



## by Louise Atkinson

**T**EN years ago next week, the Mail launched a groundbreaking campaign to banish plastic bags from supermarkets.

Our crusade was a triumph, leading to the introduction of a 5p charge which has led to more than seven billion fewer bags being used every year.

But we didn't stop there. Last year we launched our Turn The Tide On Plastic campaign and started a global conversation about how we're flooding the world's seas with waste. Yesterday it was announced that plastic drinking straws will be banned.

This is also the last issue of the Mail to contain a plastic bag. From March 3, Weekend magazine will no longer have a polythene wrapper.

But what about the big businesses who sell us all the plastic in the first place? As charity Greenpeace says: 'The tidal wave of plastic pollution will only start to recede when producers turn off the tap.'

Here, we reveal the companies inspired by our campaign that really are making an effort.

### SUPERMARKET BANISHING PLASTIC PACKAGING

**IRELAND** has committed to becoming the first major retailer in the world to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own brand products by 2022.

This pledge is more than just a savvy marketing exercise, however – it is a personal crusade for Ireland's managing director Richard Wulter. He says: 'I'm keen to do as I'm painfully aware of the amount of plastic littering the ocean. And as the parent of young children, I also want to do everything I can to protect their future.'

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Plastic has long been considered the best option for frozen food because it creates an airtight seal which, unlike cardboard, prevents leaks as the food defrosts. It also protects food from 'breeder leas'.

Plastic-free alternatives have to overcome these challenges – but the team are trying to crack it. They're now planning to replace plastic meat trays with paper-based ones by the end of 2018, and switch plastic egg boxes to pulp ones. This will remove 100 million plastic items from circulation.

'We are working on a plastic-free sealant which stops water penetrating the cardboard packaging, and a plant-based film in place of clingfilm,' says Richard.

The team has reported that in other areas the switch will be harder to achieve (such as the packs for chilled meat, or meat) – but they aren't ready until they succeed. Richard promises that any increase in costs will not be passed on to the consumer.

'The advance in technology will be better if other retailers follow our lead. We are encouraged by positive actions already announced by our competitors,' he adds. Indeed it's putting a stake in the ground.

### RECYCLING THAT'S FIT FOR SUPERMARKETS

**GORGEOUS** silky fabrics, tailored trousers and chiseled bags and shoes – there's nothing even the most hard-core plastic-hater would turn her nose up at in High Street giant H&M's new collection.

More extraordinary than that items in its new Conscious Exclusive range (which hits shops in April) are made by super-model Christy Turlington, are made from plastic found on our beaches.

The collection, which starts at around 140, uses Recycled polyester.

# 10 years ago we launched our campaign to ban plastic bags – and look how we changed the world! Here the Mail salutes the innovative ways big firms are saving the planet

# High St dresses made from 7 million plastic bottles

ated nylon and Bioact polyester yarn. Bioact Tern has transformed seven million old plastic bottles gathered from the UK's shoreline into fabric for its new line. Avoird 50 bottles go into making each dress.

Joseph, sustainable. It made from discarded plastic fishing nets collected from around the world by volunteer divers. This saves non-toxic dolphins and turtles from getting tangled in them. These nets are combined with old carpets, industrial waste and fabric scraps before being spun into yarn.

Caterina Midy, H&M's UK sustainability manager, says: 'This recycled fabric really is as good as new. The brand will also recycle any of your old clothes for free and reprocess up to 95 per cent of it.'

**THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD ECO-WARRIOR**

**YOU'RE** never too little to make a difference – as proven by a five-year-old from Criccieth, who wrote to her local Pizza Express last year about her concern over plastic straws. She received a letter in 2017 from one of our customers, Ava, aged five, and it spurred us to make a big change,' says managing director Zoe Bowley.

She wrote: 'When I get my drink at Pizza Express, I always see a lot of plastic straws in it. I am writing to please ask you to stop using plastic straws as they are very bad for animals. They get stuck in their mouths and noses. Could you only use straws if people ask for them as I don't want any animals to get sick?'

