

## Ethical Shopping

I usually try to promote ethical shopping before Christmas, concentrating particularly on Fair Trade. Traidcraft is well known for its teas, coffees, biscuits and, of course, chocolate, but there are lots of other goods you can get as well. They do a reasonable selection of clothes including a nice range of socks, and also things for the home and garden, and gifts. You can also get really attractive cards. Delivery is free if you spend over £50 (usually) so it's worth seeing if friends want anything and doing a bulk order. Their website is [www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk) and you can order by phone as well as online. My attention was also drawn to the Ethical Superstore by an article in my newspaper. This really has an amazing amount of useful stuff – a huge range of all sorts of groceries from pasta and rice via condiments and baking ingredients to specialised goods relating to various different cuisines. There is also a vast range of cleaning and personal care products and a lot of things for children – gifts as well as practical items. Well worth a browse in [www.ethicalsuperstore.com](http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com). Another useful source is EcoForce (website [www.biggreensmile.com](http://www.biggreensmile.com)) which also has a big selection of cleaning and personal care products, childcare products and some over-the-counter types of health care goods. It also stocks a few gift items, including some lovely-looking blankets made from 100% wool and produced in Cornwall. We usually think of ethical goods like these being from overseas but there are also some British firms which are worth supporting. The Ecofriendly shop ([www.ecofriendlyshop.co.uk](http://www.ecofriendlyshop.co.uk)) is similar. It has a good range of products, though perhaps fewer in each section. They do claim to be trying to reduce plastic packaging and if the wrapping can't be accommodated in your local recycling system you can send it back to them and they will attend to it. I haven't tried this, but it sounds as if they are really making an effort. The Ecofriendly shop also offers a few books on environmental issues (a field guide on churchyard lichens or false scorpions anybody?) The Eco Shop ([www.theecoshopuk.com](http://www.theecoshopuk.com)) is another similar company covering cleaning and household products, toiletries and make-up and lots for children, toys as well as baby-care products. Some items are refillable and there are all sorts of intriguing odds and ends, so it's worth a browse on this website. Natural Collection ([www.naturalcollection.com](http://www.naturalcollection.com)) is another on-line company providing a vast range of goods – clothes, gifts, cleaning materials, toiletries, items for children and lots of food. They claim that for an item to be sold by them it must have good credentials in at least one of these criteria: Fair Trade, organic, eco-friendly, locally produced or charity. You can search the website using various filters – Fair Trade, vegan or plastic free, for example. Oh, and, Marple Health stock a good range of Ecover cleaning products, and will refill bottles for some of them. They also stock soap and solid bars of shampoo and conditioner in paper wrappers.

These are wide-ranging providers, but there are some who have a more limited but still useful range. Eco Chic ([www.eco-chic.shop](http://www.eco-chic.shop)) sells foldable bags of various sorts – backpacks, lunchbags, shoppers etc., and rain ponchos. It's a bit difficult to make out from the website exactly how their goods are produced but they claim that their bags, umbrellas and ponchos are made from recycled plastic bottles. They also do re-usable drinks cups made partly from bamboo and corn fibre – what a pity that the current situation makes such cups a no-go just when the whole idea of re-usable instead of disposable was really taking off. We are probably going to need face masks for some time, and most of the above sell them, but another company called Cycle of Good ([www.cycleofgood.com](http://www.cycleofgood.com)) produces a version called a masiki – it's a loose,

stretchy snood which is more comfortable than the usual type of mask. They are made from recycled plastic bottles, have an antimicrobial finish and when you have used and washed them you can send them back to be re-processed into new masks. For food wrapping Bee Green Wraps ([www.beegreenwraps.co.uk](http://www.beegreenwraps.co.uk)) just does what it says – longlife beeswax food wraps, reusable and compostable. Gruum ([www.gruum.com](http://www.gruum.com)) in spite of its Scandi-sounding name, is local – actually based in Stockport. It sells purely personal care stuff, for both men and women and is committed to avoiding testing on animals, using unnecessary packaging and incorporating too needless chemicals in their products.

And so to books – there is a company called Abe Books ([www.abebooks.co.uk](http://www.abebooks.co.uk)) which supplies not only new books but secondhand ones too. They don't claim to be ethical, but are an alternative to Amazon. I have issues with their definition of 'good condition' for some of their used books, but they do offer a refund if you are not happy, and you don't have to send the books back. There is also a company called Bookshop ([www.bookshop.org](http://www.bookshop.org)) from which you can order new books, and they give the 30% bookseller's margin to a local bookshop. This is a really good idea – local bookshops have been struggling and they are a great asset to any local community.

I'm sure there are lots of other companies and websites – if we could all pool what we know perhaps we could put some information together to circulate.