

The MO



Photography By Lucy Unwin

Editor's Note

Without trying to sound too sinister and like something from 'The Shining', we're back! We trust that the summer has been kind to all of our readers and that you all managed to take some time to relax, unwind and rebalance.

The summer was certainly glorious with scorching temperatures, ice cream sales going in to overdrive and disposal barbeques selling out of many retailers. Certainly the tabloid press had a veritable field day with photos of Brits sun worshipping and headlines declaring record breaking temperatures. Whilst we enjoyed the sun, did we consider the causes of the soaring celsius centigrade? I wonder.

Now that we are back *The Mo* team have been hard at work making sure that this edition is as topical as ever. With the world's ears listening to what Greta Thunberg is saying about climate change;, keeping a close watch to what the Duke and Duchess of Sussex are doing whilst they tour South Africa in a bid to promote conservation and engaging in social media to stay in touch with the vsco girls' movement., we thought it might be timely to devote this edition to the environment.

As with all things *The Mo* we have tackled the issues with our own unique style. This edition explores Lil' Dikcy, questions whether the drive for climate change is solely for profit, the true cost of fashion and give a nod to October's National Poetry Day with poems inspired and drawing on the theme of nature.

Like with any new academic year we are looking for a new group of writers, artists and photographers to join our existing *The Mo* team. Essentially, if you have an opinion, an interest in art, photography or media, enjoy writing or want to work in journalism helping to produce our award winning 'The Mo' is absolutely the opportunity for you. If you're a sixth former we meet Wednesdays, Week 1, Period 5 in the LRC or if you are lower down the school and want to get involved just email Ms Redfern (h.redfern@marlborough.herts.sch.uk) and she can arrange a time to speak to you about your ideas.

We look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas.

OUR TEAM

Andrea Jenkins - Writer

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Greta Thunberg

“I don’t want your hope. I don’t want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day.”

Climate change is now the biggest threat of the 21st century with the threat of extinction ever present if we do not cut down on our pollution levels or find a solution that replaces our greenhouse gases. Our sea levels are rising, species are in danger of becoming extinct, and the rainforest is on the verge of being permanently destroyed. But don’t you panic—nobody else seems to be. Nobody except Greta Thunberg.

Thunberg is a 16-year-old Swedish climate activist with Asperger’s who is fighting for her voice to be heard before time runs out. Thunberg’s climate war began when at 15 years old when she began protesting outside of Swedish parliament. She wanted to voice the paradoxical reality that future generations may not have a future because climate change is a real and present issue. Thunberg started to regular skip school on Fridays, sacrificing her school to protest, others joined her until her campaign became infectious and reached millions of young people across the globe. This then became

known as “Fridays for Future” where every Friday, teenagers all across the world strike on the same day, eventually contributing to 125 countries standing still for the world to see that we are serious, calling it the “Greta Effect”.

An interview from *Democracy Now!* reveals that she was inspired by the idea of a climate strike after several young American refused to go to school until gun laws were addressed—this came about after a high school shooting where they had witnessed tragedy. However, Thunberg first heard of climate change when she was eight years old. From that point, she became increasingly confused about why people weren’t talking about it or doing things to stop a future catastrophe. As she waited for the silence to end she started devoting her life to environmental commitments such as going vegan, refusing to travel on aeroplanes, and encouraging her parents to make major life and career changes to sustain a greener household. She felt bad that nothing was being done and felt she had to the voice. However, it wasn’t she turned fifteen, she started to strike properly.

Despite her impact, she claims to not see herself as an idol and says she hasn't "done much" to draw people into following her lead.

However, it is clear that a lot of the public disagree as she has already been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, featured on the front cover of Times Magazine and has ironically gained the attention of coal and oil industries, which are, the main cause of the pollution and greenhouse gases. But, "we are still not doing enough," she says to politicians who are prioritising their issues elsewhere and believes she still hasn't gained their full awareness that things have to change—this is portrayed in her parliament speech: "Is the microphone on? Because I'm beginning to wonder".

However, despite her strikes and speeches, which include scientific evidence that the threats are increasing, the criticism that she has received is tormenting. It is little short of trolling. In response to, Thunberg, who is still a child, Jeremy Corbyn's brother stated that Thunberg is "an ignorant brainwashed child", whilst American President Donald Trump believes climate change is a "myth" and that her teachers disapproved her protesting in school hours, calling her nothing but a "troublemaker". Perhaps this is why she has decided to take a more radical approach to highlight that climate change isn't the main priority of politicians, world leaders or many

celebrities who stand on the biggest platforms and could spread the biggest messages to millions. Instead, an ordinary girl with compassion and concern for a disappearing future has made what others claim to be unbelievable, believable.

Today, Thunberg is known globally. Walk in to Waterstones and you will see display units selling her biography, her speeches and her cause; she has been the catalyst for what we have been waiting for - action to protect our planet. Public respect for her has been portrayed in various ways; there is memorial graffiti in Bristol, her quotes have been engrained in monuments throughout Sweden, and a quick google search can bring up 182,000,000 results in 0.45 seconds. Clearly people are listening. Whether Thunberg will change the world or even help to solve climate change, we don't know. But what we do know is that she seemingly one of our most influential advocates for change. She cares and she doesn't care who knows.

"Because that future was sold so that a small number of people could make unmanageable amounts of money. It was stolen from us every time you said that the sky was the limit and that you only live once."

Written by Syanne Taylor

You Count

Ah, planet Earth—the place we call home, where we grew up and the place where all of our memories exist. Our whole lives made possible thanks to a series of fortunate events occurring at the right time, in the right place. Scary, right?

