



THE **CONSUMER REVOLUTION** ISSUE

BAREFOOT SOLDIERS

Galahad Clark on why it's time for a barefoot revolution in footwear

ETHICAL GIFTS

How to choose presents that will support a more conscious Christmas

HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD

World Land Trust's Viv Burton reveals how you can save land and species

RAISING THE BAR

Introducing the plastic-free soap and shampoo bar subscription

slice

Could your data pay for a better future?

Earn £1,200 a year whilst planting trees in the tropics.

Your data makes money

Did you know that big tech companies are making billions selling advertising to brands? They use your data to get rich, whilst you get nothing.

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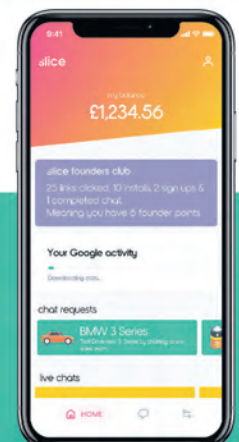
How it works

The Slice app takes back your data from these companies and stores it securely. If you want to make money, Slice can analyse your data, work out what you're looking for and match you with relevant brand offers.

Our partnership with **MYGREEN pod**

For every new customer who accepts an offer, Slice will donate 50p to planting trees in the tropics. If you donate a percentage of your Slice earnings you can make an even bigger difference.

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getmyslice.com/mygreenpod

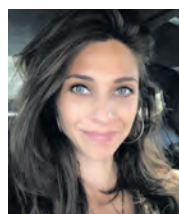




Welcome to My Green Pod Magazine!

2019 could be the year that changed everything: from hearts and minds to entrenched consumer habits.

We're predicting a big shift away from Christmas traditions that breed waste and excess, plus a record year for conscious gifts. There are more options now than ever before, so we hope this issue brings some inspiration! Merry Christmas x



Katie Hill
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
katie@mygreenpod.com

About us

MyGreenPod Ltd is an independent, family-run UK business, founded by Katie Hill and Jarvis Smith. We want to share the real stories behind the brands and people working tirelessly to offer ethical alternatives to mainstream products and services.

You might not see these options on the high street and they may not be the first to appear in online searches. But they are on

mygreenpod.com. These Hero products and services support the shift to a more conscious lifestyle – and may help you save some cash (while having some fun) on the way!



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PHOTOGRAPHY ISTOCK



11 years
The time we have left to turn things round

40%
of British crops are rejected due to their shape or size



17 trees – plus 7,000 gallons of water – are saved with each tonne of recycled paper

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EVERYONE CAN HELP SAVE OUR PLANET.

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HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST BUT THAT MEANS
THERE IS STILL HALF LEFT TO SAVE

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£100 an acre



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worldlandtrust.org

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World Land Trust, Blyth House, Bridge Street, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 8AB



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MY GREEN
pod.com
HERO
DECEMBER '19

Introducing our December Heroes!
Forget the Christmas jumper – these gift ideas
will help your loved ones make a switch that will
really make a difference.

View all our Heroes at mygreenpod.com/heroes



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premium performance, made
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[@KitandKinUK](https://www.kitandkin.com)
[kitandkin.com](https://www.kitandkin.com)



LUNA TEXTILES

The Natural Comfort range
of organic wool bedding from
Luna Textiles could be the
most ethical – and luxurious –
way to get a good night's sleep.

[@Lunatextile](https://www.lunatextile.co.uk)
[lunatex.co.uk](https://www.lunatextile.co.uk)

HOME & GARDEN



TINCTURE LONDON STARTER SET

If you're new to natural cleaning, this set contains everything you need.
The all-natural products – for bathrooms, floor, furniture, glass, washing
up and all other purposes – harness the cleaning power of ethically
sourced essential oils and active botanical extracts instead of harsh
chemicals. Refills for the silver-lined bottles come in glass containers.

[@TinctureLondon](https://www.tincturelondon.com)
[tincturelondon.com](https://www.tincturelondon.com)

HOME & GARDEN



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[@TUKC](https://www.theusedkitchencompany.com)
[theusedkitchencompany.com](https://www.theusedkitchencompany.com)

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does it all: it's suitable
for all skin types
and conditions and
intelligently adapts
to the ever-changing
needs of your skin.
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of 30 bio-active,
balancing and natural
therapeutics brings
out your natural glow.

[@](https://www.pureandlightorganic.eu)
[pureandlightorganic.eu](https://www.pureandlightorganic.eu)

ARTS & FASHION



ASHA SUNGLASSES

If you're heading away for some winter sun, the
stylish, unisex Asha sunglasses from Pala Eyewear
could be just the ticket. They're made from matt
black recycled acetate from factory offcuts that
would otherwise go to waste.

[@PalaEyewear](https://www.palaeyewear.com)
[palaeyewear.com](https://www.palaeyewear.com)

TOP 5 WINTER SWITCHES

FOOD & DRINK



SLANGE VAR

Alcohol-free luxury, with fresh lime juice, cold pressed ginger juice, cider vinegar and a hint of Scottish honey. Yum.

[@SlangeVar](#)
slangevar.com

FOOD & DRINK



AVALLEN CALVADOS

Made with just apples, water and time – all sales support bees.

[@AvallenSpirits](#)
avallenspirits.com

FOOD & DRINK



GOOD SIXTY

This revolutionary online marketplace showcases the best independent food and drink the UK has to offer.

[@GoodSixty](#)
goodsixty.co.uk

GIFTS

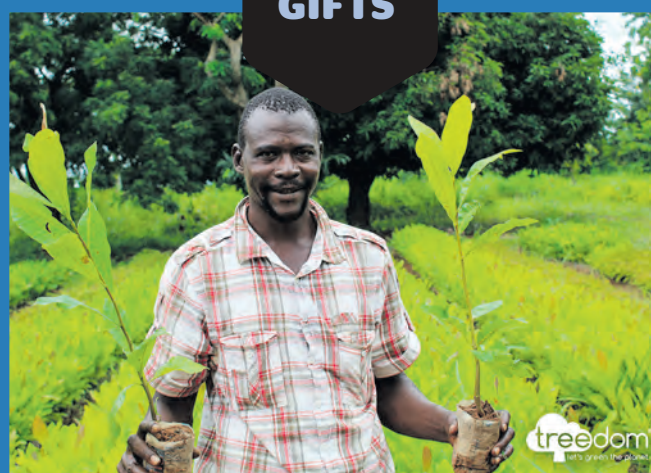


MY TANO DEORE

The frame for this my Boo bamboo bike is handmade in Ghana, in partnership with a non-profit that invests in local education.

[@MyBooBambooBike](#)
my-boo.com

GIFTS



TREEDOM

Plant a tree in a small, sustainable agroforestry system and follow its story online. You will directly support smallholder farmers.

[@Treedom](#)
go.treedom.net/mygreenpod

1

Re-wrapped gift wrap is made entirely from post-consumer waste pulp and printed using vegetable inks.

[@Rewrappeduk](#)
re-wrapped.co.uk

2

Weleda Skin Food defends your skin from cold weather and the drying effects of central heating. Apply it anywhere that feels dry, cracked or chapped.

[@WeledaUK](#)
weleda.co.uk

3

Switch your home to a renewable energy supply from Octopus Energy. As well as sleeping better at night, you'll almost certainly be rewarded with cheaper bills.

[@octopus_energy](#)
mygreenpod.octopus.energy

4

If dairy will feature in your Christmas lunch, make sure it's the best you can get. Yeo Valley is '100% Yeorganic' – organic and then some.

[@yeovalley](#)
yeovalley.co.uk

5

Escaping for some winter sun? Pack light with incognito 3-in-1 Suncream, Insect repellent and Moisturiser.

[@incognitoUK](#)
lessmosquito.com



AWARDS 2019

In association with **octopusenergy**

**Winners announced at green-carpet ceremony
that invited guests to become agents of change**

The climate emergency is now attracting mainstream and global attention, with more people than ever looking for ways to live a more conscious lifestyle. Their transition will be smoother due to the heroic efforts and determination of individuals who have spent years trying, testing and perfecting the alternatives many are looking for today.

P.E.A. Award winners come from all areas of the UK; they have different backgrounds, beliefs and approaches. But they all share one thing in common: they are united by the conviction that tangible and effective alternatives exist that have the power to save the world.

These pioneers – in sectors ranging from the Arts to Money – are exploring, researching and implementing alternatives to business as usual in their chosen fields. Through their own passion and dedication, they are venturing where governments and big business fear to tread, forging a blueprint for what conscious businesses and lifestyles of the future could look like.

IMMERSIVE THEATRE

In the run-up to the awards ceremony, the production team spent three weeks working silently behind the scenes; an

electric Renault Master was used to collect pieces of set that had been exclusively designed for the show and awards.

Central to the night was an immersive production by multi-award winning theatre company Enlightenment Café. The show, *ZQH*, will now tour the UK, helping to spread a message that has underlined the P.E.A. Awards for nine years: every individual has the power to make a difference.



A GREEN CELEBRATION

The ceremony was held at Studio 338 on the Greenwich Peninsula, London and co-hosted by P.E.A. founder Jarvis Smith and biophilic design expert Oliver Heath. Guests had time to network with green heroes over free-flowing drinks provided by Juniper Green Organic, Atlantic Distillery, Luscombe Organic, Equinox Kombucha and Deeside Water.

A vegan meal was prepared by Amrutha Catering and a raffle, which raised money for charity partner World Land Trust, saw winners lease a Jaguar I-PACE (from Octopus EV) and a Tesla (from Evison Electric Vehicle Hire).

The bespoke P.E.A. Award trophies were, for the third year running, created by the incredibly talented Katie Weiner.



PEA★ AWARDS 2019 WINNERS

ARTS

SPONSORED BY



WINNER:

CLAIRE O'NEILL
founder of A Greener Festival



Claire has pioneered an awards scheme that recognises festivals for organisers' efforts to become more sustainable. It has since evolved into a sophisticated assessment and feedback process that is internationally recognised. Assessors share best practice between events and collect valuable information that can be used to benchmark progress. For example, the estimated average carbon footprint of festivals assessed in 2019 was 5kg CO2e per person per day.

[@agreenerfest](https://twitter.com/agreenerfest)
agreenerfestival.com

SHORTLIST:

ANSHUL SINHA, filmmaker
CONSCIOUS BEAUTY UNION (team)
TIMBER FESTIVAL (team)

BRITAIN'S GREENEST FAMILY

SPONSORED BY



WINNER:

THERESA WALTERS & MARY STRONG
Sisters Against Plastic



In February 2018, Theresa and Mary used the power of sibling rivalry to reduce the amount of plastic waste they produced at home. Every month the sisters weighed their plastics footprint, and the household with the greatest decrease in plastic waste was awarded a homemade trophy. Over the course of a year the two families have slashed their plastic waste by three-quarters. Mary, the winner, has also launched a plastic-free buying group.

[@SAPlastic2018](https://twitter.com/SAPlastic2018)
m.facebook.com/sistersagainstplastic/.org

SHORTLIST:

THE CARNALL FAMILY (team)

ENERGY

SPONSORED BY



WINNER:

EHAB SAYED
founder of Biohm



Biohm is leading the construction sector towards a circular future inspired by nature and driven by human, environmental and economic needs. Its construction system drastically reduces environmental impact, build times and costs; its carbon-negative buildings can be deconstructed at any stage of their life. Biohm's own bio-based materials include mushroom-based insulation and a plant-based alternative to concrete.

[@biohmhome](https://twitter.com/biohmhome)
biohm.co.uk

SHORTLIST:

TECH TAKEBACK (team)

PEA AWARDS 2019 WINNERS

FOOD

SPONSORED BY



WINNER:

LETTUS GROW (TEAM)



Fertile soil is being lost at a rate of 24bn tonnes a year through intensive farming. LettUs Grow's modular, efficient irrigation and control technology for indoor farms is helping vertical farms to scale globally and become profitable.

The soil-free aeroponic tech dramatically reduces the operational cost of indoor agriculture, whilst delivering (on average) a 70% increase in growth rates across a range of crop species.

[@LettUsGrow](#)
lettusgrow.com

SHORTLIST:

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (team)

GREEN PIONEER

SPONSORED BY



WINNER:

TABITHA JAMES KRAAN
founder of TJK High Performance Organic Hair Care



In 1999, Tabitha set out to eradicate all harmful chemicals from her industry. As well as having the UK's first organic hair salon, she has created the UK's first Soil Association certified professional hair care range.

[@TabithaJK](#)
tabithajameskraan.com

SHORTLIST:

ELVIS & KRESSE (team)
NATALIE FEE, founder of City to Sea

HEALTH & WELLBEING

SPONSORED BY



WINNER:

VIVO LIFE (TEAM)



Famed for creating award-winning plant-based supplements that don't cost the Earth, Vivo Life has ditched its plastic packaging and replaced it with a 100% home-compostable alternative, which breaks down in food waste bins or in your back garden in less than 12 months. This will save over 20,000 plastic packages from circulation each month.

[#VivoLife](#)
vivolife.co.uk

SHORTLIST:

MAY EAST
Miombo Honey and Courage Chocolate

MONEY

WINNER:

DAVID GARDINER
director of
Evergreen Insurance Services



Profits from Evergreen Insurance Services go to wildlife charities including Plant Life, Bug Life, Seed Madagascar and butterfly and bumblebee conservation trusts. The service is bringing the feel-good factor to insurance purchases – which is something David's nominee 'never expected to say about an insurance company'.

[@Ethical_Ins](#)
evergreeninsuranceservices.co.uk

SHORTLIST:

SHARED INTEREST SOCIETY (team)

PEA AWARDS 2019 WINNERS

NATURE

SPONSORED BY

Iceland

WINNER:

CLARE DUBOIS
founder of TreeSisters



TreeSisters is a registered charity that accelerates reforestation by inspiring feminine, nature-based leadership and channeling donations to fund the planting of tropical trees as an expression of collective planetary care. To date, TreeSisters has funded the planting of over 6 million trees. The charity is working on embedding ecological restoration into every financial transaction and business model.

[@treesisters](#)
treesisters.org

SHORTLIST:

#ONELESS CAMPAIGN (team)

PRODUCT

SPONSORED BY

myenergi

WINNER:

MY BOO BAMBOO BIKES
(team)



My Boo produces bikes with frames made in Ghana out of bamboo tubes. Bamboo is a great material for building a bike – it's shock absorbing, quite stiff, light and looks great. My Boo's partner in Ghana, The Yonso Project, creates the frames from sustainable bamboo that's harvested in the local area. The Yonso Project reinvests all proceeds in local educational programmes, providing jobs and futures for Ghanaians.

[@MyBooBambooBike](#)
my-boo.com

SHORTLIST:

RAW BOTTLES (team)

TRAVEL

SPONSORED BY

hotels & resorts
DELPHINA
un Amico in Sardegna
www.delphina.it

WINNER:

CLEAR OCEAN PACT (team)



Clear Ocean Pact is a non-profit that's on a mission to end dependency on single-use plastics in yachting through a clear, five-goal pact.

clearoceanpact.org

SHORTLIST:

EVISION ELECTRIC VEHICLE HIRE (team)

TOURISM



WINNER:

VICTORIA OF WIGHT (TEAM)

Wightlink's £30m flagship is England's first hybrid energy ferry.

[@wightlinkferry](#)
wightlink.co.uk

SHORTLIST:

METERS FOR TREES (team)

VEGAN



WINNER:

JULIET GELLATLEY, founder of Viva!

Juliet has been driving the vegan revolution for more than 25 years and championing environmental issues for decades. Viva! uniquely targets consumers, empowering people to vote with their wallets.

[@vivacampaigns](#)
viva.org.uk

SHORTLIST:

RAINFOREST FOODS BAMBEANIS
(team)

LIFESTYLE HERO AWARDS



Tony Juniper was recognised for his commitment to protecting nature; the late Polly Higgins for her work on Eco-cide and Katie Hill for bringing sustainability issues to mainstream audiences.

TONY JUNIPER, POLLY HIGGINS &
KATIE HILL



CHRISTIANA FIGUERES, LEAD NEGOTIATOR, PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

2040

IN CINEMAS
NOW

“Entertaining & uplifting”

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

[illegible]

TOGETHER FILMS INTO FILM ODEON VUE



HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD

Viv Burton, co-founder of World Land Trust, explains why the charity is a key player in the fight to save land and species – and how you can help

When World Land Trust (WLT) was born in 1989, the world was a simpler place. It was the year the World Wide Web was invented. It was the year the Berlin Wall came down. It was the year the first GPS satellite went into orbit. Aluminium can recycling got underway and ‘environmentally friendly’ started to become a catchy slogan. To the founders of WLT, anything felt possible: communication, freedom, discovery and environmental awakening – it seemed a good time to pioneer land purchase and protection, starting in a forest in Belize. 110,000 acres of rich tropical forest, to be precise – all set to be chopped down to make way for the monoculture and cattle farming that was sweeping through Belize.

