

Dreaming of a Fairtrade Christmas

AN ethical Stratford shop with a difference has opened just in time for the Christmas rush, and is further enhancing the credentials of the town's official Fairtrade status.

Selling only certified Fairtrade goods, Shared Earth on Wood Street is now one of eight such branches around the country after opening last week.

The shop stocks, among a range of 5,500 different gifts from all over the world, boxes made from recycled crisp packets, note books made from recycled car tyres and photo albums made from bamboo.

Area shops manager Lynne Dawson explains that Stratford had been carefully selected as the retailer's next location. "We are hopeful that we will do well here. We place ourselves in the hands of the good people of Stratford and hope they like our products, and support us in what we do," she told the *Herald* this week.

"We are the biggest non-food Fairtrade company in the country, but we want people to come here because our stock is beautiful and the Fairtrade is a

Report by James Cracknell

bonus, rather than being a sympathy vote.

"We regularly go out to where our stock is made and meet the people who make it. People in Cambodia and Vietnam have always been into recycling things. Because they don't tend to have much, they make the most of what they do have."

Shared Earth began as a small shop in York 22 years ago, in October 1986. Its founder, Jeremy Piercy, travelled to India after leaving school and wanted to do something to help redress the imbalance of wealth in the world. Fairtrade was the obvious answer and the original shop contained a wide mix of products from Asia, Africa and South America.

"We felt there were still a lot



●Fairtrade Christmas. . .Shared Earth shop supervisor Natalie Jaworska with a camel made out of recycled fabric and a toy plane made in Madagascar. Photo by Geoff Smith

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of independent traders in Stratford and we felt we fitted in with that. The big out-of-town shops can house the big brands but we are better here, and we hope tourists and local people like what we do," Ms Dawson

added.

Also high on the agenda is addressing environmental problems and all Shared Earth shops sell a huge range of recycled and sustainable products including stationery, jewellery,

toys, games and Christmas cards.

Fairtrade sales are also continuing to soar around the UK with 2007 seeing retail sales grow by 58 per cent to £493 million. All Fairtrade certified

products ensure a guaranteed minimum price for producers and provide an additional premium which can be invested in projects that enhance social, economic and environmental development.