For a species who claim to be intelligent, apparently we really aren't what intelligent life would destroy the only home that they've got? You wouldn't set fire to your home, watch it burn and then panic, so why are we doing that to our planet? Shockingly, a large percentage of our population choose to be ignorant to the damage we are currently inflicting on our home. Huge companies like BP and Shell are profiting from destroying our world so that they can make enormous amounts of money. Do the chief executives of these businesses realise that, with the effects of climate change kicking in at full speed, their expensive coastal holiday homes due to the rising sea levels will soon be engulfed by water due? Or that their lavish seafood dinners will no longer be available as a result of overfishing and around 150-200 species going extinct daily?

Climate change affects every single living thing on Earth—there are no exceptions. No matter how much money you have, we all bear the consequences that the current environmental crisis brings with it.

In the words of Greta Thunberg: "Now we all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the future living conditions for

humankind, or we can continue with our business as usual and fail. That is up to you and me." Some may believe that the mere individual cannot contribute to the restoration of our planet. Yes, a sizable percentage of climate change contributors are large companies and industries, but that doesn't mean that individually we cannot have an impact. One of the first things you can do to make a difference is by boycotting these companies and industries that seem to profit at the expense of the environment. By boycotting a company that is known to contribute to or fund environmentally damaging actions, the demand for their product is reduced and thereby less is generated—stopping them from further contributing to the damage.

We all have a choice. Quite simply, we can control our actions and therefore we can choose to control the choices we make. We get to decide whether we protect our planet or not. You count. In our society, your actions count for so much more than you may think. Every small action done regularly are the ones that really make the difference. Even if your lifestyle, your home-life or your socio-economic position limits you from fighting as much as you would like, there are still things that can be done to stop environmental destruction.

Written by Lucy Unwin

With each action you perform throughout the day, think to yourself “is there any way I could do this in a more environmentally friendly way?”. Whilst you’re making your lunch, put the meat to one side and try a vegetarian or vegan meal instead going green can massively reduce your carbon footprint. Or, if you’re planning to meet up with your friends, rather than get a lift, why not walk or cycle there? There are so many small changes that can be introduced into our lives that have such a positive effect overall.

One of the most powerful things we can do is to begin reducing our meat and dairy consumption. Did you know that the number one leading cause of climate change is animal agriculture? A lot of environmentalist organisations purposely downplay the vast environmental footprint that the industry actually has. That is because meat is such a *huge* part of our diet, our society and our culture.... and it has been for centuries. As a nation we seem to love our animal products so a small group of activists telling the whole world to veggie, or give veganism a go isn’t going to necessarily go down that well. Rather it is all about reduction. People don’t realise that by doing something as simple as a meat-free Monday or going vegan for a week, would significantly their carbon footprint and thus help to reduce the carbon in our atmosphere.

Other small efforts we can do include: carrying a reusable cutlery set, having metal straws, reusable water bottle and a reusable travel mug to avoid buying single-use plastics that will end up in landfill; having a tote bag or reusable shopping bag so that you won’t need a plastic bag; swapping out your plastic toothbrush for a bamboo one; sewing or fixing clothing and possessions when they break instead of buying new ones; using public

transport; shopping second-hand when possible; reducing food and water waste; joining a local environmentalist group; and picking up litter. There are *so* many different ways to contribute to bettering our world that aren’t even that hard! They are just small, educated choices. Small actions done often really make the difference—after all, every little helps.

At the time of writing this, we are in a climate crisis. I hope that, in the forthcoming years, I can look back at this article and disregard that first sentence because it no longer applies. I hope to look back and know that we saved our planet by working together. We haven’t failed to protect our planet... yet, but if we sit and do nothing, our failure will be inevitable.



Photography by Lucy Unwin

The earth by Lil Dicky

Lil Dicky, the 31-year-old rapper, originally intended for his rap career to be the catalyst into his acting career, but after realising his growing love for hip-hop and R&B music ran deeper than he realised he has chosen to put the Hollywood dream to one side. Lil Dicky he has been releasing songs and mixtapes and is currently teasing fans with an upcoming album.

However, as an environmentalist and rapper, Lil Dicky released the song 'Earth' which brings to light the issues and effects of global warming in a less daunting way. Lil Dicky's music was always comedic and light-hearted, topics covered were light touch and never anything to be taken too seriously. But with the global warming drastically changing the world's landscape to such a degree that people fear the world will be uninhabitable by 2031, people are trying to change their ways and the ways of others too. There is a new call to keep the world we live in sustainable for future generations. This includes people like Lil Dicky who has a tendency to 'stay positive' and joke about other issues; however, this philosophy seems to be changing. The serious message about preserving the world we live on is accompanied with beautiful animations with famous artists including Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber, Snoop Dog and Psy, who lend their voices to help spread the word about climate change and global warming.

In the music video, litter-covered streets of California are seen with black smoke coming out of a car's exhaust as it drives past a child. Later Lil Dicky features artists representing animated animals, bacteria and fungi. In a way, it could be argued that it downplays the severity of the effects of global warming by turning it into a comical

song about loving the planet. Nevertheless, the overriding message reinforces an environmental awareness and makes it a very strong talking point. The music video and song both appeal to every generation, it's animated effects and the catchy lyrics call to the ears of children, his reputation calls to the youth and his reference to the forest fires in California make this a very real song. A song that everyone can enjoy and plus, a song with an environmental message.