PUTTING BELIZE ON THE MAP

At that time not much was known about Belize – probably because it had been the UK’s last continental possession in the Americas, then British Honduras. So, the first thing WLT had to do was to put Belize on the map. Why Belize? It’s a short answer: the forests were spectacular, the biodiversity was stunning, the threat was imminent, the land was cheap and no people were being displaced. The premise was simple, too: just £25 to buy an acre of Belizean tropical forest and save it forever. The idea took off and people really connected with the concept. Here was an opportunity where the individual really could get involved – and they did, in their thousands. Those people have, together, ensured that 260,000 acres of tropical forest in Belize are now safe from the chainsaw, but only in the nick of time. Once the land was bought one of the first things to do was waymark the boundaries of the reserve. Sadly, today, those waymarks are no longer necessary: monoculture has swept right up to the forest frontiers – a reminder of what the future held for this Belizean forest and its wildlife, had WLT not been able to mobilise donor support.

KEEPING THE VISION

WLT has punched well above its weight; in subsequent years it has tackled the catastrophic loss of the Atlantic forest of Brazil,



PHOTOGRAPHY PATRICIA ARELLANO

When I’m asked why I support World and Trust I say that it can be summed up by the following reasons. They are short and to the point, which is what I like about WLT. First, they save land... Second, WLT does not own the land, the ownership of land they have saved is vested in their in-country conservation partners. Third, WLT keeps its overheads low.’ Sir David Attenborough



PHOTOGRAPHY CSFI; TROTSKY RIERA VITE; JUAN PABLO REYES

saved an island in the Philippines from destruction, worked with indigenous Guarani communities to protect their forest habitat in Argentina and secured right of passage for Indian wildlife across traditional migration routes. More recently, £1m was raised to connect isolated forests in the Kinabatangan flood plain of Malaysian Borneo to ensure the survival of orangutans. The key to WLT’s astonishing success is its close relationship with knowledgeable and established local non-governmental partner organisations – 29 and counting. 30 years on from its first project in Belize, WLT supporters have helped save more than 775,000 acres around the world – that’s three quarters of a million acres of habitat that would have been lost, together with its wildlife.

HOW IT WORKS

WLT can still purchase real acres in real places, to be saved forever, for just £100. It also has an Action Fund, supported mainly by regular donations from WLT Friends, and a Plant a Tree initiative to restore native tree species on cleared land. Special Appeals are launched to raise funds for urgent land protection projects – look out for WLT’s current appeal: ‘Scorched Earth to Forest Haven – turning back the clock on the Vietnam War and helping restore its forests’. These days life isn’t as simple as it was in 1989; while WLT can boast tremendous success when it comes to saving real acres in real places, the world is struggling to survive. Yes, do buy environmentally friendly products and do all you can to reduce your carbon footprint, but there’s an urgent need to change both heads and hearts. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Support WLT’s mission to save land to save species this Christmas at worldlandtrust.org/mygreenpod-christmas

WLT CHRISTMAS GIFTS

£5	Plant a tree to restore natural forest
£25	Help offset your Christmas impact and indulge without guilt
£50	Help offset your journey this Christmas if you’re planning to travel
£100	Buy an Acre in Mexico, Colombia or Zambia

Making a sPLaSh

These practical and high-performance kids' clothes are made from recycled plastic

Twenty-three years ago, JoJo Maman Bébé was a tiny business that operated from a kitchen table in Wales, with stock held in a shed that belonged to the parents of the company's founder and CEO, Laura Tenison MBE.

Thanks to Laura's eye for practical clothing and imaginative designs, JoJo is now a go-to boutique brand for families looking for durable and attractive clothes with common-sense features.

We're talking covered zips that don't rub the neck, lightly elasticated hoods, mitten clips and coats that are longer at the back to keep little ones warm. They're touches that can go unnoticed until you have to deal with them not being there.

The kids' clothes don't come cheap – especially if you're a new parent who's trying to juggle budgets and survive on half the usual income – but they hold their quality so well that you can hand them down time and time again, or recoup a lot of the initial cost by selling them on when they've been outgrown.

REUSE IN THE DNA

Reuse is a common theme at JoJo; if you've visited a high street store you'll probably have seen the 'From a Mother to Another' hand-me-down initiative, which is tied to The Trussell Trust's network of UK foodbanks.

What you may not be aware of is that reuse also features heavily in the materials: JoJo's Supersoft Performance Fleece has been made from recycled fabric and bottles for over 10 years. It's a top-of-the-range fabric that provides a level of quality rarely found in kids' clothes.

JoJo Polarfleece jackets, hats, scarves, mittens, balaclavas and wellie-liners are made from recycled yarn that has been spun from fabric chips that started life as plastic bottles. Around 17 large plastic bottles go into every Polarfleece All-in-One, helping to save energy, emissions and waste to landfill.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

Going back to price, the 'fashion' fleece usually found in cheaper clothes costs around £2 per metre, while the Polarfleece or Performance Fleece costs £6-8 per metre.

Cheap fabrics can cause huge damage – from toxic dyes in our waterways to hellish conditions for workers – and on a very practical level they don't usually feel nice to wear.

The Polarfleece range has a huge following – not because of its eco-credentials, but because it's lightweight, breathable, water repellent, quick-drying, anti-pilling, machine-washable at 30°C and available in a great range of colours and designs.

The waterproof outerwear available from JoJo is also made from recycled materials; polyester clothes that can't be worn any



READER OFFER

Get 10% off purchases in store or online with the code **GRN92**. Visit jojomamanbebe.co.uk/tandc for Ts & Cs.

more are torn into shreds which are broken down and stretched into long fibres that are woven into rolls of fabric to make new clothes. It's soft, flexible and lightweight, making it perfect for dungarees, all-in-ones, mittens, trousers and hats.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

The emphasis on quality and longevity at JoJo could be down to the 'great values' Laura's mum instilled in her five children, including 'waste not, want not.'

'Our founding ethos was based on sustainable business practice – long before it was fashionable', Laura reveals. 'This is how we achieved B Corp Certification – an accreditation that's notoriously hard to achieve for fashion retailers. Putting people and planet above profit is part of our DNA and this mantra becomes more relevant to the world as each day passes.'

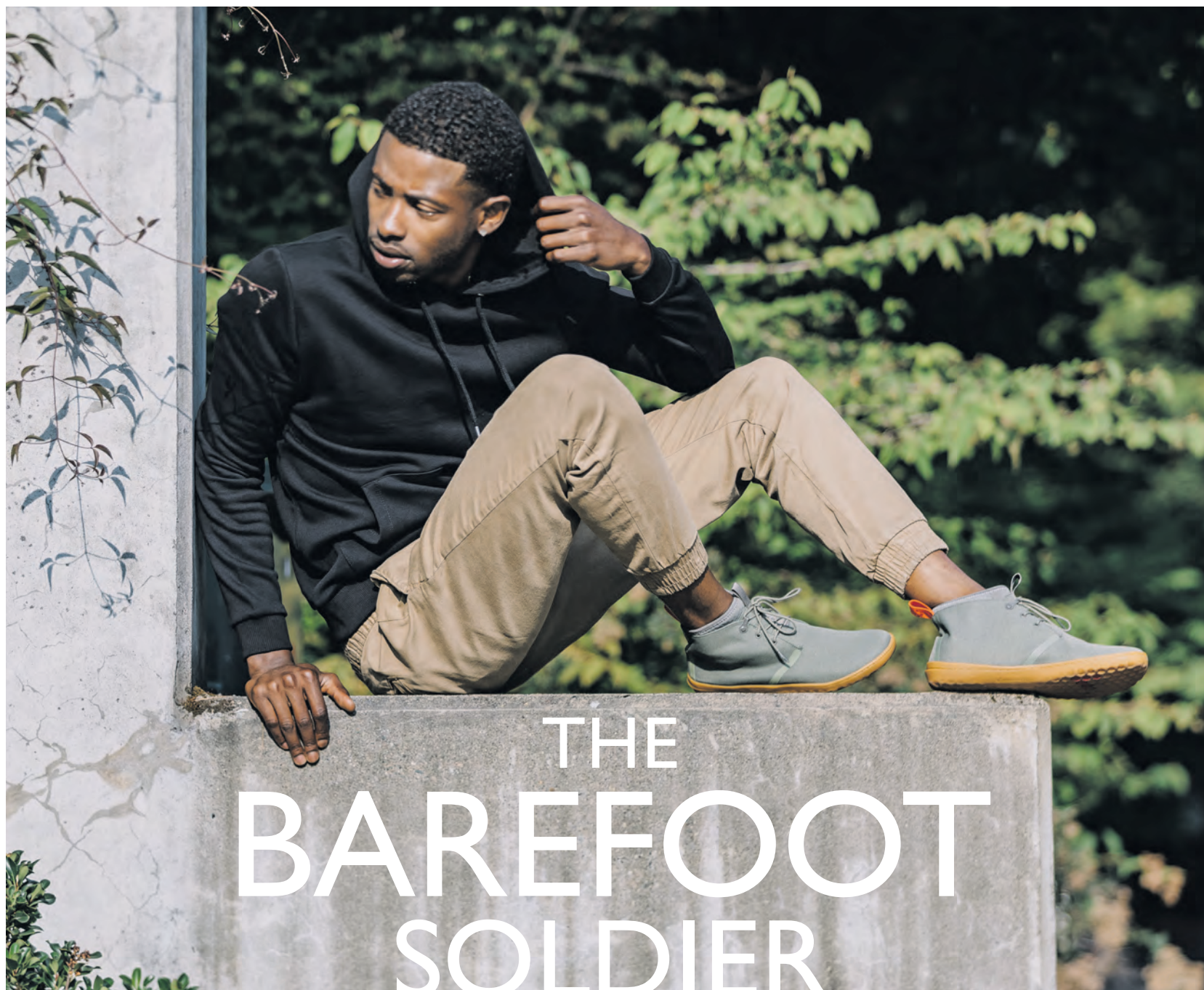
To become a certified B Corp, a business must complete a tough certification process that assesses social and environmental impact across all its operations. Despite now being a medium-sized business – and a long way from Laura's kitchen table – JoJo has upheld its small business ethos and continues to put people and the planet first. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Learn more about the fabrics used in JoJo Maman Bébé ranges at jojomamanbebe.co.uk



Find out why the JoJo Maman Bébé Pack-Away Rain Jacket is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes



Galahad Clark's family has run a shoe business for over 200 years – yet his company is all about reproducing the barefoot experience

A shoe company that sings the praises of a barefoot experience: it sounds like a cannibalistic idea from

a business point of view, but Galahad Clark is no novice in the footwear market.

Clarks, one of the UK's most recognisable high street names, was founded in Somerset in 1825. Seven generations later Galahad Clark, together with his cousin Asher Clark, is combining his knowledge and instincts with insights from the family treasure chest to devise revolutionary footwear.

'I associate the happiest moments of my youth with barefoot times in Devon and Somerset where I grew up', Galahad tells us. A childhood friend, Tim, helped to kick-start Galahad's interest in shoes that recreate a barefoot experience. 'He came to me with a pair of Nike Huaraches that he had sliced the sole off', Galahad remembers. 'He'd stitched on a tennis racquet cover to create a modern-looking moccasin, and said 'this is the way shoes should be made.' I instinctively loved the idea.'

As humans don't have hooves or pads, our feet need shoes with thermal and puncture protection – but as far as Galahad's concerned, that's it. From the eland-skin hunting sandals made by Kalahari bushmen to the buffalo sandals made in India, the reindeer moccasins made by the Sami people in the Arctic Circle and even the Roman soldiers' sandals made a couple of centuries ago, humans have been making perfect shoes from local materials for thousands of generations. We roamed all over the globe without any air, gel, arch support or torsion controls – and without a chiropractor in sight.

'All indigenous shoe-making is barefoot', Galahad explains, 'and in fact the populations wearing little or no shoes have near-perfect feet compared with modern Americans, who now spend more of their money on corrective foot surgery and orthotics than they do on their shoes!'

'A PUBLIC HEALTH SCANDAL'

For Galahad, the whole shoe industry lost its way in the 20th century when we tried to emancipate ourselves from nature. 'It is a public health scandal that the modern shoe industry leaves nearly every

young adult with weak and deformed feet', he says. 'From the age of four we put children's feet into non-foot-shaped shoes with heels or big wedges of padding that literally deform the feet and render most foot muscles redundant.'

'Underfoot cushioning or thick, rigid soles lead kids to develop unnatural movement habits, and most people in the modern world end up with some sort of chronic pain later in life', Galahad continues. 'Depending on which study you read, up to 79% of people get injured when they run and 60% of people over 55 are in pain – in my opinion due to compromised footwear that results in weak feet and a series of bad movement habits that play out in sore knees, stiff ankles and hips and back and neck pain.'

THE BAREFOOT REVIVAL

Barefoot shoes are experiencing a revival thanks to support from a growing legion of medics, scientists and coaches who agree shoes play a critical role in our overall health.

'So much of our brain is dedicated to movement and the sensory feedback from the body – in particular the feet', Galahad tells us. 'If we take away

that sensory feedback, the brain gets confused and starts to make bad movement decisions. Research now shows that walking around in cushioned shoes in a concrete world literally atrophies the brain, leading to brain degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's.

For Galahad, the ability to move naturally, regularly and (most importantly) enjoyably into old age is still the best anti-ageing programme known to humans. A brain in full vitality also provides a lot more emotional wellbeing than one that is being understimulated.

'Sensory deprivation disorder is a growing problem for young people growing up in cities in padded shoes', Galahad adds. 'The sooner we change that, the better and happier they will be – and there's plenty of science to back that up.'

REINVENTING THE SHOE

Science, biomechanics and sustainability concerns led Galahad to launch Vivobarefoot as a stand-alone brand in 2012. Today Vivobarefoot offers a wide variety of shoes, from hiking boots to trail running shoes (including swim-run shoes) and aqua shoes, with everyday, simple and luxury styles for men, women and kids.

'The Tracker is our best-selling hiking boot and the lightest, most flexible waterproof hiking boot on the market', Galahad tells us.

The Primus Bio is Vivobarefoot's everyday sneaker; it's made from bio-polymers (plants) and is a great lightweight modern-looking sneaker.

'The Ababa, made in our factory in Ethiopia through a joint venture with our lead tannery Pittards, is a basic slip-on that's socially innovative, simple to make and beautifully hand-stitched', Galahad tells us. 'It creates an amazing barefoot feel – and is damned good-looking to boot!'

Perhaps the most impressive of all is the San-Dal, innovated 100,000 years ago by the San Bushmen of the Kalahari desert. It was designed for running eight hours in 40-degree heat to track down antelopes.

'The San-Dal provides perfect protection from the thorns and porcupines whilst allowing humans to run for hours on end', Galahad tells us. 'In collaboration with the Future Footwear Foundation, we make a limited run of these shoes every year with the San people, in a little workshop we helped build deep in the Nyae Nyae conservation area. These shoes were among the first 'tools' ever innovated by humans – and there's no underfoot technology in sight.'

REPAIR AND RECYCLE

Vivobarefoot has pledged to eradicate virgin plastic from its supply chain in 2020 and will instead focus on three 'buckets' of materials: biosynthesised (polymers made from plant oils but also foams made from algae); natural (wool, cotton, hemp, leather and wild rubber) and recycled (yarns and soling materials). Materials are rarely 100% bio, natural or recycled, so it's a constant challenge to purify designs so they're more recyclable – or at least repairable or designed for disassembly.

'We're going to launch a full repair and refurbish programme with a re-commerce platform and secondhand market', Galahad tells us. 'It will be particularly useful for kids' shoes and expensive hiking boots! Barefoot shoes lend themselves to being worn by multiple people because they don't really change shape in wear: the ultra-thin sole contours the foot without any of the obvious wear patterns you might get in a heeled or cushioned shoe.'

Innovations in the pipeline at Vivobarefoot include 3D-printed shoes and a modular pod shoe, made bespoke for every foot. Galahad is also looking forward to launching the first barefoot smart shoes, with a digital insole and built-in AI coach.

'We regularly get mail from customers who say they find it weird and painful to go back to their 'normal' shoes, which they end up having to get rid of', Galahad reveals. 'We're in the final throes of figuring out how to 'barefoot' your favourite footwear, so all the nostalgia wrapped up in that pair of shoes you had your first kiss or last dance in will remain – but with a barefoot feeling!'

RE-EDUCATION

Countless shoe store owners, podiatrists, orthotic manufacturers and shoe brands are deeply invested in underfoot technology, so the barefoot revolution will face resistance on many levels.

'It took a long time for the world to accept the harms of smoking and for governments to actually do anything about it', Galahad says, 'but just as you wouldn't give your children cigarettes, why would you actively weaken and deform their feet? It is that stark and that real for me – so I'm afraid along with

cigarette advertising the shoe industry is going to have to change. The sooner the better.'

Galahad believes that the revolution must be led by the people – because 'governments will, as always, be very slow to act – and some big powerful, swooshy forces aren't going to like it'.

