

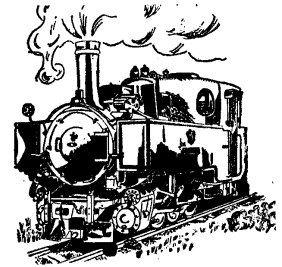
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A World-Euro-Standard Returnable Drink Bottle

Not least following David Attenborough's latest revelations, a modest backlash has at last arisen against one-trip plastic bottles. The London Daily Mail on Mar 24 had a front page patting itself on the back claiming credit for a plan to require a few pence deposit on these bottles in the hope/expectation that either the drinkers, or a re-incarnated squad of "Wombles" will collect discarded bottles to claim the deposit, and remove them from the waste stream. Whether tetrapaks and cans will be included remains to be seen.

Glass is by contrast re-useable after washing with almost no deterioration in quality. In UK the returnable glass milk bottle has become an endangered species along with the decline in doorstep delivery. Unlike much of the rest of Europe, UK supermarkets work as a one-way street and they seem unwilling to return anything, so the delivery trucks routinely return empty. If they could be persuaded to collect and return empty bottles we would remove much from landfill and if glass replaced plastic and composites, washing rather than re-manufacture would be routine.

For some time, in UK we have been persuaded to bring empty bottles usually at supermarkets, to be smashed in bottle banks, so it is reasonable to expect this to continue if there was the facility to return them intact for washing and re-use, as can be done in stores in Germany. Here the bottle is pushed in a tube at the top, the machine reads the bar code and will accept almost any type. It prints a ticket and cash is deducted at the check-out. It also accepts crates at the bottom.

This is where the Standard bottle comes in, which in view of Brexit, perhaps should be re-named a WORLD – BOTTLE. If drink manufacturers could be persuaded or even required to all use the same bottle, it could be returned anywhere and re-filled with anything, so transporting empties any distance would be minimised. This glass bottle would have a short wide neck to optimise space and have a re-sealable steel screw cap. The bottle would be washed, but the cap replaced. Being steel, it is easily re-cycled. We already have the standard ring pull can, and so many drinks are in 1 litre PET bottles, one can claim standardisation is here already. Agreed a glass bottle will be heavier than any plastic one, but so many drinks not least containing alcohol still use glass, the point is made. Glass bottles larger than 1 litre may need some investigation, or will remain made from PET.

There is now, at last some concern internationally about the vast number of plastic bottles that end up in the sea. This bottle could replace most of them and would help to clean up the sea, or at least slow down the rate of deterioration.

The SNAPPLE bottle from AG Barr comes close to the desired shape. The neck would be shorter & wider.

First written 1987, & since updated.