However, he doesn't only mention global warming—Lil Dicky also refers to the self-destructive behaviours that the human race. From shootings to pollution, Lil Dicky uses this song to portray his message that people should be more caring towards each other and the world that we all have to share, for hopefully thousands of years after us. Animated Lil Dicky is taken back to more primitive times where everything was much simpler. He's exploring the world, showing the beautiful accomplishments that we have achieved together as the human race and asks that we as race respect what we have built and, better yet, what we were given: the Earth.

A lot of people still don't believe that our actions are affecting the world and the other organisms and animals that inhabit it. But with people like Lil Dicky, Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande recognising global warming as the disaster that it is, it helps people to realise that if we don't take action now, we will forever regret not taking care of the world sooner. Hopefully, the song will encourage people who don't believe in global warming to do some further research and learn what they can do to help preserve the Earth.

Written by Afiah Mitchell

Artwork by Ellie Brasington



How Climate effects wild life

Climate change is one of the most significant issues that is prevalent in the world right now. It affects everything and everyone. Climate change, also known as global warming, is the long-term changes in global patterns of weather. It is caused by human activities (mostly through greenhouse gases) which means that whatever happens to our world is on us. Since we are unable to care for our world as we should, oceans, rainforests and animals are suffering. Water levels are rising and getting warmer, forests are being destroyed by deforestation and animals are becoming endangered. Because of this, many habitats are lost, leaving animals at risk with no home to turn to. The life cycles of both plants and animals are also altering as plants are starting to blossom earlier than usual and some animals are waking from hibernation earlier or migrating at different times. All of which are detrimental.

Due to temperatures and sea levels rising, the ice is melting, leaving all arctic animals, (including polar bears and penguins) vulnerable. If no one does anything to prevent this, they will have no home and will have to adapt or perish. Currently, many species of penguin are endangered and overfishing and oil pollution are the main threats. The population of black-footed penguins has decreased by 90% in the wild since the beginning of the 20th century as a result of eggs being taken for food.

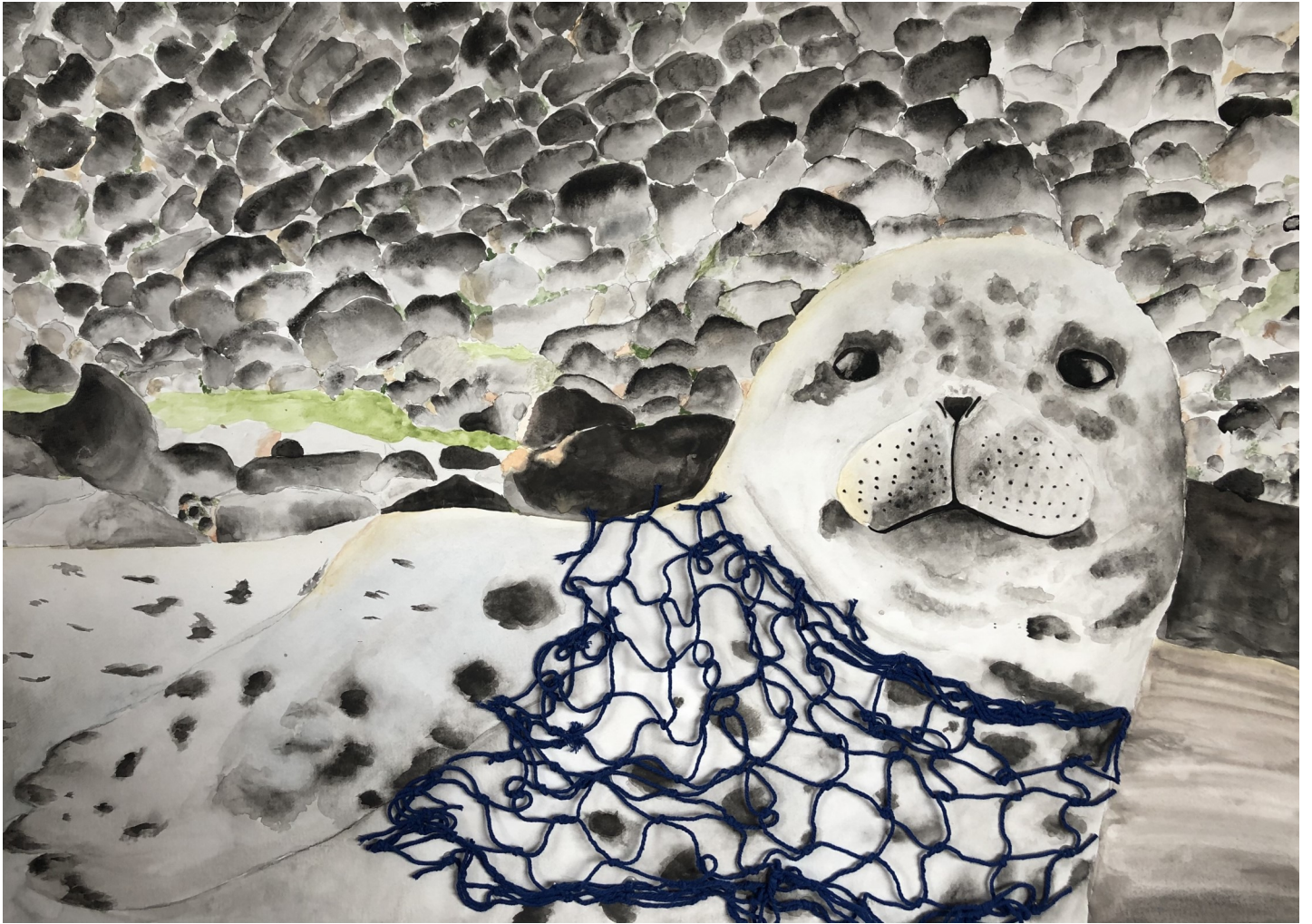
The Amazon Rainforest - the biggest rainforest in the world, is home to 40,000 plant species, 3,000 freshwater fish species and more than 370 types of reptiles and 427 mammal species. Warmer temperatures and decreased rainfall have meant that the Amazon has faced many droughts where crops have been destroyed and forest fires, leading to the loss of many species. Lakes,