Thanks to a growing network of coaches and online education tools, the barefoot movement is growing. Educators from other barefoot shoe brands – particularly in Germany – are all contributing, and Galahad's goal is to coordinate the barefoot community to create an educational movement that will be more powerful than the sum of its parts.

'Our mission is to reconnect people and the planet', Galahad explains. 'We believe the closer you are to nature, the healthier you will be and the more sustainable your choices will be. We make shoes for people to enjoy the most beautiful places in the world as well as making shoes that bring you as close to nature as possible in the concrete jungle.'

A FULL CIRCLE FOR SHOES

Clarks was a pioneer in many things and, funnily enough, more or less on the barefoot concept in the 1880s; text from an advert for 'hygienic boots and shoes' is very similar to what Vivobarefoot says today:

'These boots do not deform the feet or cause corns or bunions but are comfortable to wear and make walking a pleasure. At the same time the shapes are not carried to such an extreme as to appear conspicuous or unsightly...

'Most eminent medical men fully recognise the importance that proper shapes of boots and shoes have on the health of the wearer.

'Those whose feet have been deformed in childhood will find greater ease in these boots than in ordinary shapes with small high heels.

'Those who are less deformed may by wearing these boots avoid further injury and may gradually recover the natural form of the feet.

'The greatest advantage will be found by those who wear hygienic shapes from childhood and all parents should feel it a duty to preserve the feet of their children in the shape that nature intended them to grow.'

Galahad is perfectly placed to retrace the history of shoe design and identify where things went wrong in the mainstream industry. His alternative offers a way for people to reconnect with the planet, and create a world with less padding and more feeling.

'Our sustainability goals are to make circular shoes that are also regenerative', he tells us, 'to enhance personal and planetary health and, perhaps most importantly, activate a community to reconnect to nature and fight for a more sustainable planet.' ■

FIND OUT MORE

- View the full Vivobarefoot range at vivobarefoot.com
- Learn more about the science at Shoespiracy.tv





PORTRAITS FROM THE PRECIPICE

This winter, Octopus Energy will join forces with Artfinder, a digital platform that supports inclusive, equal-opportunities art across the globe, to translate our collective experiences of the climate crisis into the world's biggest outdoor environmental art exhibition.

A MESSAGE FOR COP26

The goal is to use art to inspire action against climate change – and the exhibition will send a strong message to global leaders when they convene in the UK for the COP26 climate summit in 2020.

Given that global CO₂ emissions must fall every year from 2020 to avoid catastrophic warming (1.5°C by 2100), it's important for every leader at COP26 to understand the strength of popular support for climate action.

Art and imagery are crucial here; while traditional climate communication can be inaccessible, art offers a valuable medium for engaging with climate ideas.

Creativity can inspire action by moving people and opening new avenues for exploring complex issues. As research organisation Climate Visuals has found: 'the images that define climate change shape the way it is understood and acted upon.'

Octopus Energy and Artfinder
have joined forces to
inspire climate action
through art



IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

In a bold foray into the world of climate art, Octopus Energy has partnered with Artfinder's impressive global community of artists to launch *Portraits from the Precipice*. It will be the largest ever outdoor exhibition of climate art, specifically aimed at driving climate action.

Since 25 November, artistic explorations of the climate crisis have been projected on billboards across the UK for millions to see. They have appeared on roadsides and train and tube stations, and have illuminated some of the most iconic streets in London, Leicester and Brighton.

The goal is to make climate change, and the real impact it's having on humans around the world, impossible to ignore – for the public and also the world leaders arriving for COP26.

Submissions from Artfinder's online artist community are still coming in thick and fast from around the world. The very best pieces will be curated by the Artfinder Collective, and in February one artist will be awarded the first annual Climate Change Art Prize of £10,000.

CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN IMAGE

I Told You So, Kirstie Taylor; *Last Year's Model*, Stephen Beer; artist Sandy Dooley at work; *Deforestation*, Neha Soni; *My Planet* – *Balloon* (2019), Lena Smirnova

Greg Jackson, Octopus Energy's CEO, sees the collaboration as a new way to help more people really think about the climate crisis. 'Art has always been a key vehicle to visualise difficult topics', he tells us, 'and no topic is more difficult than the ongoing destruction of our planet.'

UNIFYING OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Art has a particularly important role to play in unifying our disparate experiences of climate



breakdown. Around the world – whether you're a commuter or a world leader, a small business owner or a school student – we all, to some extent, bear witness to the real, emotional experience of being a human in the midst of a climate catastrophe.

The changes we are witnessing in the UK – hotter summers, fiercer floods and coastal erosion – may be less severe than the stronger storms, droughts and famines rocking the Global South, but these wildly different experiences must be brought together as we tackle a shared cause and encourage a shared solution: the reduction of carbon emissions.

CAPTURING CHANGE THROUGH ART

Sandy Dooley is one of the artists involved; she spoke to us about how her work will reflect changes she has witnessed in her lifetime. 'I live in rural Kent, lots of my artwork has been informed by the local landscape and the changes that have been happening to that landscape', Sandy reveals. 'For this project I've decided to do a triptych – three paintings that fit together – exploring those changes.'

'Some are bittersweet', Sandy continues. 'We now have a thriving vineyard and wine industry – those vineyards are definitely something different, a shifting baseline. The fishing boats down at Hastings are still pretty, and almost decorative, but fish quotas are lower than they have ever been, and the crops in the fields have changed so much.'

Tapping into another theme that is central to *Portraits from the Precipice*, Sandy explained how important it is that her materials are 'appropriate

for the task at hand'. She paints with Graphenstone's environmentally friendly graphene-based paint, which actually absorbs carbon from the atmosphere. Three 15-litre buckets of this mineral-based paint soak up more than 10Kg of CO₂ in a year.

Another artist involved, Margaret Mallows, explains that while the responsibility to effect change rests with governments and corporations, it also belongs to each and every one of us. 'We can all make a difference to our lifestyles which will



COMPETITION

Now it's your turn! Octopus is inviting everyone – regardless of age or ability – to get involved. Submit your artwork to art@octopus.energy for the chance to see your (or your family's) art on billboards across the UK! The winning entry will also receive an eco-holiday.

The brief here is exactly the same; artists must answer the question:

'What does the climate crisis mean to you?', using the most sustainable materials possible.

help,' Margaret tells us. With this in mind, she has created bold, WWII-inspired 'DO NOT' posters with messages like 'DO NOT KEEP CALM WE HAVE TO ACT NOW'.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

Octopus Energy and Artfinder want everyone – artist or amateur – to have the chance to play a part in *Portraits from the Precipice*. Whoever you are, you have a unique experience to share that will help to strengthen our collective drive for action.

The community competition (see below) is open to all; your artistic response to the question 'What does the climate crisis mean to you?' could be posted on billboards around the UK – and help world leaders to understand the huge public will for climate action. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- Join the sustainable art revolution at octopus.energy/climate-art
- View all the great climate artwork on Artfinder at artfinder.com/u/artfinder-team/collections/portraits-from-the-precipice



Find out why Octopus Energy's Super Green Tariff is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

A *thriving* MARKET

The future's bright for clean renewable energy



In October, the Carbon Brief announced that renewables had outpaced fossil fuels for the first time since the UK's first public electricity generating station opened in 1882.

Its analysis revealed that UK windfarms, solar panels, biomass and hydro plants generated an estimated total of 29.5 terawatt-hours (TWh) in the third quarter of 2019 (July to September), compared with the 29.1TWh output of power stations fired by coal, oil and gas.

The findings confirm the National Grid's prediction that zero-carbon sources of electricity – wind, nuclear, solar and hydro – would generate more electricity than fossil fuels during 2019.

The Carbon Brief called this 'another symbolic milestone in the stunning transformation of the UK's electricity system over the past decade.'

RENEWABLES GO MAINSTREAM

The world's largest offshore windfarm, the 1,200MW Hornsea One project, was completed in October, adding to the more than 2,100MW of offshore capacity that started

operating during 2018. At the same time the UK's remaining coal plants are rapidly closing down; by March 2020 just four will remain in the UK.

'Over the past 25 years, our pioneering investors have helped grow renewables from an alternative concept – accounting for less than 2% of our electricity mix – to the mainstream', says Matthew Clayton, managing director of Thrive Renewables. 'Today, over a third of UK electricity is generated by renewables. That is a significant achievement, but just the beginning of what we can do to clean up our energy system.'

11 YEARS LEFT

Thrive has been there since the beginning, and continues to fund, build and operate renewable energy projects across the UK. It connects people to sustainable energy, offering accessible opportunities for individuals and businesses

RIGHT

Over 25 years, Thrive Renewables will have reduced CO2 emissions by over 660,000 tonnes

to invest in clean energy projects that deliver financial, environmental and social rewards.

The mission is to power the transition to a sustainable future by helping people to connect with clean renewable energy projects.

The UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) has suggested we have only 11 years to turn the climate change super-tanker around; as we start to see the effects of climate change unfold, Thrive's mission is as vital today as it was when it launched 25 years ago.

'As the climate crisis unfolds and we start to see more and more visible effects of climate change across the planet, it becomes clear that the pioneering and values-driven investment approach of Thrive and its investors has never been more relevant', Matthew added.

MAKING AN IMPACT

In October Thrive Renewables marked its 25th anniversary with a special report that highlights the important roles of impact investment and community energy projects in meeting the UK's 2050 net zero carbon target and creating a smarter, greener and more connected energy future.

Thrive is about to hit a milestone of 1.6 TWh of renewable electricity generated over the last 25 years, reducing UK CO₂ emissions by over 660,000 tonnes and meeting the equivalent annual energy demand of one million UK residents.

The company has built or funded 22 renewable energy projects over the last quarter of a century, the majority of which it owns and operates. It has raised £35m in equity and £13m in bonds, and has over 6,100 investors.

THRIVE'S 25TH BIRTHDAY

In October over 500 members of the public attended anniversary open days at Thrive's Avonmouth wind farm in Bristol, where they were given lots of opportunities to connect with renewable energy.

Visitors were invited to look inside a real wind turbine, ask questions and find out how a turbine works, and the Centre for Sustainable Energy provided inspiration and advice on home energy efficiency.



We'll look back at the 'fossil fuel age' and be genuinely shocked at the way we as a species sleepwalked into the climate change crisis, and were so slow to react. The stone age didn't end because we ran out of stones, and, similarly, the fossil fuel age will not end as a result of peak oil; it will end because we've used our ingenuity to find a better way of doing things.'

25-year anniversary report, Thrive Renewables



Bristol Open Doors led a kids' engineering workshop and The Landmark Practice gave an insight into the ecological aspects of developing and running a wind farm. ExplorerDome brought its interactive renewable energy show in a blow-up planetarium, which was a hit with everyone.

The local primary school visited the site and took part in an arts workshop; with help from Art and Energy, an organisation that uses creativity to change the way people view green technology, the children produced their very own windmills to take home, plus two pieces of communal art that were displayed at the public open day.

If trends continue, the next generation will carry the torch lit by pioneers like Thrive Renewables 25 years ago; armed with information and inspiration, they will be guardians of an energy system that has been transformed by engaged communities and individuals who are determined to change the future. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- Take a look at Thrive Renewables' clean energy projects at thrivere Renewables.co.uk

A gift WITH impact



A new platform matches charitable givers with receivers to help us achieve the SDGs

Christmas is on its way and many will be feeling charitable – but at this time of year letterboxes are jammed with appeals and pleas for festive giving.

It's not easy to choose between the many causes that desperately need support, and feelings of benevolence can quickly turn to pangs of guilt that we can't help everyone. On top of that it's sometimes unclear where your money would be spent, and what tangible difference your donation would make.

THE CHALLENGES

'We identified a lot of challenges with how giving is done at the moment', reveals Darshita Gillies, founder and CEO of Maanch, a charitable giving platform. 'The most common issues that funders experience are feelings of distrust and a lack of transparency from organisations they are interested in or give to.'

Charities and other recipients of philanthropic capital also operate in a challenging context; UK charities face increasing demands on services, cuts in available government and local authority support and difficulties around communicating impact to increasingly discerning and sceptical funders.

'Finding the right fit and developing the right relationships is the most important thing that charities can do to sustain themselves', Darshita explains. 'Our aspiration is that Maanch can facilitate meaningful, transparent funding relationships for charities, and bring the joy of giving back to those who have been disenfranchised by mistrust and well-documented scandals.'

WHERE MAANCH FITS IN

Maanch is an online platform that uses data to match-make charitable givers with receivers; donors can make a tangible difference in areas of specific interest, and finance is funnelled to projects that will help to accelerate sustainable development.

It's the first global platform dedicated to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 by influencing the flow of funds across the philanthropy sector; the goal is to help to create a fair future for everyone on the planet.

HOW PROJECTS JOIN UP

A huge range of organisations, working in over 25 countries, is listed on Maanch, running projects that cover everything from youth, health and adult education to justice, migration and climate change. The platform also reveals how different topics intersect, providing great insights around how the complex ecosystem joins up.

'This context is something that we should all be aware of when choosing which charities to give to', Darshita tells us. 'We should take an ecosystem approach: understand where exactly the intervention fits and get a realistic understanding of the project's scope.'

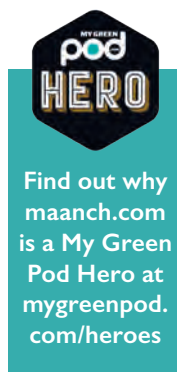
PROGRESSING TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

When it comes to understanding the broader context of individual projects in the sustainable development sector, Darshita has a wealth of experience; she has visited the UN every year since 2015 to present global data on SDG progress.

The data presentation evolved into the blueprint for Maanch, which has been designed as a tool that aligns giving to the SDGs.

'We have looked deeply into each constituent datapoint that makes up the 169 targets and over 230 indicators behind the 17 SDGs', Darshita explains. 'We then categorised progress by each country to find out what was most needed and where.'

Darshita saw that many countries lack access to basic human necessities that are required if we, as a global society, are to progress collectively to a sustainable future.



She discovered that even nations performing 'well' against the indicator frameworks in the developed world were in no way perfect examples of sustainability; each country has intersectional problems that need addressing.

'This was a really insightful mapping process', Darshita tells us. 'It helped us to understand areas for engagement and funding across the entire globe, based on national priorities and needs.'

CAN WE ACHIEVE THE SDGS?

Darshita believes there's a risk the SDGs won't be met. 'What we need to understand is that the UN is a governance body, not an execution body', she tells us. 'It excels at framework building, data and monitoring and advocacy for change, but it is up to all stakeholders to change, support and implement solutions.'

Based on the intricacy of the connection between countries, SDGs and global ecosystems, Darshita believes only 'a perfect storm' involving governments, businesses, NGOs and civil society will make the SDGs globally achievable, and that all aspects of capital movement need to be influenced and adapted if we are to achieve the SDGs.

'What's important is that we're not disenfranchised by the scale of the task', Darshita tells us, 'but energised to accelerate that progress and make attainment more achievable through action. Where governments and businesses don't have the interests to tread, philanthropic capital has always been the most important device to deliver positive change.'

DEMYSTIFYING THE SDGS

To make the SDGs less abstract to everyday funders, Darshita has linked the 17 goals to the five UN pillars of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Each project listed on Maanch is mapped against both the SDGs and these five pillars.

Maanch currently focuses on charities that are registered in the UK and regulated by the Charity Commission. 250 organisations, representing an amazing breadth and diversity of geography and demographic, have already signed up to Maanch through a pre-launch process. The goal is to increase the number of projects available to funders as Maanch grows.

AN OPEN CALL FOR CHARITIES

Currently, any UK registered charity with a clean commission history can sign up and publish projects. 'Now that the platform is live', Darshita says, 'this is an open call for charities to come to us, use the platform and explore the opportunity Maanch gives to find new funders and promote your work to a fresh community of data-driven donors.'

For charities, signing up as an organisation takes two minutes, and the full project creation process takes around half an hour. Projects don't go live immediately as each is subject to an impact assessment that's checked against approval criteria before being pushed live and made visible online for sharing and fundraising.

TRANSPARENT GIVING

For funders, the search, filter and transaction functions are open to everyone. Impact reporting and transaction history are available to funders who register for an account; this allows givers to track their funds and understand the cumulative impact of what they're giving.

Once projects are funded, Maanch tracks project progress and feeds it back to funders to keep them engaged and interested in the work, while also helping to improve their understanding of how charitable work is done.

'We hope our platform provides all the insights funders need to make intelligent decisions around what to support', Darshita tells us, 'while at the same time offering charities a 360-degree view of the potential impact of their work.'

HOW MUCH TO GIVE

For the first time in history, Maanch will be able to aggregate what each of us gives, how it all adds up and where it is having impact. 'We will then have a better understanding of what's working and where the gaps are', Darshita explains. 'Our call to the giving community is to start with what feels comfortable and then see how you go! We also offer services for funders who would prefer to give offline.'

THE GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

INSPIRING PHILANTHROPY

There are more than 168,000 registered charities in the UK with a total annual income of £77.4bn in 2018. Individual giving in the UK in 2018 was around £10.1bn. The estimated additional investment required to achieve the SDGs is about £1.9tn per year. While a huge number, this is split across government spending, business investment and activity and philanthropy.

