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FIRST ELEVEN

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ALL CHANGE FOR EDUCATION? DE-TOXING CHILDHOOD

GOING GREEN: PARTIES AND FASHION PREP SCHOOLS GO CO-ED

MANAGING POCKET MONEY **FOOD IDEAS FOR FADDY TEENS**

ALL THAT GLITTERS - IS OXBRIDGE LOSING IT? WINTER SUN AND SKI

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ECO FASHION

For a trend-setting industry, fashion has been slow to get to grips with green issues. No matter that the whitest cotton T-shirt might hide a dirty underbelly of toxic pesticides and exploited workers. If consumers weren't complaining, then as far as the industry was concerned, it was business as usual. Long after organic food and cosmetics became niche market staples, eco-fashion struggled to shake off its well-meaning hippies-in-brown-sandals reputation. In the shops, "green" clothing was either hard to find or off-puttingly expensive. Even leading designer Katharine Hamnett has faced an uphill struggle in nearly two decades of campaigning for environmentally friendly clothing and more ethical working conditions for

Jane Hughes reports on how "green" clothing has gone mainstream, helping salve our consciences and save the planet

Safia knit dress from People Tree's new collection £100



garment industry workers.

Not any more. In the last couple of years eco-fashion has become hot news. Hamnett has been joined by a host of high profile names – among them Ali Hewson, wife of Bono and co-founder of the Edun ethical clothing company. Celebrities from Charlize Theron and Helen Hunt, who wear the American Wildlifeworks brand, to Sienna Miller and Cate Blanchett, fans of Brighton eco-label Ciel, are demonstrating their green credentials through their clothing. Supermodel Lily Cole is working with the Environmental Justice

Foundation. Ethical brands have mushroomed online and it's become almost *de rigueur* for major stores to have an eco-concession or clothing line. Marks and Spencer recently supplemented its organic linen lines for men with organic cotton slogan T-shirts. It's also just launched a schoolwear range made from recycled polyester plastic bottles. Monsoon has an expanding Fairtrade range and Topshop sells organic cotton clothing by fair-trade brand People Tree. Mike Korchinsky, CEO of Wildlifeworks says. "In the UK, we're pushing a full range of high-end



Above: dark grey Elly-print dress £180 over organic roll-neck £90, both Wildlifeworks; Below: raglan top £25 and handknit collar £30 over baggy leggings £25, all People Tree

contemporary fashion in a way we just wouldn't have been able to do a few years ago."

Such specialist labels are dedicated to producing organic, fair-trade apparel. Wildlifeworks owns an 80,000-acre wildlife sanctuary in Kenya where clothing is handcrafted at an eco-factory.

People Tree specialises in garments that are often hand woven or embroidered by small groups of workers.



Then there is a growing range of boutique labels like Ciel, by designer Sarah Ratty. Her clothing ranges from hemp silk dresses to lingerie and bamboo leggings, with knitwear made from organic alpaca wool from Peru.

Says Katharine Hamnett, "It's interesting that children are taking these issues seriously and asking their parents to buy organic cotton. Not only is it a softer fabric but it ticks all the environmental boxes."

Indeed, the Pesticide Action Network has labelled cotton the "world's dirtiest crop" accounting for 16 per cent of global insecticide use. It estimates that 150g of chemicals are used making just one T-shirt. This year, Hamnett launches her organic clothing range for Tesco.

Dawn Mellowship set up ecostylist.co.uk to help eco-shoppers find clothes. "I do the hard work for them," she says. Charges range from £5 to source a single item to £150 for a full seven-day wardrobe, costing £2,200, with shoes, underwear and gymwear. Clients fill in a questionnaire and send her their photograph.

- www.ecostylist.co.uk
- www.katharinehamnett.com/shop
- www.wildlifeworks.co.uk
- www.peopletree.com
- www.edunonline.com
- www.ciel.ltd.uk

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