rivers, oceans and seas are being covered in plastic, so every species that lives in the water is vulnerable to it. Many birds, fish and other underwater species have consumed so much plastic and have had to pay the price for human laziness. Deforestation is one of the most significant factors contributing to climate change. When forests are cleared or burnt the deposited carbon is released into the atmosphere, which mostly consists of carbon dioxide. Deforestation has caused around 18% of all global greenhouse gas emissions because of human activities.

One of the most common causes of animals becoming endangered or vulnerable is the loss of their habitats—whether it's due to infrastructure or natural hazards, habitats are being destroyed, leaving many species homeless. These animals include elephants, African hunting dogs, giraffes, hippos, white rhinos and tigers. The Amur tiger is endangered, and the species is being protected by ZSL in Russia. They are using automatic camera traps to take pictures and videos of wild tigers and combat poaching. A huge forest area between India and Bangladesh on the northern coast of the Indian Ocean is where one of the largest tiger populations can be found. This is called the Sundarbans. Unfortunately, rising sea levels are threatening to wipe out these forests, which means that the habitat of the large population of tigers will be wiped out too.

In order to help try and save all these animals, we could switch from plastic, make our voices heard and join groups that are working on preventing any more extinctions of species. We can pick up rubbish wherever we go and collect plastic from any lakes, rivers and beaches that we go to.

Written by Andrea Jenkins



Climate Change Or Profiteering

Climate change is now deemed to be the biggest threat to our society. It is threatening our animals, ourselves and the planet. There are many factors that contribute to this, most coming from large industrial companies producing large quantities of goods for large economic profits. However, as individuals, we also pay a large part to play. Many of us have awakened to the idea that we have been given the knowledge to understand the need to recycle more, reduce our carbon footprint more and think more ethically when consuming or buying products.

Plastic is one of the most threatening materials to our wildlife and our natural landscapes. Your common plastic bottle can take hundreds of years to biodegrade as well as containing harmful toxins which are then consumed. Although, thanks to David Attenborough, we are realising the dangers of plastic and although we are moving to extreme lengths to ensure our plastic does not end up in our oceans or natural habitats, the mass daily production is simply too large and too damaging to remove.

According to statistics from 2018, one trillion single use plastic bags were being used annually. When we look at this figure in terms of waste, these bags can take hundreds to thousands of years to breakdown, therefore it's almost impossible to place these out of harm's way. In aid to tackle this, we are starting to find alternatives which have a more

ethical place on our planet, but just how far are people willing to commit to this and just how far are the economic giants prepared to go too?

Fast food joints such as McDonald's, Burger King and KFC (food that millions consume daily), can have devastating effects on the planet. Has anybody stopped to consider the impact of the sheer amount of meat consumed, or the cost of transporting the animals to the slaughter houses and the meat to the restaurants?

Farming meat is one of the biggest greenhouse gas contributors to the environment, taking up 18% of greenhouse gas emissions. As well as this, there is also the issue of the plastic the food is wrapped in and the accessories such as the plastic cutlery, lids and straws which are used and thrown away every single day in which majority of these items are not even recyclable and nor do they come from recycled resources. However, thanks to the growing publicity surrounding the dangers of plastics, the growing influence of campaign groups and the growing public outrage at the sheer pace of global warming, major companies, especially fast food chains are starting to take a greener approach towards their businesses.

Whilst the cynic in me may question the motivations of companies suddenly going greener, I can't say that I am disappointed. In fact, it is a timely change.

McDonald's and Burger King, some of the few major fast food chains that are enforcing new rules in order to make their companies greener. One of these policies is that they are going to swap kids toys found in their respective Happy Meals and Junior Meals for additional fruit or vegetable bags (before you say anything, yes, I know the bags are plastic and it isn't a cure all solution). Their objective is to reduce the amount of plastic they use and produce, as well as improving their reputation of providing healthy kids meals. Let's be honest, the toys they manufactured were cheap, poor quality and invariably ended up in the bin and being healthier is always a win.)

McDonald's and Burger King claim they aim to reduce the 320 tonnes of waste they produce annually. Although this many sounds extremely appealing to the consumers, many critics believe this is just an excuse to save money and invest elsewhere. For many large business chains, solving the planet's environmental problems can fall under the umbrella of saving money and production as they secretly walk away with a profit.

Annually fast food chains spend millions in design, producing and perfecting entertainment in children's meals to attract the young consumer. As well as this, McDonald's have stated they would maybe consider producing bio degradable toys but would want consumers to pay more to allow this to be a working and tangible idea. Is it that companies will move to greener alternatives but only on the condition that the patrons pay and the companies can still balance their budgets with profit.

Perhaps what would be an even better option would be to swap it for nothing at all. Who knows, perhaps losing the freebies might encourage families to talk more, children to

play more and a move (if only for a few minutes) back to simpler times!