Those interactive levers will change and shift over time, and so will the size of the philanthropic portion of that funding allocation. 'We want to leverage our technology to bridge the gaps', Darshita explains, 'and provide the missing transparency that could inspire greater engagement in philanthropy.' ■



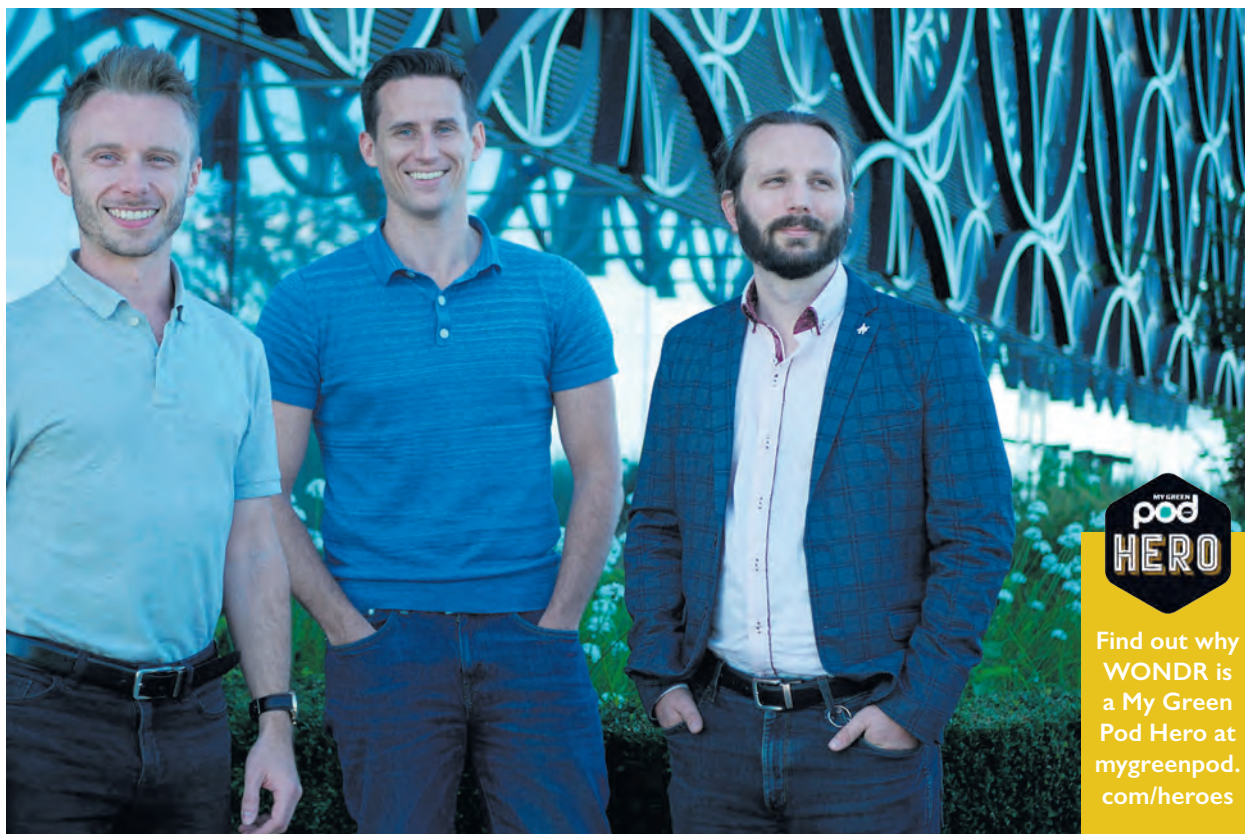
With Maanch we can now focus on achieving our charitable objective, rather than spending inordinate time on fundraising.' Leslee Udwin, founder of Think Equal

FIND OUT MORE

- Register your charity on Maanch, or find projects to support, at maanch.com

FIND YOUR TRIBE

A new online platform is connecting like-minded people so they can take action on things that matter to them



Search engines and social media are now common props when we identify gaps in our knowledge, but the digital information provided online is in many cases insufficient to answer our questions in any substantial way.

Money and motivation are issues; the paid adverts are the ones that appear first on most search engines and the most visible information is often there because a team of digital media experts is pushing it out.

Add in the distracting pop-ups and fierce competition for your online attention and it's easy to see why finding accurate and balanced information is far from straightforward.

POTENTIAL FOR ONLINE LEARNING

The internet isn't all bad; it has the capacity to democratise learning and provide open access to education. It can also disseminate news and information far faster than books or newspapers; thanks to online media we can get real-time updates on events as they unfold in the world around us.

There are many good reasons for accessing and consuming information online – the challenge is around knowing where to find what we're really looking for and meeting the people who can help us access this knowledge in the most efficient way.

A new online community has been launched in a bid to resolve some of these issues. By connecting groups through aligned interests, aspirations and

ambitions, a platform called WONDR creates an online environment where individuals can collaborate, crowdsource knowledge and learn alongside like-minded people.

Its co-founders, lifelong friends Sam Reader (left, main image) and Simon Jones (centre, pictured with chief tech officer David Maidment), share a passion for continuous learning; they feel today's fragmented and often divisive social media networks have missed a huge opportunity for empowering positive change.

'We want to create a space where people work together', Simon tells us, 'so we can help people to progress, learn and share valuable insights. We want it to be a truly positive online community, where people can network consciously and interact meaningfully on a platform that has principles.'

We're moving at such a pace, and the issues we face are so huge, that Sam and Simon feel we'll only solve today's problems as a unit, working together to share information and expertise. Simon puts it very simply: 'collaborative learning is the future.'

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS

WONDR is currently in beta mode, yet it already has a network of over 3,500 members who have registered over 200 interests. The goal is to give 10,000 people early access to the community by the end of 2019; with direct access to the team, these members will get a say on how they'd like to see WONDR develop.

80% of WONDR's current users are choosing to explore environmental topics; they use the platform to share knowledge around the subjects they are passionate about and take actions that will have a positive impact on a local and global scale.

'The environmental focus wasn't part of our initial intention', Sam tells us. 'Our aim was to cover purposeful topics and help people to take a conscious approach to problem solving. We're not surprised the environment has been so popular – there's currently no bigger problem – and we're proud to be able to help to find solutions.'

Members of WONDR's environmental community include forest engineers, marine biologists and conservationists, as well as concerned citizens who simply want to live a more sustainable lifestyle. They are starting discussions and forming projects around subjects including climate change, sustainability and conservation.

EMPOWERING COLLABORATIONS

UK book sales fell for the first time in five years in 2018, and our time spent online – currently up to 34 hours a week – continues to rise. If current trends continue, could online learning support mainstream education and lifelong learning?

'We would love to see more teachers and lecturers on the platform', Sam tells us. 'It's a profession full of people who want to create an impact and support young people – the challenge is the system in which they have to operate. The biggest cost for young people can be their self-efficacy and confidence to make positive change.'

An education culture that grades and rewards linear learning isn't the best way to inspire creativity, curiosity or self-belief. Instead, the team at WONDR sees huge value in a more informal approach that connects users with like-minded people who fall outside their immediate and usual networks, to foster an exchange of support, direction, information and advice.

WONDR offers a culture of empowerment – it encourages and supports its members to take steps they couldn't – or wouldn't – otherwise have taken. It's designed to generate a sense of self-efficacy, and a belief that there's no end to what an individual can achieve. Sam sums it up perfectly: 'When we collaborate with each other to drive those opportunities, imagine what we could achieve.' ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Sign up for free membership to WONDR and start exploring the online communities at mywondr.co

The Bulgarian rose (*Rosa damascena*) is known as the queen of the roses and one of the world's most incredible flowers; it opens the heart and invokes love and inspiration, but is most famous for its healing and beautifying properties. Cleopatra and Michelangelo knew well of its secrets and used rose water daily.

A recent revival has seen countless new rose-infused skincare products hit the shelves, but many are 'rose-based' and enhanced with artificial essences and aromas. Traceable ingredients and organic certification are crucial if you want to get the full scope of benefits from this amazing flower.

Likewise the distillation process is key to retaining the rose's purity and, consequently, its therapeutic clout; while rose absolute is distilled using a chemical process, rose otto is extracted using steam, making it a 'true essential oil'. Known as liquid gold, organic Bulgarian rose otto is the rarest and most precious essential oil in the world.

VALLEY OF ROSES

Rosa damascena thrives in the microclimate of Bulgaria's Valley of Roses; the area is sheltered by two mountain ranges and the favourable soil conditions produce an abundance of extremely potent roses.

Given the demand for rose otto and rose water, growing these beautiful flowers was a natural career path for Daniel Kolev's great-grandparents, who were born in the area. Over a century later the family business continues, and the knowledge handed down over the generations continues to inform the way the company is run.

'Purity has been a family value for as long as I can remember', Daniel tells us. 'Today there is more reason than ever to uphold it; the land and Earth have provided for us for generations and we have enormous respect for Her. Organic and Earth-friendly agriculture has always been our only option.'

TRADITIONAL ORGANIC BEAUTY

Towards the end of the last century the company – now Alteya Organics – began to develop its own skincare based on traditional beauty recipes, and today it's the only fully internationally certified organic skincare manufacturer in the region.

As a fully integrated business it does everything (literally) from the ground up – from planting and harvesting the roses to distilling the raw ingredients and manufacturing the finished products.

'Obtaining a rose water, or a rose otto, which keeps its full scope of therapeutic quality is an art in itself and that is not an exaggeration', Daniel tells us. 'Everything matters in this process – the way of growing, the time of harvesting the rose petals and the specifics of the distillation process.'

HAND-PICKED ROSES

Producing rose otto is extremely labour-intensive; each milligram requires 50,000 individual petals – roughly 1,500 flowers – of the bounty harvested annually between May and June.



Find out why Alteya Organics Iridescent Light Serum is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

Secrets of the rose

During this period the roses are flowering abundantly; they are picked by hand, on a daily basis, in the dewy morning as the sun starts to ascend.

If the rose petals are not picked on time, they tend to fade with the heat of the day and their potency gradually diminishes. 'There is no danger of over-harvesting', Daniel explains; 'the real challenge is to harvest all the available petals on time every day during the harvesting campaign.'

WHERE SCIENCE MEETS NATURE

Rosa damascena is a holy ancient plant with modern pharmacological benefits that are still not entirely appreciated. However its antimicrobial, antioxidant, analgesic, anti-inflammatory and anti-depressant properties are just some of the benefits that have been confirmed in scientific research.

Alteya is perhaps the best-placed company to understand the complex and multi-faceted bounty of the rose; today it blends 400-year-old traditions and ancient recipes with research that sits at the cutting-edge of scientific discovery.

The result is a range of effective skincare that masterfully blends the natural benefits of the purest and most potent roses with ingredients that further enhance their performance, effect and functionality for modern lifestyles.

The company's proprietary distillation process captures the most complete range of aromatic plants' benefits – producing a rich composition of essential oil microelements and a full concentration of hydrophilic components.

FIND OUT MORE

- More about the Valley of Roses is at alteya.co.uk/pages/organic-science
- Find the right rose product for your skin type at alteya.co.uk/collections/skin-care

A RIVAL TO MAINSTREAM SKINCARE

Every ingredient used undergoes rigorous testing and all products are certified organic and free from any harmful ingredients. 'Creating organic products that are on a par with conventional ones in terms of efficacy is a challenge that we have relished', Daniel tells us, 'and I'm glad to say we have been successful.'

Alteya creates three facial skincare lines that are dedicated to different skin types and age groups, alongside a range of five different floral waters – the undisputed highlight of which is the Organic Rose Water. 'Our Rose Water boasts the most full and complete traceability in the world', Daniel tells us. 'It's crafted in our own distillery from our own organic rose gardens, which use our own source of underground spring water.'

FOR SKIN, FOOD AND SLEEP

This rose water is so beautiful, pure and powerful that it's hard to resist drinking it. Our three-year-old wears it as a perfume on special occasions and a spritz on the pillow can help relieve tension and soothe you into a calm sleep.

The more conventional application is as a facial mist after cleansing; it supports skin rejuvenation and renewal, helps to maintain the skin's pH balance, softens, tones and hydrates.

You can even use Alteya Organics Rose Water as a hair spray or a flavour enhancer to ease digestive issues; a spray in your culinary creations, juice or tea delivers an instant hit of that Cleopatra or Michelangelo feeling, plus countless other benefits. ■

JANEY LOVES

Natural beauty expert Janey Lee Grace reveals the highlights of her 2019 Platinum Awards

Every year, the Platinum Awards recognise the best in natural organic, sustainable products and services – with the help of some fabulous celebrity judges.

Huge thanks to Jo Wood, Glynis Barber, Carrie Grant, Zoe Ball and Clare Every, who had the difficult job of sampling (and being pampered!) with these amazing products.

A big thanks also to My Green Pod, which was once again our media partner for the awards, and Hello Love, which hosted the awards as part of a week-long collaboration to raise awareness of non-toxic skincare and cosmetics.



This year we introduced a category for CBD products to reflect their rising popularity.

Here are some of 2019's Platinum Award winners from the skincare and beauty categories, where – as always – we had some incredible and innovative products. Congratulations to all our winners – and thanks to everyone who voted!

FIND OUT MORE

■ See the full list, including winning wellbeing books and therapists, at imperfectlynatural.com



JANEY LOVES PLATINUM AWARDS 2019

SKINCARE AND BEAUTY

FACIAL CLEANSER

AEOS, Cleansing Oil dé-Maq
(£37.50, 100ml)

FACIAL SERUM

Alteya Organics, Organic
Iridescent Light Serum Rose
& Mullein (£19, 30ml)

FACIAL OIL

Lucky Cloud Skincare,
Balancing Face Oil (£21, 30ml)

FACIAL MOISTURISER

Earthzest Organics,
Youtopia Balm (£25, 50ml)

INNOVATIVE CLEANSING PRODUCT

The Konjac Sponge Co,
Elements Collection
Konjac Sponge (£9.99 each)





LEFT TO RIGHT
Glynis Barber,
Janey Lee Grace
and Jo Wood at
2019's Platinum
Awards



BODY CARE

SOAP

The Kentish Soap Company,
Blissful Soap (£4.50, 85g)

NATURAL DEODORANT

Scence Natural Skincare,
Natural Deodorant (£12, 75g)

NATURAL SUNCARE

Incognito, Mini Suncream
and Insect Repellent SPF30
(£14.99, 75g)

MEN'S GROOMING

Pure & Light Organic Skincare,
Essential Face Cream for
Gentlemen (£39, 50g)

MULTI-PURPOSE SKINCARE

Weleda, Skin Food Collection

NATURAL AND ORGANIC HAIRCARE

Tabitha James Kraan, Luxury
Edition Organic 4-in-1
Conditioner (£36, 200ml)



Women are constantly bombarded with messages that we are either not enough or too much – whether we're talking looks, intelligence, abilities or emotions.

For Anna Challacombe and Charli Anne Thompson, enough is enough: they want women to be unapologetic about what they want, feel and need, to embrace their innate female power 'to birth anything' and to join a global sisterhood of women who are demanding more.

AN EVERYDAY ANCHOR

Together Charli and Anna have created a range of yoga mats to serve as everyday reminders of your needs, desires, beauty and power.

Following a successful Kickstarter campaign, these stunning mats are now available on Anna and Charli's just-launched website, More. They have been designed to help you release the burden of life's responsibilities in a celebration of self-expression.

As well as being a powerful anchor for the most unapologetic version of you, each yoga – or 'Pleasure' – mat is beautiful, comfortable, functional, high-vibe, non-toxic, washable, vegan and eco-friendly – clearly more than just a yoga mat. With a sustainable tree rubber base and a gorgeously soft recycled 'vegan suede' top, the mats offer great grip while absorbing sweat, oils or any other fluid.

FROM A MAT TO A MOVEMENT

Anna knows a thing or two about yoga mats. She chose to design her own after struggling to find a mat that was both beautiful and eco – then founded Blisscloud yoga mats to make them available to all.

In 2018 Anna wanted a new mat design to add to the award-winning Blisscloud collection. 'I wanted this mat to be unique', she explains, 'a celebration



DEMAND *more*



The yoga mat that launched a movement for a global sisterhood



Find out why the More crystal-infused water bottle is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

of what it means to be a woman.' Anna had a Skype call with designer and artist Charli, and seeds were planted over what turned out to be a long conversation.

'Suddenly this wasn't just about a mat any more, it was a movement', Anna tells us. 'We realised we were both craving connection, tribe and growth; we wanted acceptance and inclusion and we wanted to offer it to others. My mind was opened and I understood that this was way beyond having a vulva.'

One design turned into five – the five designs turned into a Kickstarter campaign and in September the More website was launched. In the same month, More scooped a Janey Lee Grace Platinum Award for its Mermaid Dreams Eco Travel Yoga Mat.

