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# Howard's way

CAN MICHAEL HOWARD  
STEAL THE ELECTION?  
A SPECIAL REPORT FROM  
THE CONSERVATIVE  
CAMPAIGN TRAIL.  
BY ANDREW ANTHONY



# Price points

We all know going green is helping save the environment. But it'll also help preserve your wallet. **Lucy Siegle** adds up her eco pounds

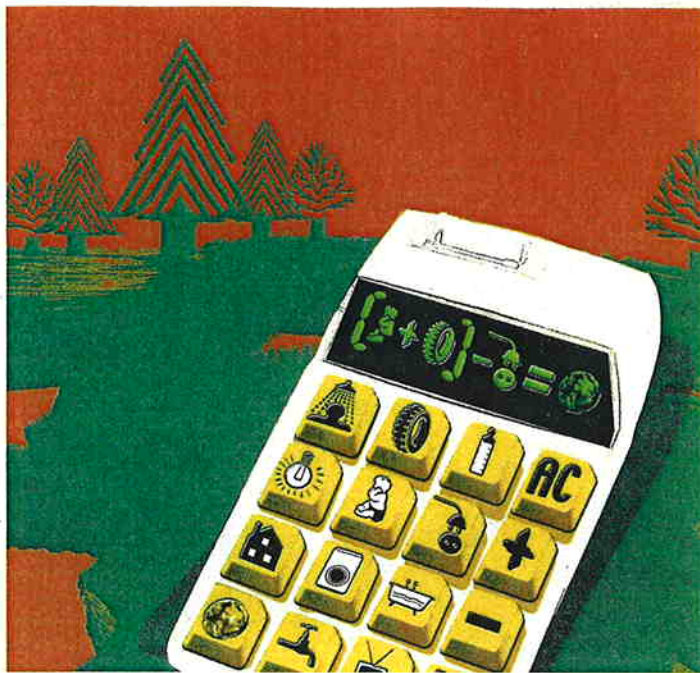


Everyone loves a bargain, so it stands to reason that the latest crop of planet-saving ideas is inclined

to appeal to our wallets, rather than to our consciences. Friends of the Earth, for instance, has launched [www.savecashsaveplanet.org](http://www.savecashsaveplanet.org), full of cut-price green tips, while the Energy Saving Trust (020 7222 0101; [www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk)) will alert you to the fantastic savings to be made by being less profligate with power.

Cut 10 per cent off your annual bill by turning down your thermostat by one degree, lag your hot-water tank to save £15, stop gaps with newspaper and close your curtains early to stop heat escaping, and you'll be quids in. Occasionally, it will be necessary to speculate in order to accumulate: fitting energy-efficient bulbs costs more, but they last around 12 times longer than conventional bulbs, thus saving £7 per year for each bulb installed. Tot it all up on a solar-powered calculator, and you'll find that the average home can save around £200 per year.

You can, it's alleged, even do some cut-price parenting by becoming an enviro-mum/dad – good news when you consider that, according to a recent survey, the cost of raising a child (for the first five years) is £52,000. The Women's Environmental Network (020 7481 9004; [www.wen.org.uk](http://www.wen.org.uk)), which runs Real Nappy Week, estimates that using washable, re-usable cloth nappies instead of disposables saves £500 per child. Rebecca Lewis, a self-confessed enviro-mum, has worked out that with real nappies in conjunction with her own invention, Genesis



Washable Nursing Pads (available from Boots stores nationwide), you can expect to knock £1,000 per year off the cost of a child.

However, before we get carried away and make plans for the new contents of our eco piggy bank, it's worth remembering that not all ethical lifestyle choices are as cheap as chips. In fact, the savings will probably be needed to fund other important lifestyle changes such as fresh local and organic produce, textiles made from non-polluting organic cotton, and sustainable technology such as photovoltaic panels. They all have high price tags and long payback periods.

Sales of Fairtrade products – now exceeding £140m – prove that in some cases we're happy to pay a premium price to guarantee that environmental and social justice

criteria have been met. A recent survey by the WWF One Million Sustainable Homes campaign ([www.wwf.org.uk](http://www.wwf.org.uk)) found 84 per cent of those surveyed prepared to pay an average 2 per cent extra of the purchase price for environmentally sound homes.

This is encouraging because while thrifty eco living is a good motivator, it's not the whole story. Recent front-page photos show that you'd be hard pressed to get a decent skiing holiday at the top of Kilimanjaro. Similarly, Himalayan glaciers are retreating at an unprecedented rate, threatening water supplies to the Indian subcontinent. So the real question is: what price you can put on environmental degradation? Some things are, after all, priceless. **OM** [lucy.siegle@observer.co.uk](mailto:lucy.siegle@observer.co.uk)

## GOOD BUY

### Child's play

Welcome to the world of Tatty Bumpkin. Conceived by Sam Petter, herself a young mother, it's an organic lifestyle for 18-month-olds to five-year-olds which includes specially designed yoga workshops, a full range of organic clothes, fairtrade dolls and even a chemical-free first aid kit.

Petter grew up on her family's organic farm, where she still lives, and is passionate about creating a brand for kids which is free from toxins, is light on the environment and encourages health and fitness. To help her in her mission she's devised a range of cute, practical clothing featuring frogs, spiders and lions. A raggle-taggle array of species, they fall into line behind the brand's eponymous heroine, Tatty Bumpkin the yoga doll. Made by a Fair Trade co-op in Sri Lanka, the doll can go into 'most yoga positions' and introduces children to the workshops.

Petter also believes in making life easy, which is why she's come up with a wardrobe in a bag (£75), containing a child's complete kit for a day away or overnight stay. All



clothes are reversible, and bibs double as bandanas and blankets. 'Every garment we sell that is made from 100 per cent organic cotton means that a teacupful of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides is saved,' says Petter proudly.

The Tatty Bumpkin children's organic range starts from £10 (01732 812 212; [www.tattybumpkin.com](http://www.tattybumpkin.com))

**Do the right thing** It takes 4.5 gallons of oil to make a new tyre. So stick with secondhand tyres. They're as safe as new, says the Retread Manufacturers Association ([www.retreaders.org.uk](http://www.retreaders.org.uk))