By suggesting that multimillion pound companies wants you to pay for their greener ideas, despite the magnitude of power and money seems outrageous. Morally these companies are on the right lines—they have a duty to help our planet and protect it as best we can.

However this idea needs to grow and develop, in press releases supermarkets are stating that they are going to stop producing food in single use plastic; coffee and milkshake chains are moving to being lidless and there is an increasing incentive to bring your own. Yet, is it wrong to be cynical about the true reasons behind these moves when businesses have a focus on money and the power they to make a truly make a big change.



Written by Syanne Taylor

Photography by Ellen Berril-Osborne

Single Use, Multiple Problems

In a society run by efficiency and profit, it's very easy to become persuaded into buying products for convenience and it's not easy to break the habit of this. Every day we are surrounded by plastic—whether it's recyclable or not, we have bought it, used it and thrown it away. However, do we really understand the carbon footprint of the plastic empire and the environmental travesties this can have on other life forms?

The term “single-use plastic” is often mentioned in direct reference to consumer goods and packaging that many people believe is truly only used once, then placed in our recycle bins and taken to recycling sites to be crushed and used again; however, this is not the reality of it. In actual fact, a lot of this plastic does not make it to these sites and is never recycled—instead, 32% of the 78 million tons produced annually is left to flow into the ocean. This is the equivalent to pouring one rubbish truck of plastic into the ocean per minute. These plastic items include plastic bags, straws, water bottles and most food packaging.

Therefore, it raises the question: **Is our aim to recycle plastic really worth it?** Yes. The little bit of extra protection on our bananas or a practical pot to sit our grapes in does not equate to an ocean of rubbish? Are the millions of sea creatures choking on our plastic straws for our practicality worth it? No. However, we should accept that single-use plastic is convenient and it's about practical. It's the quick and effortless solution. However, with a little effort and a few small changes we can easily change what has become a habit.

In addition to consumer choice, are we as buyers completely to blame? To We are persuaded and controlled by the media every day to shop in certain supermarkets for better quality or the best price; we are totally susceptible to the pricing trap. When we shop

for our food, we aren't aware immediately aware of the labour or the harm that has been done in the production of the a plastic boxes we will be throwing once we empty our bags; we mainly care about price, which is an easy trap to fall into, especially if you are living on a budget.

As consumers, it can be hard to make a big change towards a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. It can be argued that major supermarket companies are at fault as they produce huge quantities of single use plastic. To make a change or a swap, we need more market stalls, more refill shops and more Farmers shops so that we are encouraged to buy greener. Perhaps this will stop the habit of single-use plastic if it really is all down to convenience.

However, in order to put a stop to the single-use epidemic, we must first be educated about what we can do and what we can learn from countries developing a cleaner lifestyle. One myth is that many people believe that single-use plastic only harms the sea creatures and doesn't have any effect on us once we throw it away—after all, once it's gone, it's gone. However, what happens to it is no longer in our hands?

Fact, one of the results is on sea animals such as turtles, fish and birds that are eating plastic or getting stuck in plastic bags puts us in just as much danger as them; if we don't clean up the plastic, these species will become extinct. We cannot eat fish with a stomach full of plastic bags and straws, our ecosystem won't function with turtles drowning in plastic and our children won't be able to walk into the sea due to the amount of toxins leaked from plastic landfills or a build-up in the ocean covering our sandy beaches, resulting in our water becoming contaminated with chemicals that we cannot

drink from.

Although this is still a major problem in most parts of the world; many countries are working towards a permanent solution to plastic and bringing in a whole new meaning to convenient shopping . For example, Costa Rica is set to become the first plastic-free and carbon-free country by 2021 and hopes others will follow and see how easy the anti-plastic lifestyle can be. As well as this, many small businesses are offering free drinks and food for collecting a bucket of plastic from the beach in

order to get people motivated to change. Although these may seem like small changes or even unrealistic goals in such a short space of time, every little thing makes a difference in the time we have to change things.

So, the next time you buy fruit or veg from the supermarket or buy a plastic bottle instead of bringing a reusable one, please consider that although it may only be a small purchase, it has a massive impact on our planet.



Written by Syanne Taylor
Photography by Syanne Taylor

Attenborough's Advice

The grandfather of environmental protection, nature and wildlife, Sir David Attenborough, has placed his support behind the recent wave of young people protesting as part of the School Strike 4 Climate Movement.

In a recent interview Attenborough, backed the youth movement's policy of non-violent direct action. As he spoke to an Australian radio station ahead of the global climate strike the darling of the BBC said he feels "blessed" to be able to keep working, and to have seen a rise in the environmental consciousness of young people. He explained that 'young people see things very clearly. And they are speaking very clearly to politicians'. He went on to explain that the youth movement may not have the vote yet but there's an understanding that this is their world and they want to make it clear to business leaders and politicians that they know that action needs to happen. He went on to say that "if they just sit on the side lines, and [debate] in a nice, reasonable way, you know, they'll say, *'oh kids'*. But if they actually do something in the way that they have been doing in this era, then politicians have to sit up and take notice."

The BBC presenter said: 'You can say, "It gets you nowhere, just stopping the traffic". But what he seems to understand more than most is that whilst it may get you nowhere it gets you noticed. Once you're noticed you will have people's ears and then they will listen to what you say. Then comes the real power – when you realise that you are important and you are making a difference. As a

respected natural historian to have him explain that it is the young who are going to inherit the mess that has been made of the world is empowering.' After all. "the world is sick, we really have to do things about it. And there's no more time for argument," he said. These words and sentences of approval come at a time when some young activists are coming under criticism. For instance, the activist Greta Thunberg has been trolled following her recent and passionate speech at the UN Climate Action Summit. Shockingly, the 16-year-old Swedish campaigner was mocked by the leader of the free world... Her response to Donald Trump was mature and informed... and yet she was then accused of being 'melodramatic' by Piers Morgan.