MAKING MAGIC

The More online store features mats, organic cotton T-shirts, tote bags and lots more, and is also a space where women can unapologetically embrace pleasure and self-love and share stories with sisters.

Anna and Charli believe that through those unique stories we will learn and grow into a deeper understanding of what it means to be a woman in this world. It's their view that when we allow ourselves personal space to let go of societal expectations, to feel good in our bodies and share our journeys together, 'magic happens'.

'This is why it was so important for me that The More. Collective includes and celebrates ALL women and those who identify', Charli tells us. 'Womanhood is however you feel it in your body and heart and not for others to define – men, or anyone! I believe in the right to full self-expression and the need for our traditional women's spaces to be opened up, to create a beautiful, diverse and loving sisterhood.' ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ View the full range of yoga mats and accessories at choosemorenow.com

The natural and organic beauty sector has grown quickly, and consumer demand is driving change in unexpected places. But when big companies sprint to catch up with the preferences of eco-savvy buyers, they can sometimes miss the point entirely. We shouldn't have to choose between single-use plastic packaging and genuinely natural ingredients, and it's unacceptable that we can end up funding animal testing when we buy from ethical brands owned by less scrupulous multinationals.

Conscious beauty products should offer it all; Evolve Organic Beauty is one company that's showing the big players how it's done and providing shoppers with what they're growing to expect.

When plastic packaging is used, Evolve opts for 75-100% recycled post-consumer PET plastic which, unlike PVC, is fully recyclable and doesn't leach harmful chemicals into the soil if it does end up in landfill. The company's glass packaging is also partly recycled and the card cartons are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Ingredients are sourced as locally as possible, and those bought

SLOW beauty

Simplifying your skincare routine can have a big impact on your health, wellbeing and the planet



Find out why Evolve's Daily Renew Facial Cream is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

from further afield are purchased in powder form to reduce the company's carbon footprint. The products are handmade in small batches in Hertfordshire, so their natural ingredients are still potent when used.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

All Evolve Organic Beauty products are vegan; as well as supporting plant-based and cruelty-free lifestyles, this also makes sense from an environmental point of view: plant-based ingredients require less energy, land and water, making them a more efficient use of resources.

Evolve has gone one step further by advising us to cut down on the number of beauty products we use, and instead respect our skin's natural beauty. The advice is to avoid overloading skin with products that could affect its pH, strip away its friendly bacteria and diminish its detoxification capabilities.

It's time to embrace a slow beauty regime that prioritises quality and rejects the illusion of any 'quick fix'. This means streamlining your beauty routine and using any spare time you gain to enjoy the scents and textures of natural ingredients that will lift your spirits, nourish your skin and minimise your environmental impact. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Discover what your skin really needs by using the skin type filter at evolvebeauty.co.uk

READER OFFER

Get **15% off** Evolve Organic Beauty (until 31 Dec 2019) using code **MGPI5** at evolvebeauty.co.uk

Anti-stress skincare

Now you can treat skin problems – from acne to premature ageing – organically and intelligently

Pollution, radiation, chronic stress, lack of sleep, poor nutrition – modern lifestyles expose us to a cocktail of chemicals that can really make our skin suffer. Today skin conditions and allergies are on the rise, and becoming hallmarks of the generations inheriting toxic lifestyles and environments.

Living in conflict with nature's rhythms causes inflammation in the body, which is linked to ageing. For the vast majority it's simply not possible – or even desirable – to drop out of modern society and the stresses it induces, but now there's a different option.

It's logical that a potent dose from nature's most extreme medicine cabinet could help to redress the balance and alleviate skin problems caused and exacerbated by increasingly stressful lifestyles that are out of sync with nature.

STRESS-TOLERANT ACTIVES

Laura Rudoe, founder of S5 Skincare, has devoted years to the research and discovery of nature's most effective bioactives, derived from plants that live in some of Earth's most extreme ecosystems – including the Arctic, high altitudes and deserts.

The actives are bio-adapted to be resilient to stress, and when added to natural skincare products they can be used to treat specific skin conditions.

Laura has built a modular range of skincare with five treatment serums at its heart. Each contains the highest possible concentration of bioactives to treat one single skin issue: redness/sensitivity, blemishes, pigmentation, premature ageing and dryness.

The serums blend bioactives with high-tech green ingredients, such as hyaluronic acid, in an organic base of natural oils, waters and butters, helping to

prevent further damage and repair the visible effects of modern living on the skin.

The serums can be combined with S5's skin-type based cleansers and moisturisers to create a bespoke beauty regime to suit your skin's needs.

This is a pioneering approach to organic beauty at the cutting edge of scientific development. ■



Find out why S5 Skincare Illuminate Serum is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

READER OFFER

Get **15% off** S5 Skincare (until 31 Dec 2019) using code **MGPI5** at s5skincare.com

FIND OUT MORE

■ View the full range of S5 Skincare at s5skincare.com



CONSCIOUS CHRISTMAS

Beautiful, ethical products that are packed with natural luxury will be top of 2019's Christmas lists

Environmental concerns and the growth of ethical shopping could make 2019 a bumper year for conscious Christmas presents.

We're predicting a rise in 'experience gifts' from those who object to panic-buying stuff that no one really wants or needs, plus great years for gifts that give back – particularly charity gifts that support communities, protect species and conserve habitats.

Still, giving a physical, personal gift to someone you love is hard to beat. It's a way to say thank you for the countless favours and acts of kindness that mount up over the year, and to indulge someone who might not otherwise take much time out for themselves.

'Celebrating a conscious Christmas is something we can all do', explains Jayn Sterland, managing director of Weleda UK and Ireland and No. 1 in 2019's Who's Who in Natural Beauty list. 'If we shop with these thoughts in mind, we're heading in the right direction. One: give something meaningful that won't disappoint. Two: consider the packaging: bigger isn't always better and so many gifts come over-packaged at Christmas.'

CHRISTMAS 2019 BEAUTY TRENDS

The growing consumer demand for transparent business and sustainable products means there should be plenty of ethical gift options available this year.

Skincare and beauty products are great for delivering the indulgence factor, but the sector is changing so there are a few trends to consider if you want to make sure your gift hits the spot.

The lines between beauty, health and wellbeing are blurring; effective beauty products are now expected to heal and nourish rather than just creating a veneer on the surface of the skin.

As a result, synthetic polymers (liquid plastics), chemical quick-fixes and laborious skincare routines are on their way out, and holistic, natural beauty is very much in. If you're new to this, look out for products that carry NATRUE or COSMOS Natural or Organic certification logos on the packaging.

CLEAN SKINCARE

If makeup is on your hit list, you may want to research ethical and organic ranges: the latest research from Mintel reveals makeup sales are falling as the trend for naturally radiant skin gathers pace. As makeup artist Lou Dartford explains: 'Good skincare is the basis of all good makeup. A good

skincare regime ensures skin is looking its best, meaning less makeup should be needed and any makeup that is applied will sit better on the skin.'

Ingredients are key: the desire for glowing skin that radiates health and overall wellbeing is most authentically achieved using 'conscious' beauty products that contain clean ingredients.

When considered in the context of growing environmental concerns, the quest for naturally radiant skin helps to explain why the annual Soil Association Certification *Organic Beauty & Wellbeing Market Report* revealed a 14% growth of certified organic beauty and wellbeing in 2018.

FRESH FROM THE FIELD

A contender that will top many lists this year is the Christmas 2019 gift collection from clean beauty pioneer Weleda. It hits all the spots: biodegradable, natural products that support conservation, biodiversity, species and habitats, all wrapped in ethical packaging – without skimping on indulgence or sheer beauty.

The collection is inspired by the vibrant butterflies that visit plants in Weleda's biodynamic gardens, which sprawl across 13 acres of 'super-organic' land just a couple of miles up the road from the company's HQ in Derbyshire.

CLOCKWISE

The peacock, speckled wood, large white, small copper, holly blue and comma are just some of the butterfly species that visit Weleda's biodynamic gardens in Derbyshire

This area – ‘The Field’ – is where Weleda cultivates the medicinal plants that form the basis of its pharmaceutical and body care products.

Planting in line with the biodynamic calendar ensures the ecosystem is balanced; the moon, sun and planets all affect the way a plant grows. Biodynamic farming also means no pesticides or other toxic substances come into contact with the precious ingredients, so their purity and quality are protected.

From a customer's point of view, all these benefits ensure maximum potency and efficacy of the formulations inside the Weleda bottles and tubes that end up on bathroom shelves.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

The Field is maintained as a rich natural habitat bursting with pollen and nectar; it supports ecological stability and makes a wonderful home for insects that help to prevent the spread of pests and diseases.

Over the spring and summer of 2019, a survey with East Midlands Butterfly Conservation revealed 32 species of butterfly in Weleda's gardens.

The holly blue, comma, red admiral, large white, peacock and purple hairstreak butterflies were just some of the species spotted, and each has been captured beautifully in illustrations painted by British designer Lisa Jane Dhar of Studio Noodles.

CAPTURING THE ART OF NATURE

Like Weleda, Lisa creates in harmony with nature and places a strong focus on quality. ‘Most of my materials are a special blend of natural mineral pigments and are bound together with honey and gum arabic’, she explains. ‘The fewer the ingredients, in my opinion, the better.’

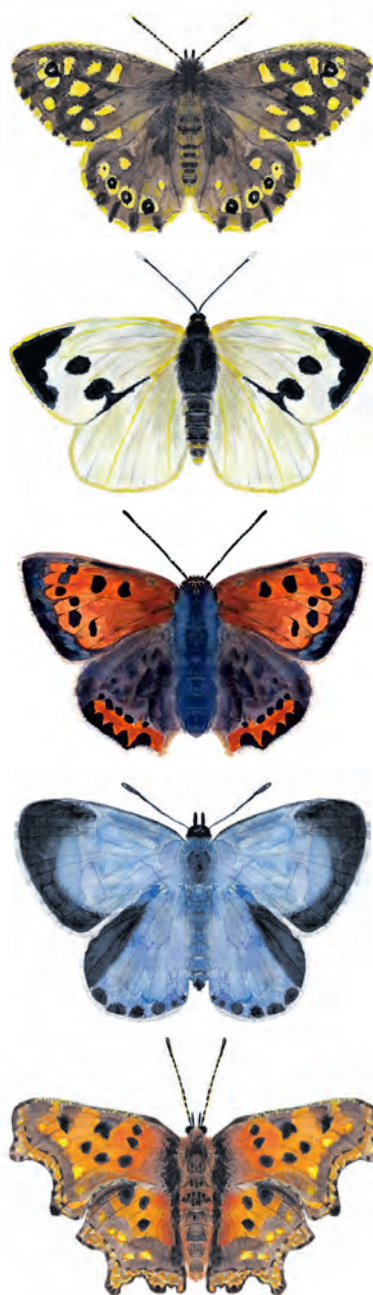
For the 2019 Christmas gift collection, Lisa's butterfly designs feature on Weleda's favourite seasonal botanical formulations, including Arnica Muscle Soak, Lavender Relaxing Bath Milk and Rosemary Invigorating Bath Milk (all 200ml, £14.95).

The illustrations also adorn Weleda's new Christmas gift sets: Heaven for Hands, which contains the velvety Sea Buckthorn Hand Cream and soft organic cotton gloves (50ml, £14.95); My Natural Beauty Kit, with three replenishing skin saviours and an organic muslin wash cloth (£34.95) and Treat Your Feet, which combines a natural pumice stone with cooling Foot Balm (75ml, £14.95).

POSITIVELY BEAUTIFUL

You'll notice another butterfly on these products: Positive Luxury awarded Weleda its Butterfly Mark in 2013, in acknowledgement of the company-wide commitment to sustainability. This logo, which guarantees transparency and trust, is found only on products from companies that meet the highest standards of verified innovation and social and environmental performance.

The Positive Luxury logo was inspired by the story of the large British blue butterfly, which was brought back from near extinction in the UK in the world's



‘An encounter with a butterfly may be brief and fleeting, but their passing beauty never fails to capture the heart.’

Lisa Jane Dhar, Studio Noodles



most successful insect reintroduction programme. Sir David Attenborough shared this story with Positive Luxury's founder, Diana Verde Nieto, when she presented him with his Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. It demonstrates how we can unite to reverse the negative impact we are having on our planet.

ALL WRAPPED UP

We can all make a difference by choosing products that minimise our own environmental impact, and thinking about what we do with the empty packaging.

Only 50% of packaging is recycled in the bathroom, compared with 90% in the kitchen. The convenience factor undoubtedly plays a role, but lack of clarity is also an issue. According to the latest packaging trends report from Mintel, just 27% of global new beauty and personal care launches in 2017 featured an environmentally friendly packaging claim.

FIND OUT MORE

- View the full Weleda Christmas 2019 collection at weleda.co.uk/christmas-gifts
- More about the inspiration behind the butterfly collection is at weleda.co.uk/butterfly-inspiration
- Learn how to be biodynamic in your back garden at weleda.co.uk/biodynamic-garden

The material used to package Weleda's Butterfly Collection is FSC certified, recyclable and biodegradable, with no plastic inserts or outer cellophane in sight – but equally important is what's inside the products themselves. Plastic pollution has become the nation's most pressing environmental concern, yet many people remain shocked that liquid plastics persist in mainstream personal care products – even when they come in plastic-free packaging. Just like secondary microplastics from degraded packaging, liquid plastics end up in our waterways and ultimately in the systems of marine life.

Thanks to effective certification and clear labelling, it's easier than ever to find luxurious and indulgent gifts that will help to protect all living things for generations to come. This year could be a bumper year for truly ethical gifts (and very happy faces) on Christmas Day. ■



RAISING THE BAR

This soap and shampoo bar subscription service helps stop plastic waste going to landfill

Only 50% of packaging is recycled in the bathroom, compared with 90% in the kitchen. It's a huge problem – especially considering that 120 billion units of packaging are produced annually by the global cosmetics industry.

The war on plastics is leading to innovations in 'ethical' packaging, but question marks still hover over the wider and long-term environmental impacts of some plastic-free solutions.

The most obvious approach is to minimise packaging – of any sort – wherever possible, and to make sure that any packaging used is easy to recycle and reuse.

'There's no excuse at all for wrapping soap in plastic packaging', says Jayne Waddy, founder of The Kentish Soap Company, 'and the use of all-natural ingredients absolutely does not make plastic-free packaging any more of a challenge.'

LETTERBOX BARS

The Kentish Soap Company removed the last small bits of plastic packaging – such as sticky tape – from its products last year, and in August it soft-launched a subscription service to help customers reduce unnecessary waste. 'We have tried to think of everything', Jayne tells us. 'We've even gone the extra mile to find compostable postage labels rather than the normal plastic-based ones.'

Subscribers can have four soap bars, or three bars of soap and a shampoo bar, delivered to their door every month or every other month. They come unwrapped in an easily recyclable cardboard box, which should help the 4.5 million people who don't recycle bathroom products due to the inconvenience.

VEGAN FRIENDLY AND PLASTIC FREE

The subscription model also helps to cut costs: the price of the soaps is reduced and subscribers receive a 20% online discount on other products, such as bath salts, body butter, hand cream and candles.

Subscribers can cancel at any time, though we're pretty sure you'll fall in love with the naturally made, beautifully scented, vegan-friendly and plastic-free soaps that arrive through your letterbox. The soaps last for at least a year so there's no rush to get through the bars as soon as they arrive.

BELOW

Jayne Waddy is pioneering a sustainable alternative to unnecessary and plastic packaging



'Our Blissful soap (sweet orange and geranium) has been a firm favourite with our customers for a long time', Jayne tells us. 'At the moment we are particularly excited about our just-launched shampoo bar in a lavender and rosemary fragrance.'

A new Christmas range will pack all the same natural and ethical goodness into soaps, bath treats and candles, but with a winter twist and natural, warming festive scents.

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

The move to reduce packaging is part of Jayne's wider concern for the environment. 'Our products are vegan friendly and the premises are run on 100% renewable energy due to our wider concerns about climate change', Jayne explains.

Natural ingredients are also key – and the very reason Jayne first started making soap from her kitchen table over a decade ago.

As a pre-school teacher Jayne washed her hands 'what felt like a million times a day', which left her skin feeling dry and irritated. She decided to make her own natural alternatives for her family; they proved so popular that Jayne's family – daughter (Emma), husband (John) and nephew – all joined the team.

Keeping the business in the family and making all the products by hand means Jayne can keep tight control over the ingredients used. 'We can ensure the honesty and integrity of our products, and speak with authority about them', Jayne tells us. 'We also run workshops to help people to understand the natural soap-making process.'

By sharing her knowledge and passion, Jayne is helping people to understand the difference between authentic, handmade products and the soaps commonly found in the retail environment, while also providing an opportunity to cut the issue of packaging entirely: by making soap for yourself. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- The full range of plastic-free soaps is at kentishsoap.com
- View details and pricing options for the subscription service at kentishsoap.com/soap-subscription



Find out why The Kentish Soap Company is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

Celebrating HERITAGE

Natural skincare that celebrates the Lake District's recognition as a World Heritage Site



All Pure Lakes' natural and organic skincare is made inside the Lake District National Park – and the company has launched a brand-new range of products that celebrates the area's recognition as an official Unesco World Heritage Site.