Ava's mother Andrea James said: 'To say I'm a proud parent is an understatement. I encouraged Ava to write the letter after she saw a picture of a turtle with a straw stuck in its mouth and asked how we could help. We've always eaten at Pizza Express, so we decided that was a good place to start.'

When they received her letter, the customer service team at Pizza Express sent Ava a hand-written reply to confirm the news of the straw ban, writing: 'If you ever think you can make a difference or that you don't have a voice, write that letter or make that call to our local Pizza Express last year because even at age five you can change the world!'

Now it's her turn to show that they have banned plastic straws, although I don't think she under-

stands the enormity of what she has achieved, says Andrea. 'This is the best possible outcome. Ava has turned into a little eco-warrior, changing other plastic bags around the beach and making sure they get picked up.'

**WASHING-UP BOTTLE TO BRAG ABOUT**

**AS ONE** of the largest producers of ecological cleaning products in Europe, Ecover is already a green choice as it doesn't use harmful chemicals in its products.

However, its bottles were made from plastic – until now. A dedicated team has been working on a 100 per cent recycled and recyclable washing-up liquid bottle.

Ryan McIlroy, EU industrial design manager at Ecover, says it has been challenging, so much recycled plastic is produced overseas that it was tricky to find a source close to the UK.

'We knew our product (pictured right) had to be clear in order to be fully recyclable but most recycled plastic is yellow or grey. Our design team worked to create a robust design to make it look like high-end glass. The next challenge

was trialing different weights of plastic to balance using the smallest amount of material.

'We are now looking at redesigning our laundry range and using biodegradable plastic packaging to ensure that any bottles which don't make the recycling bin disappear before they reach the ocean.'

**TEABAG REVOLUTION BREWS AT THE CO-OP**

**DID** you know teabags contain plastic? That's the problem that has become a personal crusade for environmental manager Iain Perrett at the Co-Op, who has worked at the supermarket for nearly 30 years.

He was responsible for removing plastic filters from Lissac boxes in 2009, but when he was asked to package for paper cotton had straw back in 2010, he refused to do so until other retailers, and he led the way



Making waves: Christy Turlington in H&M, and campaigner Ava, 5

in 2012, in lightening the colour of Co-op's milk bottle tops so they are easier to recycle.

Last year he recommended tomatoes be sold in cardboard rather than plastic punnets, and that polystyrene boxes for Co-op pizzas are changed to cardboard.

Now he's teamed up with tea company Tymbro to develop the world's first mass-market plastic-free teabag.

Co-op food chief executive Jo Whitfield says: 'Many tea drinkers are unknowingly using their teabag to leech in plastic. 150 tonnes in total leached in six billion cups of tea per year, which means an enormous amount of plastic waste.'

Perrett – who is 60 – now says he refuses to retire until the plastic-free tea bags hit the shelves.

The biodegradable bags are under trial at the Tymbro factory in Liverpool, with a team experimenting

with various sealants and different paper cases. It's hoped they'll be ready for your cuppa soon.

### SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS AT LUSH

**LUSH** direct retailer Lush launched solid shampoo (shaped like a bar of soap) more than 20 years ago – and now it's going further. Five million bars were sold in 2016, which saved over 15 million plastic bottles (each bar is equivalent to three medium bottles of liquid shampoo).

They have expanded the 'naked' range to include solid body conditioner and shower gel. Co-founder and managing director Mark Costantini says: 'We can only offer alternatives. Some customers love them and some hate them.'

'In our industry, packaging often represents more than half the cost of the finished product. By creat-

## AND YOUR FAVOURITE PAPER

**THIS** is the last issue of the Daily Mail that will contain a plastic bag. From March 3, Weekend magazine will no longer have a polythene wrapper. The material can be widely recycled but sometimes does end up with rubbish, so we're getting rid of it. The change will mean that the plastic wrapping will no longer be used in more than two million copies of the Mail which are sold every Saturday.

straws going to landfill every year. Paper straws are hidden from view and produced only on request. According to a spokesman, the original idea was prompted by customers and staff. The pledge was made in September and all 500 pubs were straw free by January 1. 'Now you only get a paper straw if you ask, so it makes it a tiny percentage of what it used to be,' he says. 'Overall the move has been very well-received.'