Later in the interview Attenborough was damning in his words of political inaction, singling out Australia's slow reaction to the issues of the Great Barrier Reef and the construction of new coal mines. He asked whether "it's right that we go on destroying the natural world?". He also made an economic argument for action urging bankers and big business to wake up to the influences they have. He stated that they too have a role to play in ensuring we have a healthy planet for generations to come.

So, if the godfather of nature shows, animal shows and environmental shows is calling for change and for more global responsibility then perhaps we should all be a little more aware and a little more alert to the changes that need to be made.



Photography by Tom Vincent

The True Cost Of Clothes

“Globally, we now consume about 80 billion new pieces of clothing every year—400% more than we were consuming just two decades ago.” – University of Queensland

Fast fashion. What is it and why aren't we talking about the true cost of it? Fast fashion is not a term that most are familiar with. Only recently (due to the rise of the youth eco-activist movement) has fast fashion and the problems surrounding it been put in the spotlight. So, what is it? Fast fashion is the rapid rotation of clothes in high street stores to keep up with the changing trends. Quick and on-trend changes allows companies to maximise their profits. In simple terms, it's cheap clothing that very quickly goes in and out of style once new collections are released every month, every week, or in extreme cases, every day.

Fast fashion is such a huge problem. The production of fast fashion clothing is extremely harmful in every sense of the word. One of the most well-known problems surrounding the industry is most likely the corrupt labour behind the actual making of the clothes. Fast fashion companies are known to export their production overseas to countries where laws around labour are inadequate and systems like sweatshops exist. Where laws are loose companies are able to manipulate workers into producing large quantities of clothes for measly amounts of money—work that couldn't be done in western countries because of employment laws we have. It is reported that in sweatshops 80% of the workers are female and around 170 million children are forced into child labour to provide extra money for their families so that they can all survive. Forced in to working conditions that are unsafe and where they are being exploited.

The UK alone spends £27 billion on clothes each year but the average factory workers in Bangladesh, according to data published in 2011, were paid £60 a month. Yet where does the rest of the money we're spending on clothes go if it doesn't go to the workers. Most of this £27 billion is pocketed long before it reaches the factory workers or cotton farmers. These are the real victims of fashion; they are, for the most part, forced into jobs where they are paid below minimum wage and thus trapped in to poverty.

So, how has fast fashion become so successful? And how has this situation remained unspoken of for so long? Well, instead of replenishing stock, items that sell out are replaced with new pieces of a different style, making the first seem outdated and unfashionable. This creates a chain effect where consumers feel that they need to

constantly keep shopping for new and more fashionable clothing just to keep up with the *trends*. As well as that, these fast fashion brands purposely manufacture their clothes to be flimsy—they will break easily or wash badly, so consumers are forced to return to these stores to purchase more clothes to replace the ones that broke. Stores sell more, consumers feel even more on-trend and therefore, businesses earn more profit. Business owners and fashion buyers really are smart; they are adept at manipulating us into buying huge amounts of clothing whilst we remain blissfully ignorant of all the hardships that were caused in order to produce what we wear daily. It's scary how easily we can be blindsided to the truth of what is happening right under our noses.

The fast fashion industry is not only extremely unethical, but it is also detrimental to the state of our physical environment. If trends continue the way they are now, then the industry could account for a quarter of the world's carbon budget by 2050. That may shock you but, in the UK alone, 300,000 tonnes of clothing are either burned or buried each year—that's a lot of pollution that could have easily been avoided. According to a report by the industry, the *Circular Fibres Initiative*, in 2015, greenhouse gas emissions from textiles production globally totalled 1.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. As well as that, according to the German Company *Fast Fashion Forward*, it is estimated that around 2720 litres of water are used to make one t-shirt. That's how much the typical individual drinks in 3 years... 3 years! All that for one t-shirt that we may only ever wear a handful of times and then throw away.

Take a look in your wardrobe and I bet you that the majority of your clothing comes from a fast fashion brand that could very well exploit the women and children who are making them. But that's not entirely your fault. How were you meant to know? After all, companies go to huge efforts to hide the truth behind how their clothes are made.

However, now you know, hopefully the next time you go to buy something from a fast fashion house that seems at a ridiculously cheap price, ask yourself what real story is behind your new purchase. How was it made and by whom? What will happen to it when you no longer want it? Will it just go straight to landfill? From now on, it's your choice. Why not try shopping for second-hand clothes on websites like Depop, getting hand-me-downs from those around you or having in a charity shop? Stop putting the convenience of fast fashion shopping above our planet and try something sustainable instead. Let's put an end to this throwaway era we're living in... plus you can find some phenomenal labels in the vintage stores.



Written by Lucy Unwin Photography by Lucy Unwin

Plastic preservation problem

Speak to an archaeologist about some of the significant eras in the human population of these British Isles and it is likely that they will speak about the importance of the Bronze and Iron Ages. In history, we also learn about the industrial revolution and how the use of fossil fuels to produce steam alongside important economic changes fundamentally affected society.

But what about now? What will define our contribution on Earth? When archaeologists look back at our current time period, undoubtedly it will be known as the plastic age⁽¹⁾. The plastic won't be hard to miss. In the future, any archaeological trench that gets dug will undoubtedly contain pieces of plastic that originated from a significant number of items that our modern world demands.