'So much hard work went into ensuring the Lake District was granted World Heritage status and it's something we are really excited to embrace', said Gareth McKeever, co-owner of Pure Lakes. 'Being based in Cumbria serves as a constant reminder of our responsibility to look after the natural environment to the best of our ability.'

The new World Heritage range includes rosewood, black pepper, sweet basil and orange essential oils, and each blend is available in a hand and body lotion, handwash and shower gel. The new range also includes gift packs, containing a lotion and a hand wash, that are perfect for Christmas.

FAMILY ART

The eco-friendly biopolymer sugar bottles feature unique artwork created by Patricia 'Paddy' Naylor, the grandmother of Claire McKeever (pictured above with her grandfather, Peter Naylor).

Paddy trained at the Edinburgh School of Art and Heatherly's in Chelsea; for the last 40 years of her life she concentrated on three subjects: cats, flowers and landscapes – particularly views of Windermere from her home overlooking the lake. Paddy passed away in 2012 and a posthumous retrospective exhibition of her art was held at the Ruskin Museum, Coniston.

'We really wanted this range to draw on our personal family heritage', Claire tells us. 'We feel the images reflect both the beauty of the Lake District and the purity of the products.' Gareth added, 'Our daughter Esme is already showing signs of Paddy's talent; we may have a future designer on our hands!' ■



Find out why Pure Lakes Skincare Hydrating Hand Balm is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

FIND OUT MORE

■ View the full World Heritage range at purelakes.co.uk



Find out why ChicP Beetroot & Horseradish is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

Dip, not tip

These vibrant, healthy dips are made from imperfect fruit and vegetables

A third of the food produced in the UK is never eaten; it's a hard fact to swallow considering food bank use in the Trussell Trust's UK network has increased by 73% over the last five years.

In addition to food wasted in the home, over-supply means supermarkets and restaurants end up binning food that's already been prepared and 40% of British crops are rejected due to their shape or size.

Gala apples that are less than 50% red, wonky carrots, 'ugly' tomatoes – you name it. Quality criteria from retailers mean £650m of perfectly good food never makes it off the farm.

RESCUING FOOD FROM BRITISH FARMS

Determined to do her bit in the fight to end food waste, chef-turned-entrepreneur Hannah McCollum combined her love for healthy food with her passion for campaigning against food waste.

Hannah works with British farmers to collect imperfect fruit and vegetables that would otherwise

go to waste. This surplus food is blended into award-winning hummus in four different flavours.

Chilli Pumpkin is a garlic-free hummus that's perfect for a Fodmap diet; Beetroot & Horseradish is rich in iron and has a delicious kick; Herby is packed with protein and nutrients and Carrot, Ginger & Turmeric is full of antioxidants, making it great for fighting off winter colds. Chickpeas of different sizes go into the Original ChicP hummus; in 2020 they will be UK grown to make this the lowest carbon footprint hummus.

So far the company has saved over 30,000 fruit and veg and partnered with seven schools to help educate students about food waste. 10% of profits from ChicP's Chilli Pumpkin dip go to Feedback Global, a UK food waste charity, in Hannah's multi-pronged approach to ending the food waste farce once and for all. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ View the full range and find a local supplier at chicp.co.uk



Equinox staff reveal how respect, support and ‘positive disruption’ make up the ethical DNA of their living company

Doing business in a purposeful way means developing employees, connecting with the community and regenerating the environment, as well as making conscious products that are good for people and the planet.

As a UK craft brand that creates living organic kombucha, Equinox feels it's important that the love, care and attention it puts into the products is reflected in the culture of its entire business. The company's ethical DNA was designed by its people and reflects what it really means to work there.

GREAT TASTE

First of all, taste is everything: Equinox even goes as far as to say that ‘great taste is the doorway through which better decisions are made’.

‘When we really taste life, we leap outside the boundaries of our comfort zones and commit to growing’, explains Genevieve, head of people and sustainability at Equinox. ‘As a company, I feel we have all embarked on an epic adventure to find out how business can be done differently to benefit everyone. Every day I taste a new flavour of what it means to work as a part of a family.’

MADE WITH LOVE

Equinox believes in making things with love, which is why the products are organic. The kombucha is alive; because it's made organically, it transfers health from one living entity to another.

‘Our product really reflects the love and care of all our team – from brewing to bottling’, says Simon, a brewery technician. ‘The vibe in the brewery feels very welcoming and is also filled with positive energy.’

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

A culture of respect is also deeply entrenched in the Equinox workplace; employees admit they ‘don't always get it right’, but

do learn and grow the culture together, doing everything they can to minimise harm and maximise health.

‘We talk about emotional wellbeing and workshop about our influence on others and what our uniqueness can bring, positively and negatively’, explains Steve, warehouse manager. ‘Culture is high on the agenda, and I think that's wise for business.’

GIVING BACK

Giving back is simply understood as being the right thing to do; Equinox gives locally and globally ‘because it makes a difference’. Everyone who works there takes care of each other, the community, customers and the planet because of a straightforward understanding that ‘we are all connected’.

‘Working at Equinox has been a bit like a homecoming’, says pick-and-pack assistant Eleanor. ‘The people here are like family and the company has a special spirit that attracts a certain kind of person. People here really care about making a positive impact.’

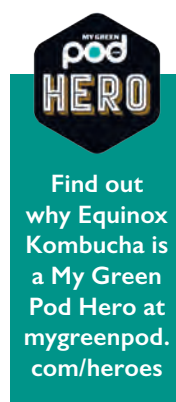
MORE THAN A NUMBER

Equinox positively disrupts by combining social and physical sciences to challenge the status quo. It challenges out-dated stories and systems, while also educating and experimenting.

‘All the companies I've worked for have had one thing in common’, says Angela, the office manager. ‘It's all about the money coming in; as a member of staff you are just a number that's easily replaced. Working for a company like Equinox – that values and invests in people and wants to change the world for the better – means a lot. I want to be part of a company with soul and integrity, so I can leave my mark on a better world.’ ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Discover more about the ethos behind Equinox Kombucha at equinoxkombucha.com



Pure *fun*

Drink organic to avoid bad reactions and protect the environment

Award-winning Vintage Roots has you covered for Christmas – whether you're looking for everyday party wines or fine organic bottles for the big day and beyond.

You can even get hold of a special organic port, Napoleon cognac or single malt whisky, plus a great range of alcohol-free drinks and many pre-set discounted mixed cases that make great gifts.

FLYING THE FLAG FOR ORGANIC

As the only UK company to import and retail exclusively organic wines and other drinks, Vintage Roots' entire business model is built on environmental concerns.

Three decades after they established the business, co-founders Neil Palmer and Lance Pigott continue to fly the flag for high-quality organic, biodynamic, natural and ethically produced wines from around the world. In total there are over 450 organic wines and drinks to choose from, plus the imminent arrival of the company's first organic tequila.

The environmental focus has also led Vintage Roots to develop own-brand ranges such as Wild Thing, which sees a donation to conservation charity The Born Free Foundation for every bottle sold.

As well as celebrating the sustainability efforts of its producers, Vintage Roots sets strict standards for its own business. Since 2005 the office has been powered by 100% renewable energy and in 2006 the company became the first in the UK to offset the carbon footprint of all its wine and beer imports.

WHY TO CHOOSE PURER DRINKS

Organically grown grapes are pure and free from unwanted chemical residues; no synthetic pesticides, herbicides or fungicides are used and the organic standards for wine mean sulphur dioxide levels are kept to a minimum and sometimes absent.

The environment and the vineyard workers are protected while biodiversity is promoted and enriched – and we doubt you'll experience a bad reaction or morning-after grogginess. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- Vintage Roots has just released its range of festive offers. Visit vintageroots.co.uk or call (free) on 0800 980 4992 for a free wine list, advice and to order



Find out why Vintage Roots prosecco is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes



Find out why Atlantic Distillery Ring of Fire Gin is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

THE SPIRIT OF ORGANIC

These handcrafted drinks reflect their makers' passions for seasonal and homegrown organic produce

Stuart Thomson is a vegan brewer and distiller with passions for gardening, the environment and organic growing. It didn't take long to join the dots when, in 2005, he started thinking about a new career that would reflect his lifestyle choices at his Cornish smallholding.

Hops went in the ground almost immediately; 14 years later the hop-yard is neighboured by a fruit garden, orchard, hedgerows, brewery and distillery. Today Treisaac Farm is a certified organic smallholding that is also home to Stuart's businesses: Atlantic Brewery and, with gin partner David Carbis, Atlantic Distillery: Cornwall's only Soil Association certified spirits producer.

HEDGEROW INGREDIENTS

'The palate of organic hops can be quite limiting, which is one of the reasons I started to diversify into botanical brews', Stuart explains. 'I wanted to make artisan beers with interesting and different flavours. When we started the distillery, it was natural to apply the same ethos to the spirits.'

The fruit garden and hedgerows provide plenty of ingredients, helping to create seasonal brews such

as the Elderflower Blonde and this autumn's Plum & Medlar ale. In 2016 David joined Stuart and they branched out into award-winning spirits; alongside the premium-quality real ale, they now also produce 10 gins, three liqueurs and two vodkas – all vegan and hand-crafted in small batches using organic botanicals grown on the smallholding or wild harvested in Cornwall.

Hand-picked Cornish gorse and elderflower are just two of the delicious ingredients that feature in the gins, while blackcurrants from the garden go into the Cornish Cassis and Blackcurrant & Mint Gin. Stuart and David have even planted 35 juniper trees which, given time, will go into their own gin.

Organic waste is composted back onto the veg plot, and rainwater collection, irrigation systems and a tracking PV solar array have been installed, further reflecting the drive to work and live lightly. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- View the range of Atlantic Brewery organic ales at atlanticbrewery.com
- Botanically inspired organic spirits are at atlanticdistillery.co.uk

The rise of 'food citizens'

Clare McDermott, business development director for Soil Association Certification, explains how choosing organic converts desire for change into action



PHOTOGRAPHY ISTOCK

There is a revolution happening in the world of food and drink. It might not be a rapid transformation, but it is reshaping the way that we all think about what and how we buy.

This change in shopping habits won't be news to many, but our increasing awareness of the damage being done to the planet by our consumption habits, is – officially – shaping the way we shop.

PLANET-CENTRIC CHOICES

More and more of us want to reduce the impact we have on the environment, and for many that starts with our weekly shop. The growing rejection of unnecessary plastic packaging, spurred on by documentaries like *Blue Planet II*, is testament to the knowledge that we can – and must – all make a difference in some small way.

In the summer, Soil Association Certification conducted research to gain a better insight into what drives us to make decisions when food shopping. We wanted to know how – and if – those drivers are changing, and what organisations like the Soil Association should be doing to harness the changes in consumer behaviour. We talked to a cross section of shoppers but focused on those who weren't already buying much or any organic.

The findings of the research confirmed what we've long suspected: choices are changing from

individual-centric to more planet-centric. People are now making decisions based on the impact they might have on the planet – think environment, wildlife, waste – rather than simply what the product can do for them as an individual.

Some individual factors remain important; health, for example, still has a major influence on our choices and with busy lives, convenience plays a huge role. But planet-centric choices, like biodiversity, are having an increasing impact. This is still early days; they are emerging trends – albeit fast-growing ones.

CITIZENSHIP AND CONSUMPTION

This changing landscape chimes with another area of work that is gaining traction across a broad spectrum of organisations: the idea of citizenship. Increasingly, people are no longer just passive consumers, simply buying what is put in front of them. Instead, we're increasingly looking to engage with a cause and to feel like we are part of – and can contribute to – a wider movement that is making change in the world.

To put it plainly, many of the businesses succeeding today are moving their customers away from buying a product and towards buying *into* a product.

For organic, this idea of food citizenship is really exciting, and not a new one. As more people seek to be more involved in where their food comes from and part of something bigger that shapes the way we eat and farm, the organic movement is perfectly placed to show more sustainable ways of producing food and drink, and to offer ways for people to support the cause beyond simply buying organic.

ORGANIC SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

We can already see the citizenship mindset at work. The rapid rise in organic veg box schemes and independent retailers points to the fact that as 'food citizens' we want to support local, sustainable production and more ethical businesses.

Many independent retailers, often seen as the traditional homes of organic produce, go above and beyond to foster the citizenship spirit, acting as community hubs or even social enterprises.

Locavore is one such organic social enterprise; its aim is to build a more sustainable local food system – one that is better for our local economy, the environment and our communities – and is not just a shop that sells affordable organic items.

It has developed a market garden, established a veg box scheme and engages local people on issues around food, where it comes from and the fairness and sustainability of mainstream supply chains in one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow. It is a golden example of how to involve people as citizens, not just treat them as consumers.

BEING PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

The challenge now for everyone involved in the organic movement, from retailers to producers, is to consistently and clearly reinforce the link between concerns about our impact on the planet, a desire to be part of something bigger and the benefits for people and planet that organic provides.

Now is a critical time to convert people's desire for change into action, and when shoppers hear of all the benefits that organic offers to the planet and wildlife, organic should become a no-brainer.

By making the intangible tangible and showing people how by supporting organic they are part of something bigger, we are well placed to create a sustainable farming future for us all to enjoy. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Discover how you can save the planet from the ground up at soilassociation.org/support-us/saving-the-earth-starts-from-the-ground-up



Find out why
Yeo Valley
Whole Milk
Yogurt is a
My Green
Pod Hero at
mygreenpod.com/heroes

What do you get when you arm a collective of artists with 3,000 buckets of manure and drop them off in a field in Somerset?

In the case of Yeo Valley, the answer is a giant cow artwork that celebrates organic farming.

The cow poo mural was painted into a field owned by Yeo Valley to coincide with the organic dairy company's 25th birthday, which fell in Organic September – a month dedicated to raising awareness of the benefits of organic.

'We made it using the cow muck from the farm to get a message across – that organic farming works with, and not against, the natural environment', explains Yeo Valley's Sarah Mead. 'Organic farming can help tackle climate change because healthy soil can store excess carbon from the atmosphere.'

LOGISTICS FOR THE MOO-RAL

70 metres wide and 50 metres high, the giant cow artwork compares with other well-known West Country landscape murals like the Cerne Abbas Giant in Dorset (55 metres high) and the Westbury White Horse in Wiltshire (55 metres high and 52 metres wide).

Heather Jane Wallace and Rebecca Barnard, directors of Heritage Courtyard Gallery and Studios in Wells, Somerset gathered 10 artists to create the work of art, which took a week to complete.

Heather admits that carrying the poo up the steep hill was 'very exhausting', and that it was also difficult to get the scale right. Great big household brooms were used to paint the manure into the grass, but Heather soon realised that only huge shapes could be seen from a distance, and details like eyelashes were lost.



The giant cow won't be here for long. Nature will have the last laugh, as ever. That's also part of the message. It's about putting nature first.'

Sarah Mead, Yeo Valley

Despite the challenges, when Sarah Mead brought the idea to the gallery Heather loved it. 'I'm a Somerset girl', she says. 'My brother, nephew and grandfather are farmers. I really understand the message.'

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

When Heather grew up, farming was naturally organic; today, according to *Defra's Organic farming statistics 2018*, organically farmed area represents just 2.7% of the total farmed area on the UK's agricultural holdings.

'I remember when farmers were encouraged to spray their crops after the war to produce more and more food at lower prices', Heather continues. 'The result of this was the decline and disappearance of the countryside and wildlife.'

'My art now is hugely influenced by seeing this when I was a child. So that's a big part of the reason why we got involved – it really spoke to me personally when Yeo Valley came up with the idea. Organic farming is so important.'

500 YEARS OF FAMILY FARMING

The Mead family's North Somerset farming roots can be traced back 500 years. Roger and Mary Mead started farming at Holt Farm, Blagdon in 1961; they had 30 cows, a few sheep and some arable crops. In 1969 Lag Farm, the farm next door, came up for sale and Roger and Mary decided to buy it and expand.

They opened a tearoom and a 'pick your own' fruit farm. Using leftover fruit and skimmed milk from their clotted cream, they started making yoghurts.

Roger and Mary were so pleased with the results that before the year was over, they had taken to the road and were selling Yeo Valley yoghurt around the valley in their Morris Minor.

A WELL-LOVED BRAND

In 1994 the Milk Marketing Board was deregulated and Tim Mead, Roger's son, helped seven local dairy farmers set up The Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative (OMSCo). Tim saw the opportunity for an organic yoghurt; he bought all the milk from the newly formed OMSCo and used it to relaunch the Yeo Valley brand as organic.

Today Yeo Valley is Britain's biggest organic brand, and the family-run company is helping to share the benefits of organic with 50,000 annual visitors. In its 25th year, Yeo Valley has a lot to celebrate. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ Visit the valley to discover the benefits of organic food and farming – details are at yeovalley.co.uk/come-and-visit-us

CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION

The Culinary Caveman explains why a cultural revolution is on its way

The consumer revolution is merely a part of a systemic revolution we are all about to be swept up in. It's already begun – just like climate change.

