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READING MUSEUM SERVICE

FAIRTRADE IN READING G182

What is Fairtrade?



Picking tea in Uganda

Fairtrade quite literally means that goods have been traded fairly. It is about ensuring that producers in developing countries are paid better prices, work in decent conditions and are able to build up their businesses to ensure local sustainability. It is about respecting other people, wherever they may live.

Many items we buy in our shops and supermarkets come from crops grown in some of the poorest countries in the world. These include sugar, tea, coffee, cotton, leather, fruits and many more. Under normal trading methods, companies are able to take advantage of the farmers who produce the crops or the workers making items in factories. They often pay them poorly and don't care about the conditions they work in. If you buy something that has been traded fairly, then you can be sure that the producers have been paid properly and the employees work in a safe environment, allowing them to improve their position and take more control of their own lives.

You might have seen this mark on products in the supermarket. It is on several items in the box.

The Fairtrade mark is issued by the Fairtrade Foundation, an organisation whose job it is to check that products meet the standards needed to ensure that they have been fairly traded.

The Fairtrade Foundation was set up in 1992 by several different organisations and charities, including Oxfam, Traidcraft and The World Development Movement.

This picture shows some of the Fairtrade products you might find in your local supermarket. There are some examples of food packaging included in the box.



Reading Borough Council

Heritage Lottery Fund

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Fairtrade in Reading

Reading became a 'Fairtrade Town' on 2 February 2004. A Fairtrade Town is any community where people and organisations use their everyday shopping choices to increase sales of Fairtrade products. A town must meet five goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation in order for it to be awarded Fairtrade Status. The goals are:

- Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens).
- A range of Fairtrade products are available locally (targets vary from country to country)
- Schools, workplaces, places of worship and community organisations support Fairtrade and use Fairtrade products whenever possible
- Media coverage and events raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community.
- A Fairtrade steering group representing different sectors is formed to co-ordinate action around the goals and develop them over the years.

Over 42 cafes and restaurants in Reading now serve Fairtrade beverages or snacks, and 54 shops and supermarkets and mail order firms stock Fairtrade goods. The Steering group are working hard to promote Fairtrade across the town, which includes asking the Museum of Reading to make this loan box.

You can also become a Fairtrade school - follow this link to find out more: http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/schools/default.aspx

The Fairtrade logo for Reading. Look out for it around the town



A Fairtrade stall in Tilehurst

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Brazil nuts can be found growing in several South American countries, including Columbia, Peru, Venezuela and of course Brazil. The nuts in this box come from Bolivia.

Brazil nut trees cannot be grown on plantations and so workers are employed to gather the nuts as they grow wild in the forests. Sometimes they have to lift bags of nuts weighing a massive 70 kg and carry them long distances. Fairtrade Brazil nuts mean that working and living conditions are improved. Harvesting Fairtrade Brazil nuts also helps with environmental issues, like deforestation. By providing local communities with a sustainable way of making a living, large parts of the rainforest are saved from being cut down, because money can now be made from selling the nuts, rather than the timber.





Mangoes are grown in the tropical regions of the world. At some times of the year so many mangoes are grown that they cannot all be sold and exported. Some are dried to save them simply rotting and being wasted. The dried mango in the box comes from Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa. Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world where four out of five families make a living growing crops. Being paid a fair price for the mangoes they produce helps farmers to support their families, improve their farming techniques and focus on drying excess mangoes to provide an extra income.





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Chocolate has long been one of our most popular treats, but a lot of the well-known brands we eat do not pay the cocoa producers a fair price.



Cocoa trees will only grow near to the equator. The main producers can be found in West African countries and in central and southern America. Can you find out where the cocoa was grown to make this drinking chocolate?

Companies that make fairtrade chocolate make sure that producers are paid fairly and can work with other local producers in the area. In the Dominican Republic, Café Direct have gone into partnership with a confederation of 7,980 small-holder farmers who produce good quality cocoa on a small scale. One of these farmers, Beato Guillermo, has been able to set up a small nursery with the extra money and sells young plants to other local farmers at low cost.



Cocoa pods

Coconut photograph frame



The edges of this photo frame are decorated with pieces of coconut shell. This is a Fairtrade item from the World Shop at RISC (Reading International Solidarity Centre).

