

CHENEY
STUDENT
NEWSLETTER
6TH MAY

WELCOME

Hi everyone, as you may have seen in the last newsletter, the sixth form team is in the process of being handed over to the year 12's so there's no SSLT update this week. However, I'd like to use this space to ask if there are any suggestions you may have to keep improving the newsletter and showcasing the incredible talent at this school!

In other news, the Enrichment Committee at Cheney is planning to create a short documentary following on from the Rumble Museum's 'Cheney 2050' workshop that the sixth form participated in. We'll be interviewing students from across the school to create a sort of time capsule for the year 2021, looking to 2050. All students should have received an email informing them of more details, but if this sounds like something you'd want to be a part of, send an email to lro@cheney.oxon.sch.uk because we'd love to have you involved.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions, email sslt@cheney.oxon.sch.uk who are happy to help.

Erin, Y12 – Editor for the newsletter



A DAY AT THE MALL

By Eleanor, Y11

Shops galore
Racks upon racks of clothes
Poisonous accessibility
The air is thick with it

There's a bag in my hand
It's full of clothes
I'm just another consumer
Shopping their way to the grave

I try to move
One foot in front of the other
Oh God, I'm stuck

Find background information on this issue on the next page

Brands and more brands
Queues at every check out
A carpark full of cars
Sale signs covering everything

I try to move again
I'm trapped
Am I even breathing?

New trends come and go
At least 1 a day
Clothes are brought
To be just thrown away

My hands are shaking
My eyes are closed
My heart is thumping
My legs won't budge

I can't block it out
The planet's screaming
At the top of its voice

Then it's over
My heart beat slows
Air floods into my lungs



By Becky, Y8

SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fast fashion is defined as inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to latest trends. Since the invention of the sewing machine people have been producing clothes more and more rapidly until now where producers can produce whole new collections almost overnight. This is in response to a consumer demand for ease and cheapness and hasn't happened without major consequences.¹

The first being the exploitation of garment workers something is often called out for but still continues to do. As the weakest link in the supplier chain they have very little power and they are at the point where things can be squeezed the most to maximise profit. This often means that workers are forced to endure harsh conditions, long hours and appallingly low rates of pay. For example in Bangladesh the average wage for a garment worker is just \$2 per day.² This is unquestionably a violation of their human rights but big corporations cut all sorts of corners to make themselves unaccountable.

It's essential to mention that fast fashion and fashion in general is also another very racist part of our society. The fashion industry has continually shown a preference for white designers, white runways and white CEOs.³ Often cultural symbols are stolen by designers and put into their clothing without any research into the history of them, or any credit given to the culture instead they are just labelled as 'tribal'.⁴ On top of this more generally there is a serious problem with people who buy the clothes particularly people who can't afford sustainable options being blamed rather than the corporations who profit off it.

And finally there are the environmental impacts which is where as a climate activist I am the most concerned about fast fashion. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Climate Change Panel) has calculated that the fast fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions yearly⁵ and is considered to be second only to oil as the world's largest polluter. The wastewater produced, chemicals used and short life span of many clothes lead to an insane amount of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Then there are the microplastics that fast fashion helps to leach into the world. Many clothes are made of synthetic fibres which contain microplastics, when they are washed, or caught in the rain in landfill sites the microplastics are flushed into the water cycle eventually reaching the oceans and causing serious problems for marine life.⁶

Luckily though fast fashion can be avoided. There is a concept called slow fashion and it is basically opposite from fast fashion and has a significantly less damaging impact on the planet and in society.⁷

You can engage in slow fashion and avoid fast fashion by:

1. Buying from sustainable brands: This can be difficult as sustainable and ethical products are often more expensive, but that makes it even more important that those who can afford sustainable options take them so that those who can't someday might.
2. Buying better quality products: Better quality products last longer, so less resources are needed to replace them. It'll also force brands to produce better quality products generally.
3. Think before you throw clothes away: Could you repair them? Are they worth putting in a textile recycling bin? Would someone else take them like a friend, family member or charity shop?
4. Instead of buying new clothes you could rent (particularly if you're buying something for a one time occasion), swap (clothes-swap happens all over and you could also set one up) or buy second hand (a really eco option and as cheap as buying new).
5. Start washing things less: The average household consumes around 60,000 litres of water by doing 400 loads of laundry every year. Things like washing clothes at lower temps and using more eco washing up liquid are amazing.

If you'd like to look into the issue some more here are some good articles to read and videos to watch:

- [Fast Fashion's 'Cheap Labor': Under the Pandemic, Global Garment Industry's Women Workers Pay the Price. \(Women's Media Centre.com\)](#)
- [The fashion industry has a long history of racism \(not what is seams on substack.com\)](#)
- [The true cost of fast fashion \(fairtrade.org.uk\)](#)
- [The story of a £4 Boohoo dress: cheap clothes at a high cost \(The Guardian\)](#)
- [BBC: The Price of Fast Fashion \(on Youtube\)](#)
- [CBBC: My life Episode 12 Fighting for Fashion](#)

¹<https://healthyhumanlife.com/blogs/news/what-is-fast-fashion> and <https://www.bwss.org/fastfashion/>

²<https://thegoodhuman.com/fast-fashion-garment-workers/>

³<https://notwhatitseams.substack.com/p/the-fashion-industry-has-a-long-history>

⁴<https://www.thefashionlaw.com/is-racism-stifling-creativity-in-the-fashion-industry/>

⁵<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2020/apr/07/fast-fashion-speeding-toward-environmental-disaster-report-warns>

⁶<https://www.treehugger.com/fast-fashion-environmental-ethical-issues-4869800>

⁷<https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/reducing-our-impact>



By Isabel, Y10



By Ayla, Y8