Conscious consumption is morally and ethically impossible to achieve unless there is an associated change in the cultural systems propping up our unsustainable lifestyles. That's because our consumerist culture is far from conscious; it's geared towards profit, shareholder dividends and the desecration of Mother Earth.

AN OBSOLETE MODEL

Currently, the systems running and regulating our consumerist existence are pinned to a framework of laws, based on immorally acquired land and wealth, that in many instances date back to the Normans.

Much of our education system is caught up in a dogma laid down over 150 years ago. Economic theory was pinned to Newton's law that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, yet Newton was only ever talking about gravity – not supply chains, customer demand or costings.

It's as absurd as running an industry on electricity from steam power, which we still do (even if it's nuclear).

Similarly, there have been no real innovations in transport from cars, trains or planes since they were invented. We have known for a long time that our culture is unsustainable; by definition it can't continue ad infinitum. We need to step into the future, and that begins with us as individuals.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL REVOLUTION

The consumer revolution will replace the 'I' with a 'we', and this will facilitate a psychological revolution. We will stop being selfish and instead take pleasure in doing things for the better of all – cooperatively.

This will accelerate an environmental revolution: we will stop accepting or allowing the pain or death of fellow humans, animals, plants or the planet, and will – and must – take on a biosphere mentality.

A SHARING ECONOMY

Another element of this consumer revolution is a sharing economy. We don't need a Hoover in every



Find out why The Culinary Caveman Green Gaia Goodness is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

home if we can share a far better one, and the same goes for cars, washing machines, freezers, lawnmowers – even DIY tools.

For new housing developments based on minimising carbon footprints, it makes perfect sense to have communal items. It's the sort of common-sense idea you'd expect to see in a Scandinavian housing development, made from hempcrete, that produces all its own energy and food.

Millennials already have this sharing instinct – they already share everything online. The only real fear of switching to a sustainable future is around sacrificing what we have already got.

But what have we actually got? We're no happier, healthier, wealthier or more fulfilled than we were in the pre-internet era. We might have more stuff than we had in 1998, but it isn't the stuff we really need.

QUALITY, NOT PRICE

I don't remember ever being given the choice between cheap food and healthy food, yet all those over-consumed, processed carbohydrates have caused a lot of long-term, really expensive health consequences, including obesity, diabetes, depression, cancer and heart disease.

Do we really need cheap plastic crap made in China that lasts a week, or would it be better to pay more for longer lasting, repairable products that are manufactured locally? Must we have cheap clothing, with an interconnected web of pestilence, desecration and slavery, or sustainable, locally produced, longer wearing items?

THE THIRD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

We are hopefully now entering the Third Industrial Revolution (which will culminate in free energy), just as agriculture will enter its third revolution (which will see thousands of permacultural smallholdings providing cheap and healthy food for all).

So too will the health, transport, education, religious, legal and political systems. They won't just change with the new times; each system needs a new start, which is why the consumer revolution will also lead to a cultural revolution.

CONSCIOUS CONFUCIUS CONSUMPTION

In the time when the rich did as they pleased with extravagance, and corruption and nepotism were rife, senseless wars were constant and communities were split apart. Many of the workers were unable to feed their families and revolution was inevitable.

This is not from today, but an account of China at the time of Confucius – around 500BC. A great, wise man with a thousand quotes to his name, this one hits this subject on its head: 'The superior person understands what is correct; the inferior person understands what will sell.' ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ The Culinary Caveman's latest book, *The Seven Deadly Whites*, is available from Blackwell's and online book retailers

Conscious COFFEE

These plastic-free and compostable coffee pods make the perfect guilt-free stocking filler

Coffee capsule machines are a convenient way to ramp up the quality of homemade coffee – but aluminium and plastic capsules take up to 500 years to degrade. 52bn non-recyclable plastic coffee pods are expected to be produced globally by the end of 2020, and Nespresso® has confirmed it recycles just 26% of its UK capsules.

Statistics like these helped spur Blue Goose Coffee founders Lex Thornely and Nick Ratsey into action. 'Seeing capsule waste firsthand in 2016, we were determined to create a range of eco capsules that tasted exceptional, giving pod users an easy, everyday swap away from aluminium and plastic capsules', Lex explains. 'We've shown just how good capsule coffee

can taste without compromising on our ethical approach to business and the environment.'

COMPOSTABLE COFFEE PODS

Blue Goose Coffee capsules are made from starch and wood bark; when empty they can be placed in council food waste bins to be processed into compost or liquid fertiliser. The GM-free pods are produced using renewable energy and packaged in sustainably sourced, recyclable FSC cardboard boxes, printed using vegetable inks and secured with plastic-free glue.

CONSCIOUS CHRISTMAS COFFEE

As well as providing 10% more coffee than standard Nespresso® capsules, Blue Goose pods also contain speciality grade coffee, and growers are paid more than the Fairtrade Minimum Price.

All this makes the Blue Goose Eco Coffee Pod Collection (main image) a perfect conscious coffee gift

READER OFFER

Visit bluegoose.coffee/mgp before 25 December 2019 and you'll get 10% off any coffee in the Blue Goose Eco Coffee Pod range



this Christmas. It contains four great-tasting varieties of speciality arabica coffee pod: Ethiopian Yirgacheffe and Organic Peruvian, plus the UK's only 100% chemical-free Swiss Water Decaf pod. The beans are decaffeinated without the production or use of manmade chemicals or solvents, meaning you get a wonderful cup of coffee without the caffeine hit or chemical trail.

Completing the lineup is the new Blue Goose Lungo coffee pod, crafted from speciality El Salvador and Brazil coffees. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ View the full range of Blue Goose coffee at bluegoose.coffee

ELECTRIC AVENUES

E-mopeds are helping councils, businesses and individuals do their bit to tackle the climate crisis

More people than ever before want to act for the climate – and switching to clean transportation could be the simplest way for an individual to make a big difference.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines the transport sector as 'the fastest growing contributor to climate emissions', yet there have never been more clean and affordable ways to get around.

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR TRANSPORT

When John Dorman and Teddy Thompson founded EcoMove they brought a bit of fun to a serious subject; their electric mopeds look great, are perfect for commuting and are so affordable (starting at just over £1,300) that they can help anyone to reduce the impact of their travel.

The 'e-mopeds' have no engine, no poisonous emissions, cost less than 1p per mile and have a range of up to 80 miles from a single charge from a household three-pin plug. The absence of an engine makes electric mopeds totally silent and 40% lighter than their petrol counterparts, so they're much easier to handle and manoeuvre.



Find out why the EcoMove M+ Series e-moped is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

EcoMove's e-mopeds are manufactured by NIU, the global leader. They're designed for safety and many of the features – such as GPS, ride history and battery usage – can be fed back to an app on your phone.

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS AND COUNCILS

John and Teddy are working with some of the many businesses looking to implement 'green policies' and improve their corporate social responsibility. 'We don't just sell e-mopeds', Teddy tells us. 'We can also advise businesses on how to implement a low-carbon transport solution and what changes are required – from policy and procedures to finance and tax breaks.'

EcoMove is also helping councils step up to the challenge of creating Clean Air Zones; Bristol was

FIND OUT MORE

■ Discover the e-moped options and support available from EcoMove – for you or your business – at eco-move.co.uk



the first council to ban diesel cars by 2021, but many people will now need to find a new way to get to work, see friends and family and do the shopping.

As with the climate emergency there is no single solution to the issues of air pollution and transport emissions, but a joined-up approach that involves individuals, business and local government can help everyone do what they can where they can. ■

Ready for the ride?



Robert Llewellyn reveals why electric vehicles will revolutionise a lot more than just the way you drive

Can you imagine a future where you buy a car online, unseen? An electric vehicle (EV) that you lease, but on a contract that lets you switch cars regularly, and incorporates insurance, breakdown cover, wear and tear, service and repair, charging and road tax? Because this service already exists in the UK, and is just one example of how the electric car is set to unleash a quiet revolution.

If you ask anyone who drives an EV about its benefits, you might struggle to shut them up. Such is the step change that people experience. EVs are quicker, quieter and smoother; 'fuelling up' is a fraction of the cost and you wake up with a full tank. The positives really add up. What's less understood is the significant changes that will come with them.

If you think the smartphone had a huge ripple effect on our lives, I would wager that smarter cars will have an even more profound impact.

SMARTPHONES ON WHEELS

Whisper it quietly, but the garages where we have traditionally 'kicked the tyres' and later paid to have them (and our bank balances) realigned are facing an existential threat.

The EV isn't solely responsible for this, of course; consumer habits are changing, and younger buyers in particular are significantly more likely to lease a car online and have it delivered to their house. But if this trend isn't threat enough, the arrival of electric cars will only accelerate their demise.

These businesses rely on highly profitable after-sale services, like maintenance and repair. But while a conventional combustion engine is inherently complex, EVs have a fraction of the parts that can become faulty.

Typically, the only time an EV driver needs to see a mechanic is when the tyres need changing. What's more, EVs are in effect 'smartphones on wheels'; any problems can be detected remotely and a repair 'operative' can come to you.

'Over-the-air' updates also effectively mean that your car improves over time. Add to this that there are now early electric vehicles (and their battery packs), such as the Tesla Model S, that are routinely racking up 400-600,000 miles and you can see that the ramifications for the car industry are very serious.



ROBO-TAXIS AND IN-CAR TV

Much like the smartphone disrupted a whole host of existing businesses (cameras, GPS, music players) and paved the way for a whole host of new businesses (apps, social media, streaming), EVs will alter things more than we might think.

While in its early stages, Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) could have a huge effect on the energy system, giving us a 'battery on wheels' that can act as a renewable storage device and provide an array of grid-strengthening services, including providing a back-up power source for your home.

More frivolously, in-car services are improving all the time. The recently released Tesla V10 update enables Netflix, Spotify and YouTube, and adds a feeling hungry/lucky feature to the satellite navigation system.

Electric cars are also expected to usher in an era of more connected, shared and autonomous transport. This future is not as far-flung as you might imagine; Elon Musk, the entrepreneur behind the staggering rise of Tesla, is predicting there will be a million 'robo-taxis' on the road by 2020.

While this timeline sounds optimistic, Tesla has confounded critics time and time again; from a standing start a decade ago it will manufacture more than 500,000 electric cars in 2020. So hold tight: the electric vehicle revolution is only just beginning – and it's going to be one hell of a ride! ■

FULLY CHARGED

■ The world's number one clean energy and electric vehicle channel receives around 5m monthly YouTube views and is growing at an astonishing rate.

■ Launched by actor, presenter and writer Robert Llewellyn (*Red Dwarf*, *Scrapheap Challenge*) nine years ago, *Fully Charged* is a fun, informative series that covers an array of renewable technologies and electric vehicles – from scooters to ships – as well as all the latest electric cars that are coming to market.

■ With more than 450 free episodes on YouTube, weekly podcasts, a website packed with news, views and reviews and an award-winning exhibition, *Fully Charged* is the destination for everything electric.

FIND OUT MORE

■ Discover more about clean energy and electric vehicles on the Fully Charged channel at FullyCharged.Show



LEASING AN EV

With savings on tax, fuel, maintenance and more, leasing an electric car through the workplace brings huge benefits for employers and employees

‘We have to act now to avoid sleepwalking further into a health catastrophe’. These are the words of Octopus Electric Vehicles CEO Fiona Howarth, who spoke out last month about ‘the need for speed’ within the electric revolution.

According to recent research, air pollution kills 100 people in the UK daily. We all know green is good and change is needed; paper straws are a great start, but one of the biggest factors behind the catastrophic climatic changes is transport.

Emissions from the UK’s transport industry have fallen just 3% since 1990, yet the energy sector has managed a 59% cut. The legally binding aim for ‘Net Zero’ by 2050 can feel a little suffocating (ironically), but it is achievable if we all work together.

IMPARTIAL EV ADVICE

As electric vehicle (EV) owners who have worked in the industry for years, the team at Octopus Electric Vehicles is able to offer bespoke and unbiased advice on making the switch to an electric car.

The EV leasing company’s bundles include a free consultation that helps customers understand which

EV is best for them and their lifestyle. This isn’t just about the car, but also the charging, energy tariffs and demystifying the experience of driving a vehicle that doesn’t run on petrol or diesel.

The goal is to ensure everyone has the smoothest possible transition to sustainable driving. There’s no catch: it’s just about getting more people into EVs and making sure they’re comfortable behind the wheel.

Going green can bring huge savings – whether in your transport choice or your energy tariff. While EV prices are trending towards the more luxury end of the car market, prices have come down massively and amazing new options have hit the forecourts in the last six months alone.

LEASING AN EV ON SALARY SACRIFICE

Offered by employers to their employees, salary sacrifice is an amazing opportunity to lease a brand new EV at a reduced cost. This tax-efficient method entails an all-in-one monthly payment for an EV, insurance, maintenance and roadside assistance, to be taken out of your salary prior to any tax reductions.

Unlike having a company car, salary sacrifice is open to every worker. Brilliantly, the government has set

Benefit In Kind at 0% come April 2020, with annual increases of just 1% for the following couple of years.

Essentially, if you happen to work for a company and happen to have a car, it’s a no-brainer. No initial payments, huge savings during the lease term, access to experts as you get up to speed with your new EV and no obligation when the leasing term ends. The solution works for employers, too: with savings on NI payments and support from an Octopus EV accounts manager, it’s the future of sustainable business. ■

BENEFITS OF LEASING AN EV

EMPLOYEES

- Payments taken through your gross salary, before tax and NI
- Savings are based on your tax bracket; a 40% tax payer can save 40% on their monthly cost
- No deposit or up-front payment
- Price includes insurance, servicing and Europe-wide roadside assistance
- An incredible car with cutting-edge tech

EMPLOYERS

- Cost-free savings with lower NI contributions
- Employee retention
- Your own account manager
- Bespoke test drive events at your workplace
- No financial outlay, and minimal impact on payroll
- Environmental kudos
- Workplace chargers
- Impartial and honest advice

FIND OUT MORE

- Learn about the benefits of leasing an EV at octopusev.com, or discuss with the team at business@octopusev.com or on 020 3870 3892

“I lease a Nissan LEAF through the salary sacrifice scheme at work and I really enjoy driving electric. The monthly amount comes directly out of my monthly gross salary. This covers the car, breakdown cover, servicing and maintenance, so it’s pretty much my full monthly motoring costs. As this payment comes out before tax and NI, it’s reduced by around 40%.

‘I have to pay ‘Benefit in Kind’ tax on this as it’s seen as a fringe benefit, though Benefit in Kind rates for electric cars drop to 0% next year, and my monthly costs will fall considerably as a result: the savings will be around £200. I didn’t pay anything up front, and everything was taken care of – it was all very easy.’

Kat Shenton, head of fund management, Octopus Investments



Combining affordability with range, the New Renault ZOE could be the electric car that drives a mainstream shift to electric transportation

THE EV THAT COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING

This is the one we've been waiting for: in September Renault announced that the all-electric New ZOE is available for pre-order. The third generation ZOE is one of several new electric vehicles (EVs) set to hit UK roads next year, but this is the one that could change everything.

'BEST EV FOR UNDER £30K'

If we want to help clean up our air and drastically cut emissions, the shift to clean transportation has to be big and it has to come quickly. That means affordability is key.

The third generation ZOE could well be the car that takes electric vehicles mainstream: in total the ZOE has won more than 60 awards across Europe and been named the 'best electric car for under £30,000' by *What Car?* for six years running. To date more than two billion zero-emission miles have been travelled in ZOE's, which gives you an idea of how popular they are.

245 MILES PER CHARGE

Renault engineers have worked hard to evolve the ZOE since the original concept was revealed in 2009; the version at the 2012 Paris Motor Show had a range of 93 miles*, which was doubled to



*Based on NEDC tests **WLTP figures shown are for comparability purposes. Actual real-world driving results may vary depending on factors such as the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted after registration, weather conditions, driving styles and vehicle load.

186 miles* when the second generation ZOE was launched in 2016.

With a bigger battery and more tech, New ZOE is a whole lot of car for under £30k.

The model arriving in 2020 will give you 245 miles** from a single charge, which puts this electric car up there with some far pricier options.

IS RANGE ANXIETY STILL A THING?

'Range anxiety' still looms for those thinking about getting their first electric car. Fears of getting stranded in remote locations, nightmares about running out of power on the motorway and even thoughts of having a car that's not ready to drive in an emergency can be enough to put people off making the switch from petrol or diesel.

Those who have driven or been in an electric car would say running out of charge is no more likely than running out of petrol or diesel. The dashboard shows how many miles you've got left in the 'tank'; it's far more precise than that red line that hovers somewhere between 'empty' and 'full', and even takes into account driving style, speed, uphill routes and traffic conditions.