As I compose this article and look around the room, I can see examples of plastic everywhere; from my clothing, glasses, television, water bottle and even the iPhone that I am typing on, plastic has found its way into all aspects of our life. So much so that developed countries would struggle to survive without it. Horribly, most of the plastic items that we use are disposable and all that plastic ends up in some shape or form in a bin or worse.

According to an article published by the National Geographic in December 2018, of the 8.3 billion metric tonnes of plastic, the world has produced a horrifying 6.3 billion which has become plastic waste with only 9% of it being recycled. The article goes on to say that "If present trends continue, by 2050, there will be 12 billion metric tons of plastic in landfills. That amount is 35,000 times as heavy as the Empire State Building"⁽²⁾. That is some statistic and really exemplifies the scale of the issue we face. Plastic is such a disposable commodity that a study by Professor Roland Geyer of the University of California at Santa Barbara concluded that half of all plastic currently used is thrown away within a year of production⁽³⁾.

Most of this plastic ends up in landfill sites where it will remain buried, but a significant

amount finds its way into the planet's waterways, streams and rivers, then into our seas and from there to every corner of the world, causing environmental consequences that we are just starting to comprehend.

To understand the issues further, it is perhaps useful to have a little knowledge of the chemistry behind these molecules. Plastics are an example of a group of molecules called polymers. Most synthetic polymers are produced from chemicals called alkenes which are derived from crude oil, a non-renewable material that has its own environmental concerns. Under the right conditions, these single molecules (or monomers) can be encouraged to react with each other to join together to form long chains called polymers. By changing the monomers used, the conditions and by incorporating different additives, a huge range of plastics can be produced with a variety of properties for a myriad of uses. The polymers themselves have strong bonds between their atoms which require a large amount of energy to break, and additionally, as these chemicals are not found in nature, living things are unable to break them down. This means that the plastic molecules are non-biodegradable and once produced they persist and pollute our planet.

Evidence of this persistence has been witnessed in the last month during a remarkable underwater exploration where plastic waste was found at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, the deepest place on Earth with a depth of 11km—this is 2km deeper than the height of Mount Everest⁽⁴⁾. But you don't have to go to those extremes to find evidence of plastic waste in our oceans; a trip to the nearest beach will provide ample anecdotal evidence of the issue.

When growing up, I was lucky enough to spend many of my holidays on the beaches of Southern England and Northern France looking for crabs, shrimps and other creatures living in rock pools.

Written by Doug Eve

I still love the beach and try to visit one whenever I can. Just today, I spent a bit of time crouched over some rock pools on a North Yorkshire beach. Looking carefully, I could see evidence of an active ecosystem. However, under close inspection, it was clear that the rock pool also contained an incredulous amount of plastic waste.

The beach itself seemed clean. In fact, the shoreline was incredibly clean, and I saw no evidence of plastic bags, bottles or other litter. Indeed, the beach had been awarded a 2019 blue flag award⁽⁵⁾, however, closer inspection revealed the worrying issue.

Within one minute of looking through the rock pool, I had found a handful of small pieces of plastic—evidence that the sea is full of it. The fragments of plastic were of varying colours and were all of a size that could be eaten by a variety of sea creatures looking for a tasty meal (see photograph).

This is the issue that has been highlighted by Sir David Attenborough, arguably Britain's most famous naturalist⁽⁶⁾. Plastic in our oceans is a huge problem. It is everywhere. Large pieces of plastic bottles and bags are mistaken by predators such as dolphins for their prey and can kill these majestic creatures. The smaller and microscopic pieces of plastic are ingested by smaller animals and enter the food chain, slowly poisoning these organisms as the chemicals increase in toxicity in a process called bioaccumulation. This affects the fragile ecosystem from the bottom up, slowly destroying the entire food chain.

We are the problem, you and me, the consumers, the human beings who produce and use plastic every day and every day just throw it away without thinking.

So, what are the solutions?

How can we stop the damage that we are doing?

Well, we could stop using plastic altogether. This is a pretty extreme response and would be difficult to do. As we have discussed, plastic is pervasive; it is in nearly everything we use. Plastics have unique properties that we would struggle to replace with other materials. Currently, without alternatives, removing plastics

from our lives would fundamentally affect how we live and it would be hard for society to make that change.

How about biodegradable plastics?

They exist, they are already part of what we are doing, but are they the answer?

The jury is out. These plastics do breakdown naturally in the environment when they come in contact with oxygen and water, but some evidence suggests that as they decompose, they persist in the environment as micro-plastics continuing to poison the ecosystem⁽⁷⁾.

The third option is, as consumers, to be more aware of our consumption of plastic items and be responsible both as individuals and as a society of the production, use and disposal of plastic items. Maximising the recycling and reuse of plastics will slow down further production and the release of these harmful polymers into the environment.

The science will catch up. Eventually, more effective biodegradable polymers will be designed that will be truly environmentally friendly. Perhaps some clever people will come up with a completely new alternative material. Until then, all of us have a responsibility to help clean up our world and prevent the plastic age irreparably affecting our planet.

We all need to be determined, on it all the time, to reduce the amount of plastic we consume. We must consider our use and find alternatives where we can. When we buy items, we need to take note of the packaging and avoid goods with excess plastic.

Importantly, we all need to make a concerted effort to reuse plastic items—bags and bottles especially. And when these items have had their day, we all need to dispose of them appropriately. This means ensuring that plastic waste that can be recycled is recycled.

