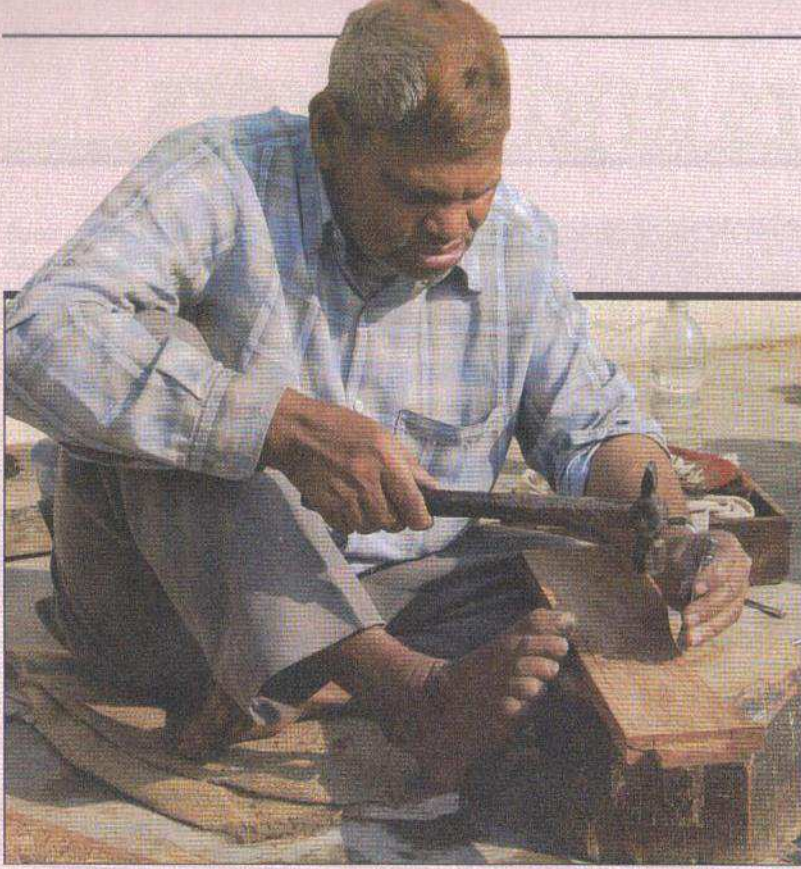


Despite what the doom-mongers might say, business is booming in York. Here's your chance to tell the city about your successes, talk about new products or services, offer tips and praise the people behind your business. Contact the York News & Times – call (01904) 767881 or e-mail editor@theyorktimes.co.uk.

Booming York company also a force for good in the world

# Measuring profits against more than the bottom line



FANCY FOOTWORK: Shared Earth offer fair prices for goods made overseas

**WITH the launch of the first Fair Trade franchise in the UK, an outstanding team and a trend towards environmentally friendly retailing, York-based company Shared Earth is exceeding expectations.**

Established in 1986 Shared Earth has led the Fair Trade industry for over two decades, focusing on delivering products that consumers want by managing the design and development in-house.

"We have always aimed to address the imbalance of wealth, working together with people from different cultures while earning a decent living and, because we make good profits, we are able to offer our suppliers a good and fair price for their products," explains Jeremy Piercy, founder of Shared Earth.

Shared Earth link the customer with product origins through an colourful retail environment. This

gives shoppers a sense of what their purchase means to the people who hand-make the delights displayed. A selection of their products can be found at [www.shareearth.co.uk](http://www.shareearth.co.uk).

Despite a difficult retail climate in the UK in recent years, Shared Earth's seven shops operate successfully. Three of these shops have opened within the last three years with sales and profit substantially increasing. With average sales from a non-branded Fair Trade shop being around £75,000 per annum, Jeremy's Shared Earth shops generate an average of £300,000. "Fair Trade is making such a difference," explains Jeremy. "Critics are quick to question whether the Fairtrade logo is just another way of businesses to profit. We can prove that the profits of fairly traded goods are directly benefiting people at the bottom of society."

Shared Earth regularly travels with staff and designers to visit its overseas

producers in countries like India and Nepal. This keeps everyone focused on the same goals; to create ethically sustainable products and check that the money is getting to the people who need it most.

Shared Earth took a team of 12 people to India in January as a product buying and press trip to report back on the good work of Fair Trade. During the trip the Shared Earth team visited handicraft suppliers in Delhi, Agra, Saharanpur and Kolkatta. A blog site was set up to report back on the trip as it happened.

Jeremy organised the trip. "During our visit we reviewed a selection of Fair Trade projects set up by Indian suppliers, which are designed to give back to the community. We visited a slum, orphanage, workshops and schools all of which

have been set up or funded through Fair Trade. It was a pleasure to view the progress and positive impact for workers, families and communities. With an increase in sales of eight per cent within our shops, we are hopeful of a positive take up for our new Shared Earth franchise package. This will give the industry a real boost."

With Jeremy's plan to grow through franchising, his business alone is capable of doubling UK-wide sales of non-food Fair Trade products. Awareness should also grow as Jeremy works to finish his first book, which captures the wonderful experience that Fair Trade provides for all of its participants. Other books on Fair Trade are available, but this will be the first one written from someone actually

trading, as opposed to a journalist, academic or campaigner.

Jeremy has been delighted at the huge initial response to the publicity about the franchise opportunity. The franchise has attracted national press interest from newspapers such as the Daily Mail, Daily Express and the Sunday Mirror. So far, Shared Earth have undertaken two Discovery Days where interested individuals receive a behind the scenes tour of the York head office.

"We are looking for individuals with the right qualities who want to own an ethical, profitable business. We are only looking for a small number of franchisees initially so that they receive an excellent level of care," adds Jeremy.