If you need to take a detour or your charge falls below what you'd feel comfortable with, you'd do

precisely what you'd do in a petrol or diesel car: find your closest filling station.

The UK now has more charging locations than petrol stations – and many are located at the exact same place you'd stop for fuel anyway: the service station.

Instead of driving to the petrol pump, you just park in the charging spot, plug in and stretch your legs while your car's on charge. By the time you've had a coffee, been to the loo and walked back to the car park, you're ready to get back on the road.

ON-THE-ROAD CHARGING

There are currently 10,000 charging locations across the country – equating to 28,500 places to charge – and the number is set to grow. Ionity, which has opened charging stations near Maidstone and in Milton Keynes, has announced plans to install 400 stations across Europe by 2020, which will offer up to 2,400 chargers.

Ionity's UK charge network allows EV owners to recharge their vehicles in as little as eight minutes via 350kW charge points (where vehicles permit) fed by renewable energy from Octopus Energy.

Chargemaster's 7,000 charging points – the UK's largest public network – are being merged with BP's 1,200 service stations following the sale of Chargemaster to BP. 400 150Kw points will be installed by 2021, 100 of which will appear on BP forecourts by the end of the year. The chargers will deliver 100 miles of range in around 10 minutes.

Over the next three years, 2,400 new Pod Point EV chargers will arrive in the car parks of 600 Tesco Extra and Superstore branches following a partnership between Tesco and VW.

The UK's growing network of electric vehicle chargers should help take the edge off fears of running out of power, but what many people don't realise is that most EV owners charge their cars at home.

GOING THE DISTANCE

According to the 2018 *National Travel Survey*, on average 1,041 trips were made by car per car owner. The average distance driven was 7,360 miles, which would make an average trip just over seven miles.

Of course some trips will be further, but according to the RAC the average car is parked up 96% of the time – 80% at home and 16% elsewhere – meaning it's only actually moving 4% of the time. When you consider that 20% of all car trips are made for shopping, that isn't too surprising.

CHARGING AT HOME

Most people park their cars on private property, and that's why EV owners do most of their charging at home. It's just like charging your mobile phone: you plug it in overnight and will generally have enough juice in the morning to get you through the day.

When you run out of phone charge you just find your closest plug – which is never far away – and power up. The only difference with an electric car is that your charging cable is always stowed safely in



2020 RENAULT ZOE SPEC

- Max 245 miles range** from new 52kWh battery
- Free 7kW Home Wall Box for eligible customers
- 50kW DC rapid charging gives a 90-mile charge in 30 mins
- 0-62mph in under 10 seconds
- Recycled upholstery available for Iconic



your boot so there's no danger of forgetting it.

Gone are the days when a window had to be left open overnight and extension leads routed round the walls to get a charge from your domestic supply; the New ZOE comes with a free wall box to make home charging even easier. The Homecharger is provided and installed by BP Chargemaster PLC and only available to eligible customers.

NEW TECH AND DESIGN

In addition to a huge improvement in range, Renault has given the New ZOE a brand-new electrical infrastructure. The new suite of safety systems includes Traffic Sign Recognition, Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keeping Assist and Auto High/Low beam headlamps (standard on Iconic) plus Blind Spot Monitoring (standard on GT line).

The Iconic's seats can be upholstered in a fabric made from recycled seatbelts and plastic waste (PET) materials. Sourcing a short-loop manufacture helps to reduce CO2 emissions by over 60% compared with more traditional upholstery materials.

Like older models, the New ZOE is currently eligible for the plug-in car grant provided by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). You'll get a grant of £3,500 to offset against the price of the ZOE, with all paperwork handled by Renault.

If you're running out of excuses not to go electric, don't panic: you're not alone. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- More on the Renault ZOE is at renault.co.uk/zoe
- See fuel cost comparisons at octopusev.com/renault-zoe

Christmas *wrapped*

This recycled wrapping paper will make your gifts look beautiful – and help you to save the planet

On Christmas day alone we use over 900 million metres of wrapping paper in the UK, which is enough paper to reach the moon.

Nothing beats giving a gift, but the paper it's wrapped in can cause serious problems for the environment. 60% of it can't be recycled; the plastic laminates, glitter, metal and other additives all end up in landfill and can take decades to decompose.

This is a huge problem for councils – in fact, the problem is so big that some are now banning wrapping paper from refuse, or imposing an additional levy to collect it during the festive season.

This is only a short-term fix: collectively, we all need to start demanding more conscious products.



Find out why Re-wrapped gift wrap is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

READER OFFER

Use the code **MYGREENPOD** to get **10% off your Re-wrapped order**

THE IMPACT OF RECYCLED PAPER

Paper can generally be recycled up to about five times, and 70% less energy is required to recycle and reuse paper than to create it from raw materials. The impact is huge: each tonne of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic metres of landfill, 4,000kW of energy and 7,000 gallons of water.

Re-wrapped specialises in the production of environmentally friendly recycled wrapping paper and other products. In the last month the company has launched 24 new designs for Christmas plus another 50 birthday designs and 75 new greetings cards.

They're all made from 100% post-consumer waste

pulp that has not been bleached, and the designs are printed with environmentally friendly vegetable inks. As a result, all its products can be fully recycled.

As well as using 100% recycled materials, all Re-wrapped's operations are powered by renewable energy and, as far as possible, the company uses recycled envelopes and packaging to ship its orders.

Re-wrapped also supports young UK designers and 5% of all its profits go back to support charities and non-profits, so you can double up on gift-giving joy! ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ View the full Re-wrapped range at re-wrapped.co.uk



Sleep in luxury

The organic sector is booming: today, there are more options than ever for people who want to detox their bodies and lifestyles while supporting farmers, workers and the environment.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

The switch to organic food entails a focus on quality over quantity, and the same is true of organic textiles. The quality of cotton is determined by the length and integrity of the fibres, so when the harsh chemicals used to break down mainstream cotton fibres are absent, the quality of the fabric improves.

Certified organic cotton is made from long-staple unbroken fibres, and you can really feel the difference. LittleLeaf Organic bedding has a silky softness that retains its feel-good factor wash after wash. 'When people feel it they are amazed by how soft and luxurious it feels', reveals co-founder Philip Ingram. 'It also lasts longer and is kinder on your skin.'

A HEALTHY NIGHT'S SLEEP

16% of the whole world's pesticides are concentrated on cotton, which the Soil Association calls 'the world's dirtiest crop'. As our skin can absorb these toxins – and we spend roughly a third of our lives in bed –

Organic cotton bedding is an investment that rewards everyone – now and for generations to come



Find out why LittleLeaf Organic Cotton Bedding Set is a My Green Pod Hero at mygreenpod.com/heroes

organic cotton bedding is an easy and effective way to reduce chemical exposure and ease the symptoms of increasingly prevalent skin conditions.

The GOTS (Global Organic Textiles Standard) ensures the cocktail of chemicals found in mainstream cotton – and linked to infertility, respiratory and skin diseases and cancer – is absent from both the manufacturing process and the final product.

A GIFT THAT GIVES

The durability of sustainably made and certified organic cotton bedding makes it a long-term investment that ultimately reaps rewards for you, for the people who grow and sew the cotton and for the environment. It presents a classic opportunity for reuse, as you can hand the bedding down through generations, as our grandparents did. ■

FIND OUT MORE

■ More about GOTS certification is at soilassociation.org/certification/fashion-textiles/types-of-certification
■ Browse organic cotton gift ideas at littleleaforganic.com/ethical-sustainable-organic-cotton-gift-ideas



GET *outside*

pod
HERO

Find out why
The Den Kit
Co Original
Den Kit is a
My Green
Pod Hero at
mygreenpod.
com/heroes

Building and enjoying a den is a fantastic opportunity for outdoor learning – and now it's easier than ever

Like the sound of a handcrafted space that serves as a temporary retreat? Of course you do – and we bet your kids will, too. The Den Kit Co provides exactly that – with little or no previous den-building experience required.

Founders Kay and Jo are Forest School practitioners who are passionate advocates of outdoor and creative learning. They founded The Den Kit Co to encourage children to get outside – whether up a hill, on a beach or in a meadow, forest, field or back yard.

WOODLAND KITS AND PIRATE DENS

The den kits contain no single-use plastics, batteries or complicated instructions – they're all about inclusive, simple and unadulterated fun.

The Original Den Kit (£40) contains a tough 2.4m x 1.8m waterproof tarpaulin with camouflage design; a durable groundsheet; water-based camouflage face paint; an enamelware mug; 10m of natural jute rope; eight steel tent pegs and straightforward instructions, all packed inside a green haversack bag with a shoulder strap.

The Forest School Den Kit (£60) adds a camouflage net, compass and insect aspirator, which harmlessly catches and contains insects for inspection.

The British Woodland Den Kit (£50) contains a beautifully illustrated identification and fact sheet to help expand your knowledge of our native, living heritage – plus the equipment you need to grow your own sapling. The Pirate Den Kit (£45) has a calico tarpaulin and comes complete with pirate bunting and an eye patch.

HOW TO BUILD A DEN

Den-building is a true team activity and a great way to spend quality time together. Older children can build without intervention from overly eager grown-ups, but the most fun is found when everyone gets involved. Even the smallest children can help to peg out, gather leaves and add decorations.

The kits can be used to make a simple tent shelter, a mini wigwam or even a cavernous cave, and all dens can be embellished with final flourishes – whether for camouflage or to stand out from the crowd.

Bunting, flags, a windsock or a sign can help to make your den your own, while natural materials such as moss, sticks, stones, ferns, leaves and fallen branches will help your hide-out to disappear from prying eyes.

Each kit contains a beautiful, Shropshire ash handmade mallet, which can also be bought separately for a very reasonable £10.

SPECIAL COLLABORATION KITS

The Den Kit Co has come a long way since Kay and Jo rushed to meet demand by drying their mallets in the microwave (this approach 'worked well but wrecked the microwave'). Today it has various partnerships in place with people and organisations that share a passion for getting kids outside to explore and learn.

A comprehensive outdoor experience kit has been designed in collaboration with Ed Stafford, a

Scout ambassador and one of the world's foremost survivalists. Packed with authentic equipment and indispensable advice, this is an essential kit for 10- to 14-year-old explorers seeking adventure.

Land Rover recently asked Kay and Jo to design an exclusive product for the next generation of all-terrain explorers. Taking inspiration from a shared passion for outdoor experiences, innovative design and getting muddy, they created the limited edition Land Rover Den Kit, which is 'tough, capable and unstoppable'.

The National Trust Nature Hideaway Kit has been designed to appeal to older children's natural sense of adventure and discovery. The goal of this collaboration is to spark wonder, test ingenuity and help create a generation that cares for nature into the future. With this kit kids can spot animal trails, learn bird calls, watch how the seasons alter the outdoor world around them – all while learning the skill of den-building.

A DOSE OF NATURE

With children becoming increasingly reliant on technology, regular outdoor play is a fun and educational antidote. It engenders a respect for the natural environment and forces children to adapt and deal with change; they get a multi-sensory experience while their lungs are filled with fresh air.

The kits appeal to kids' natural sense of adventure while also providing an effective tool for teaching; they allow children to explore their own creative talents for problem solving, critical thinking and ingenuity, while using nature as a tool to experience both the wider world and themselves. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- Learn about the Forest School approach to learning at forestschoollassociation.org
- Browse the range of den kits and accessories at thedenkitco.com



An organic hotel in the Austrian Alps with affordable skiing for all

THE IDEAL FAMILY SKI TRIP

A quiet road winds through the Pitztal Valley at an altitude of 1,366m in the Austrian Alps. Eventually the tarmac realises where it is, panics and takes a sharp right that delivers drivers to the safety of a gravel car park. From here the only way is up – but not on four wheels.

There are three options: you can take the world's longest funicular railway, the Gletscherexpress ('Glacier Express') to Pitztal Glacier; alternatively you can get out and hike the multiple mountain paths and trails on foot – or finally, it's almost certain you'll be able to ski.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Known as 'The roof of Tyrol', Pitztal's high altitude makes it one of Europe's most snow-sure locations, and one of only a few Alpine holiday destinations that is guaranteed to have snow. Locals wouldn't go far by car without a pair of skis in their boot – in fact, they might not go far in their car at all.

With 70.5km of cross-country ski trails – including a 20km track along the length of the valley – it's often easier (not to mention a lot more fun) to ski the off-road paths through quiet villages and tranquil forests that double as cycle paths in the summer months.

We travelled to the area in February; six months earlier we'd visited the exact same spot to cycle, swim and walk in the mountains, and we were keen to return to Stillebach Biohotel – one of our favourite spots on Earth – to catch up with its owner, Trudi Melmer, and see what the landscape looked like under a blanket of snow.



STILLEBACH BIOHOTEL

The hotel sits off the road a short drive from the Gletscherexpress and is the perfect place to relax and recharge after a day on the slopes. You can enjoy the barrel sauna, stone pine relaxation room and 100-year-old reading room – or just sit back and enjoy

delicious organic food and drinks in a warm, friendly environment that immediately feels like home.

The meals are always nourishing, vibrant and delicious – with ample choice for vegetarians and vegans – which never fails to amaze given the sublime backdrop of snow-covered mountains and frozen waterfalls.

Stillebach Biohotel has its very own cross-country ski track; this was the morning fitness routine of choice for guests and one we quickly adopted. It's a great track to learn on; quiet and relatively flat, our girls (aged three and 11) took to it in no time. They also loved exploring the snow maze that appeared in the hotel grounds on most mornings, shrouded in all the mystery of a Wiltshire crop circle.

You could easily spend a week at the hotel without ever feeling the urge to explore further – but a short (and free) bus ride up the road reveals so many extra highlights. The hafflinger stable in Tieflehn provides rides and hacks in summer, and sleigh rides – complete with mulled wine – in the winter months.

HEADY HEIGHTS

And then there's the skiing. The first thing to mention is that kids under 10 get free use of Pitztal's ski lifts and cable cars when accompanied by an adult. This, along with discounted kids' meals and extremely reasonable local ski hire, means you pay a fraction of the price you'd spend on a ski holiday at a bigger resort. Very little is lost if your kids (or you) wake up one morning and just want to build a snowman.

A single lift pass covers both Riffelsee and the Pitztal Glacier, Austria's highest glacier ski resort. Its highest point perches 3,440 metres above sea level; it's reached by the Wildspitzbahn – Austria's highest mountain gondola – and, at Café 3,440, you can enjoy (you guessed it) Austria's highest speciality coffee. Despite the daunting height, the open area is fantastic for beginners and pros alike and definitely worth a visit – even if only for the panoramic Alpine views.

Nearby Riffelsee has a network of slopes up to 2,880m above sea level and is ideal for families and beginners. It has a special area for children near the bottom of the cable car as well as a small selection of slopes for pros, novices and everything in between.

There are runs for all ages and abilities, which is what makes this spot so perfect for families. Everyone can feel like they've done what they wanted without having to hold back or feel pressurised to take on a slope they're not ready for.

If you're new to skiing or put off by the potential cost – or are even just looking for an idyllic spot to enjoy the beauty of nature in winter – you couldn't find a better place than Stillebach. ■

FIND OUT MORE

- View Stillebach Biohotel rates, availability and services at stillebach.at
- Information about Biohotel certification is at biohotels.info/en
- Learn more about the Pitztal Valley at pitztal.com

Competitions

We've got our hands on a bunch of prizes from fantastic companies that are choosing to do things differently. We love them all and we want to give you a chance to get to know them, too – so we're running these competitions so you can have a go and see for yourself!

Enter and view Ts and Cs at mygreenpod.com. Deadline for entries is **15 April 2020**



WIN ONE OF FIVE BRITISH WOODLAND DEN KITS from The Den Kit Company!



WIN ONE OF FIVE 10TH ANNIVERSARY SETS from Evolve Organic Beauty!



WIN ONE OF 10 WORLD HERITAGE GIFT SETS from Pure Lakes natural skincare!



WIN ALTEYA ORGANICS FACE SKINCARE SERIES of Rose Otto Bio Damascena!



WIN A MORE. ULTIMATE PLEASURE BUNDLE to help you celebrate who you are!



WIN ONE OF 10 CHICP HAMPERS – sample each dip plus Hummus Chips!



WIN ONE OF FIVE 4-IN-1 POLARFLEECE JACKETS from Jojo Maman Bébé!



WIN ONE OF 10 PAIRS OF VIVOBAREFOOT SHOES – choose men's, women's or kids'!



WIN A YEAR'S SOAP & SHAMPOO BAR SUBSCRIPTION from The Kentish Soap Company!



WIN £100 TO SPEND ONLINE ON ETHICAL GROCERIES at the Good Sixty food marketplace!



WIN ATLANTIC DISTILLERY ORGANIC GIN SELECTION – including our Hero: Ring of Fire!



WIN A SURF EXPERIENCE FOR FOUR PEOPLE at The Wave – inland surfing in Bristol!



WIN THRIVE RENEWABLES LUXURY BREAK in association with Premier Cottages!

PORTTRAITS FROM THE PRECIPICE



db Waterman - It seemed such a good idea (2019)

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