Coconut palms grow in the tropical regions of the world. The largest coconut producer is the Philippines, with Indonesia and India not far behind. Most parts of the Coconut can be used. The flesh is used in cooking, the oil is used for making margarine, the water is made into a drink and the fibrous shell can be used to make cattle feed, mats and string. Most supermarkets sell a variety of Fairtrade coconut products. Have a look for them the next time you visit.



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Banana pulp notepad



We eat a lot of bananas in Britain! In fact, only four other countries eat more - USA, Japan, Germany and Russia. More than 95 per cent of British households buy bananas every week. It is becoming normal now to find Fairtrade bananas in supermarkets, more so than any other type.

The extra money made from selling Fairtrade bananas goes directly back into the local communities where they come from. In the east of Dominica (Windward Islands), money has helped to repair roads and a small local hospital has been built, partly funded by Fairtrade premiums.

This notepad is made from the banana pulp. The pulp is made from fibres found in the stems and inedible parts of the banana.





Picking and packing bananas in the Windward Islands

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Cotton t-shirt



Just think how many things you own that are made from cotton. The Fairtrade Foundation first certified cotton in 2005. The comment below is from a cotton farmer called Laljibhai Narranbhai, from Agrocel Pure & Fair Cotton Growers' Association in India. This really shows what a difference this way of trading can make to people's lives.



I will finally be able to support my family thanks to the Fairtrade price we will get for our cotton. I have two sons and one daughter and for the first time I can think about sending my children to school without having to take out a loan. I did not go to school myself, but I want my children to get a good education and this will now happen because my income will increase through Fairtrade.



This t-shirt was bought in the World Shop at RISC.

Picking cotton in India

Cotton shopping bag



This cotton shopping bag was introduced into Co-op supermarkets in 2006. It is called the Bag for a Better Life. The Co-op has been supporting Fairtrade since the Fairtrade Foundation was formed. It was the first supermarket to introduce its own brand of Fairtrade products in 2000. The Co-op is leading a campaign to 'mainstream' Fairtrade - in other words, to make it the norm rather than the exception.



Picking cotton in Mali

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Huntley & Palmers biscuit tin



Of course people have been trading globally in Reading for several hundred years. The town is most famous for the biscuit-making company, Huntley & Palmers. The company started out in 1822 as a small bakery in London Street. It expanded quickly, opening a large factory on Kings Road in 1846. By 1900 it was the largest biscuit manufacturer in the world, employing over 5,000 people. Biscuits were exported from Reading to Africa, the Americas and the Far East. At the same time, the ingredients were coming in the opposite direction, being imported from all over the world. The British Empire was crucial to the success of the company, as ingredients like coconuts and cocoa were imported from Barbados and West Africa. The trading methods and treatment of the workers was seldom taken into consideration at this time.

The tin in the box is the shape of a globe and dates from 1906. At this time, biscuits would have been travelling all over the world in tins of all shapes and sizes. The countries on the tin marked red were all part of the Empire.

Sugar nippers



This interesting looking object was used to cut sugar in the home. Up until the mid nineteenth century sugar was bought in a cone-shaped loaf and pieces had to be cut off with the nippers.

Sugar was imported from the Americas to satisfy the European sweet tooth. The production and exportation of sugar relied heavily on slaves, often working in awful conditions and suffering terribly. It is thought that about 24 million Africans were taken from their homes and shipped across the Atlantic to the Americas to work on plantations.

The actual 'trade' in slaves was abolished in 1807, although African people continued to work in British colonies under slavery until 1838. The sugar added to Huntley & Palmers biscuits in the very early days most probably had some involvement with slavery.

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Action

Fairtrade is about taking action to make the world a fairer place. You can contribute to Reading being a Fairtrade Town by:

Finding out about other Fairtrade products
Running a Fairtrade stall
Holding a Fairtrade assembly
Telling other people about Fairtrade

Look at the following websites for more information:

www.fairtrade.org.uk

www.cafedirect.co.uk

http://www.co-operative.coop/food/ethics/Ethical-trading/Fairtrade/

www.traidcraft.co.uk

www.risc.org.uk