar panels supplied and a portable wind turbine. All of this is not easy, but in my experience easy is not where the worthwhile stuff happens. Easy doesn't protect our earth. Easy doesn't move people to action.

We want to show that if we can achieve all this in the coldest windiest place on earth we can surely give some of these alternative sources a chance back in sunny England. Our expedition won't save the world, (far from it, we are still flying in commercial airlines to get down there in the first place), but it might encourage people to explore the potential of other alternative energy industries. I want for people to make projects like the Sahara solar mission happen and for people to get properly informed about issues such as bio-fuels, rather than throwing them out, without so much as understanding them properly.

To make this Antarctic project possible I wanted to choose my sponsors carefully. I wanted to find a company that were making an environmentally positive contribution. Ethanol Ventures are aiming to be the leading bio-fuels company in Europe by 2020. Bio-fuels are often the maligned good guys in the struggle to find new power solutions. To the question: are all bio-fuels good, the answer is definitely no. There are good ones and bad ones. Bad ones result in rainforest exploitation and rising food prices. Good ones significantly cut emissions from transport fuels and can be made from European wheat crops that are surplus to food needs (they also happen to produce a high protein animal feed co-product that lessen the need for the imported soy based equivalent). The good and the bad are a world apart. And it is the good bio-fuels companies like Ethanol Ventures that represent are the greatest viable hope for cutting transport emissions.

The ultimate aim is to reach second and third generation bio-fuels, such as ligno-cellulosic ethanol, or in simple terms, power from residues, rubbish and household waste. But to reach these stages we must develop the first generation industries first, but aim to ensure we only get the very best Biofuels on offer. If we risk nothing we gain nothing. Our choice is to remain twiddling our fingers, counting the days until the oil runs dry and the earth is bought to her knees, or to stand up and do something.

My dad used to say that what matters in life is to follow your dreams and to look after friends. If he was alive today I know he would also say look after the world. To lead a ground-breaking expedition to Antarctica has been a dream since I was a child, but to make a positive difference to how we see the potential of alternative energy and bio-fuels is a must. Wish us luck.

### **The Daily Telegraph**

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**Richard Alleyne**

#### **Bear Grylls heads out on 'carbon neutral' trip to the South Pole**

Bear Grylls, the survival expert, this weekend sets out on his latest adventure - a carbon neutral trip to the South Pole to conquer an unclimbed mountain.

Bear Grylls will attempt to scale an unnamed mountain in Antarctica.

The former member of the SAS and youngest Briton to climb Everest plans to scale the unnamed mountain after travelling across Antarctica on jet-skis and under wind-powered kite-ski and electric powered para-glider.

If he is successful in climbing the remote 9,000 ft mountain he and his team of four will be able to name the peak.

The expedition aims to promote alternative energy and bioethanol as a source of power in the future and raise funds for Global Angels, an international children's charity championing the needs of children around the world.

The team, who will endure temperatures as low as -35, will have to traverse 1,000 ft ice cliffs, around 700 miles of high altitude plateau before even attempting the peak.

The trip, sponsored by British biofuel makers, is expected to last two weeks and it is hoped to highlight the potential for carbon neutral fuels that will power the expedition.

"We hope to show through this Antarctic adventure the potential of how bioethanol and alternative energy can sustain our environment and provide a viable power source for the future," said Grylls.

The star of Channel 4's Born Survivor entered the Guinness Book of Records after becoming the youngest Briton to climb Everest at the age of 23.