

Alice Curteis and Marie Robinson present

# A Fairtrade Town – past, present, and future

The road signs tell you that you're entering a Fairtrade Town and the certificates in shops and cafés tell you where to find Fairtrade goods, but what does it all mean?

St Andrews became a Fairtrade Town on St Andrews Day 2005, a little over a year after the St Andrews Fairtrade Town Campaign was set up. To achieve this status (awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation) there had to be a certain numbers of shops and cafés selling at least 2 Fairtrade products, and evidence that a significant number of businesses and community organisations were using Fairtrade products. In addition, the campaign group had to have raised awareness of fair trade with events and publicity, and attained the support of Fife Council. It also helped that the campaign was endorsed by the local Community Council and Merchants' Association.

To keep our status, we have to build on this year by year, and we are pleased we can announce that Fairtrade Town status was recently renewed up to November 2009. There are now at least 45 outlets for fairly-traded products in the town, with more shops and cafés and more products appearing all the time.

Activities during 2007 included the distribution of our certificates for businesses (still available – please contact us if you'd like one) and our Spot the Certificate schools' competition during St Andrews Festival Week to highlight their widespread use.

So much for the past. This publication goes to press in the midst of Fairtrade Fortnight 2008, February 25th – March 9th. Local activities to celebrate the fortnight reach far beyond the efforts of the campaign group, with churches, schools, the University, and others, being involved. One highlight will take place on the evening of March 5th when Julius Ehangatha, a tea producer from Kenya, will be here to give personal testimony to the huge benefits of Fairtrade for communities like his, where trading conditions now permit a decent

lifestyle. (Details of time and venue for this and other events are available on our website: address below.)

And into the future: it won't be long before Scotland becomes a Fair Trade Nation, building on the work of the hundreds of local campaigns in universities, villages, cities, and towns like St Andrews.

Now for some questions and answers about Fairtrade...

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## What is Fairtrade?

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. By requiring companies to pay above-market prices, Fairtrade addresses some of the injustices of conventional trade. The producers' lot is improved and they have more control over their lives.

## What are Fairtrade products?

Fairtrade products carry the FAIRTRADE Mark to show that their producers receive guaranteed, fair and stable prices for their products, along with a little extra to invest in their community and environment.

## What is the FAIRTRADE Mark?

This logo appears on UK product labels as a guarantee that the producers have received a better deal. It is awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation, a registered charity set up by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft Exchange, and the WDM. Fair trade, however, is not a form of charity.

## What products are available and where can I find them?

Over 2000 different retail products carry the FAIRTRADE Mark. A wide selection is available locally: see the comprehensive town directory on our website.

## What does it mean for the producers?

There are an estimated 1 million farmers and other workers directly involved in Fairtrade. Millions more (possibly 5 times as many) benefit indirectly from investments of the social



Our Fairtrade supporter's certificate.

premium in communities – helping schools and clinics for instance. It means better terms of trade and decent production conditions. Inspections and checks by the Fairtrade Foundation maintain standards.

## How does Fairtrade differ from ethical trading?

Ethical trading means companies are involved in a process of trying to ensure that the basic labour rights of the employees of their suppliers are respected. The FAIRTRADE Mark applies to products rather than companies, and aims to give disadvantaged small producers more control over their own lives.

## Is Fairtrade a subsidy?

No. Subsidies are government payments that lower the price of goods to encourage their production or consumption, or to make them more competitive. Fairtrade is a voluntary model of trade that brings consumers and companies together to offer producers better and more stable prices that allow a sustainable livelihood. Getting a higher price through Fairtrade allows investment, and diversification where desirable.

## Are there organic Fairtrade products?

Yes, but being organic is not a requirement. Some Fairtrade tea, coffee, honey, cocoa, chocolate, and bananas are organic.

## What about genetically-modified crops?

All Fairtrade products are GMO-free.

## Does the FAIRTRADE Mark apply to UK farmers?

No, Fairtrade efforts are focussed on enabling producers in developing countries tackle poverty through trade. The Fairtrade Foundation is not convinced that a labelling scheme is the answer to problems that affect UK farmers.

## What is the St Andrews Fairtrade Town Campaign?

Our group tries to promote interest in and knowledge about Fairtrade products and issues in St Andrews, as well as maintaining Fairtrade Town status. It comprises seven ordinary folk including a student member. We would welcome anyone who would like to help or join us: please see our website, [www.fairtrade-standrews.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade-standrews.org.uk) for contact details or e-mail, [secretary@fairtrade-standrews.org.uk](mailto:secretary@fairtrade-standrews.org.uk).



Success! New road signs announce that St Andrews is a Fairtrade Town, October, 2006. (Photos, courtesy Fairtrade St Andrews)



The FAIRTRADE Mark: the logo you will see on Fairtrade products.