Simply put, that's the message. That's what you, me, all of us can do. It's an old message but an important one.

The three R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Not much to help save a planet!

Waste not, Want not

When we throw something away, it doesn't go away. It doesn't vanish in to the abyss, instead it stays right here on Earth; we just don't see it and so it becomes that age old story—out of sight out of mind. Despite being told by organisations and those with more power than us to believe that there is a way to dispose of our waste in an environmentally friendly way the reality is there isn't. Apart from perishable products that can rapidly decompose, every piece of waste large or small is destroying our planet.

Even products that we are told are compostable or recyclable in the main are not. We're led to believe that the 'green' biodegradable plastic bags that are so much better for our planet. Well, they aren't, in many instances they aren't fully biodegradable and certainly aren't green. So, how do companies get away with advertising something that isn't completely true? Is that even legal? Well in short yes, because the companies aren't lying. The bags do break down—eventually—but into millions of harmful microplastics that cannot be seen by the naked eye. Companies get away with selling the misconception as most people don't have the time to look into claims what actually happens; instead they choose to trust the PR.

This is environmental spin is happening much more often than people realise. Take the time to research what the recycling logos on your products really mean and you'll realise that as consumers we are constantly being deceived in order to make us believe that businesses are eco-conscious.

In our single-use society, it is outrageously difficult to produce low levels of waste. Constant amounts of excess packaging have become so prominent in our world that it is almost impossible to avoid. Try going without plastic for a day and you will understand what I mean. Almost everything is made out of plastic. When you get up in the morning you brush your teeth with a toothbrush made out of and was originally packaged in plastic. We are living in a world where convenience is more important than We bring grapes in for a snack... what were they packaged in? Plastic. We have milk in our tea... milk from of a plastic bottle. It's everywhere.

In the main people are not knowingly sacrificing the health of our planet in return for products that are quick and easy to buy. People don't intentionally buy a coffee in a disposable cup, rather people are busy and forget to make one in a reusable flask before leaving the house. Activities like these take effort which some consumers are

reluctant to do. But sustainable living shouldn't have to be so hard in.

So, can we lead a lifestyle that involves not producing any waste? A Ted Talk presented by Lauren Singer on Youtube talked about how she lives a zero-waste lifestyle and her journey towards becoming an ambassador for this way of living.

The main goal of zero-waste is not sending anything to landfills. Sounds difficult, right? Well, done gradually, it's not actually that hard. Zero-waste involves swapping everyday items like cosmetics and food products for sustainable options instead. In the video, Singer explained how, when starting off, if ever she ran out of a product like deodorant or toothpaste instead of buying new ones, she simply learned how to make them herself – drastically reducing the amount of plastic she used. She also explained how she ditched packaged food and replaced it with bringing her own containers to stores in order to fill them with bulk or package-free items, as well as buying her fruit and vegetables from the farmers market.

The idea of living a zero-waste life can raise concerns, especially about the cost of adopting this change into their lives. Some aspects of the lifestyle are more on the pricey side, like buying in bulk or the fact that package-free food for example, is more expensive than packaged. Scandalously, when comparing packaged items from supermarkets to non-packaged items from health or zero-waste shops, the costs are noticeably higher.

There are so many other things that we can swap out in our everyday lives that aren't expensive to do which make a huge difference, zero-waste is about using what you already have, so it doesn't need to be costly! The whole premise of zero-waste is about reusing your belongings so overall, you're actually saving money because you're not buying anything new. Yes, it may be pricey at first to buy certain products but it's worth it. You'll be using the products for such a long period of time that you'll get your money's worth several times over!

In terms of healthcare there are zero-waste alternatives that will prove both environmentally sound and economically savvy. For example, a menstrual cup costing £15 will last 10 years or you could buy sanitary products each month for 10 years... the chances are with a cup you'll have made your money back in just a few months. The internet is also awash with healthy natural alternatives to shampoos that will replenish your hair of nutrients and be environmentally conscious. You just need to look.

Change can be slowly achieved if you are consciously cutting down on the waste. Changing habits can be key, for instances always ensuring that you have an old tote bag in your school or hand bag. This will mean you never need to pick up a plastic bag. Ensuing you have a reusable water bottle and cutlery set to the list of items you carry with you—it doesn't make you a vSCO girl, it just makes you conscious. Actively avoiding unnecessary packaging and generally abstaining from buying products when you don't need them also helps. If you do have the urge to shop, go in to store rather than unpacking huge boxes full of protective packaging. You could embrace public

transport as well as walking to places. It might not be zero waste... yet, but it's a start! Live consciously with an eye on how your actions are affecting our planet. Everyone can help. It has been reported that, 'We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly.' It resonates because it is so truthful. We should all be aiming to live a low-waste lifestyle but nobody is perfect. Right now, we can't all live as Lauren Singer does but the best thing we can do is consciously partaking in small actions to cut down our footprint and waste in order to better our world. It's the least we can do.



Written by Lucy Unwin

Photography by Lucy Unwin

Believe Me

I am alive, though I may not look it.

I realise that my face may not always be
inviting and amiable,

But the rhythm of my heart is no
different from yours.

I am alive, though I may not sound it.

Yes, I know my voice is coarse and
empty,

But it still reaches your ears and echoes
in your mind.

I am alive, though I may not taste it.

I might be the bitter dread burnt on
your lips,

But my lies can be as sweet and
tempting as yours.

I am alive, though I may not feel it,

It's true, I can be rigid and hollow,

But my worth is equal to yours.

And who are you to doubt it?

I am alive, though you may not believe
me.