He said customers will also be able to bring their own cups on board. And Eurostar has pledged to phase out the company's use of plastic by 90 per cent by 2020.

Plastic straws have already been banned on trains and in bouques and a ban on plastic bottles was introduced.

### COMPOST YOUR READY-MEAL TRAY

**TOMATOES** are going to be a key part of your ready meals at Waitrose – but not to eat. Black plastic food trays are frequently used for microwave-ready meals because the plastic can be tougher and more resilient to temperature changes and to give a quality look to premium range products.

But the users used at recycling plants struggle to properly identify black plastic, meaning it often ends up in landfill.

However, Waitrose has been leading experiments with alternative paper-pulp trays and cardboard packaging.

It has now managed to remove 15 per cent of black plastic packaging from fresh fruit and vegetables.

From the end of this year it will stop using black plastic packaging for all meat, fish, fruit and vegetables, and all of its own-label goods by the end of 2019.

In October, the retailer trialed a food by-product punnet for Waitrose Daily Organic cherry tomatoes made from tomato leaf and recycled cardboard, as well as trying out pulp punnets for mushrooms. Both of these materials can be home-composted.

The head of Royal Caribbean International, Michael Bayley, says: 'Healthy oceans are vital to the success of our company and we understand our responsibility to protect the sea.'

He wants to eliminate single-use, disposable plastic, such as straws and drink bottles, and reduce the amount of plastic, such as chairs, beds, staff bins and shoes.

Meanwhile, Ryanair is the first airline to announce plans to go

ing products without packaging, we can buy better ingredients and not fill the ocean with plastic. It makes sense for the industry to discard packaging and give customers better value for money.'

### HOLIDAYS FREE FROM PLASTIC

**ROYAL CARIBBEAN** International has joined forces with Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises to form a 'plastics free' charter with the intention of eliminating single-use plastics on its fleets.

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plastic-free over the next five years. The company's chief marketing officer, Kristy Jacobs, explained that this would mean switching to wooden cutlery, using biodegradable coffee cups, and the removal of plastics from in-flight products.

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### SEE OUR VIDEO

The Mail turns the tide on plastic at you too! [WATCH SC-PMO](#)

### NATURALLY FAST FOOD

**RESTAURANT** chain Leon pioneered the concept of 'Naturally Fast Food' which it launched in 2004.

It has always used paper packaging and offered free water in glasses, but it switched to compostable and biodegradable coffee cups in 2016.

Most cups are lined with plastic as a sealant to stop leaks but Leon says it has a biopolymer coating which degrades much more quickly. This year Leon will move to paper straws and biodegradable cutlery.

CEO and co-founder John Vincent says: 'Removing as much of the single-use plastic from our restaurants as quickly as we can is one of our initiatives to be kinder to the planet.'

It's not easy and it's expensive as it is 40 per cent more in costs, but it is necessary.

Economies of scale mean plastic cutlery is much cheaper than alternatives, which also use more expensive raw materials.

Mail by commercially supporting new packaging technology the team at Leon hope to play a part in bringing the overall cost down over time.

### AVOCADOS LABELLED WITH LASERS IN M&S

**M&S** says that by 2022, all of its produce packaging in the UK will be 'recycled and widely recycled'. It has reduced the plastic in 140 of its own-brand products, including crapes and popcorn packets, by around 20 per cent.

It also laser-prints barcodes on avocadoes (skil to avoid the need for labels).

Spokesperson says: 'Packaging plays a significant role in protecting our products and keeping them fresh, but it's important that we do it over packaging.'

'We know we have a lot more to do and we are working hard to cut the amount of plastic we use and help our customers to reuse and recycle more.'

## IS YOUR SMALL BUSINESS A PLASTIC HERO?

**DO YOU** own or work for a small business that is playing its part – and deserves to be celebrated for it in our pages? Let us know at [femaleaders@dailymail.co.uk](mailto:femaleaders@dailymail.co.uk), including your phone number, and we will get back to you.