



foreword

Limegrass Creative Workshops provide a framework for creative minded people to explore contemporary issues in our culture.

Understanding and addressing the changing needs of society is important if we are to design successfully for it. We are all directly responsible for shaping the future of society whether as consumers or vendors or anyone else involved in the manufacturing process.

The workshops provide a space where creative people can step out of their usual environment, to be inspired and challenged by the world. It brings together people from multidisciplinary backgrounds from whom we can also be inspired and challenged.

If you are interested in attending a Creative Workshop or would like a workshop organised for your business, please contact Posan by emailing posan@limegrass.com.

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introduction

Alternative consumption spaces, like charity shops and car boot sales are changing as our attitudes towards them drift from thrift to encompass an expression of style and individuality. Charity shops are being radically made-over, some are even unrecognizable as charity shops.

What is motivating this? How does shopping in this alternative consumption space reflect social identities and express individuality and style? What responsibility should they be placing on promoting reuse and recycling? What role will charity shops play in the future of material consumption?

The Drift of Thrift was a 2 day workshop held in London in March 2004, which explored these and other issues.

Experts were invited to share their experiences and opinions of alternative material culture. This included specialists from within the industry, material cultures and fashion.

The event was primarily aimed at individuals in the design industry, attracting designers from multi-disciplinary backgrounds, including jewellery, interaction and product design.

Day 1 began with a discussion forum, intended to get everything thinking around the key issues. Participants then went out in groups to conduct ethnographic research in the field.

On Day 2, these observations were shared with the other groups. A picture of this current world and the issues surrounding it was being built up, upon which the future of this space could be contemplated.



the venue

Shepherd's Bush Village Hall was chosen for it's subtle nuances to jumble sales and village fetes...

...an ideal environment in which to discuss thrift....

discussion forum



"TRAID is being taken seriously in the recycling arena...[we work] with a variety of recycling organisations on the area of promoting recycling, we also have a school recycling education programme."

Maria Chenoweth
CEO, TRAIID



"...we base our prices on what we are led to believe it is worth in the current market.."

Judy Taylor
Manager, Retromania

"Too much of our shopping is wasteful..at least if you are going to a [charity] shop and see that something...you're giving it a new home, the money is going to a good cause and you're not taking something from the Earth."

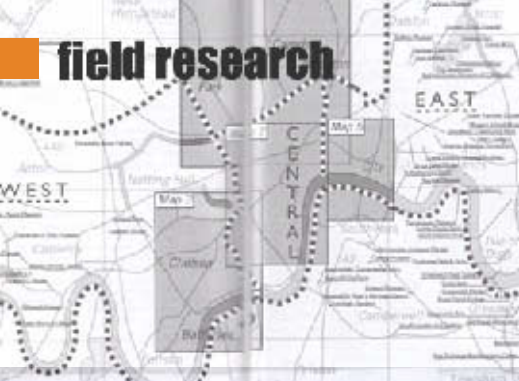
Wayne Hemingway
Hemingway Design



"There has always been an issue of class over the consumption of second hand goods - i.e. acceptable to the middle class and less acceptable to the working class."

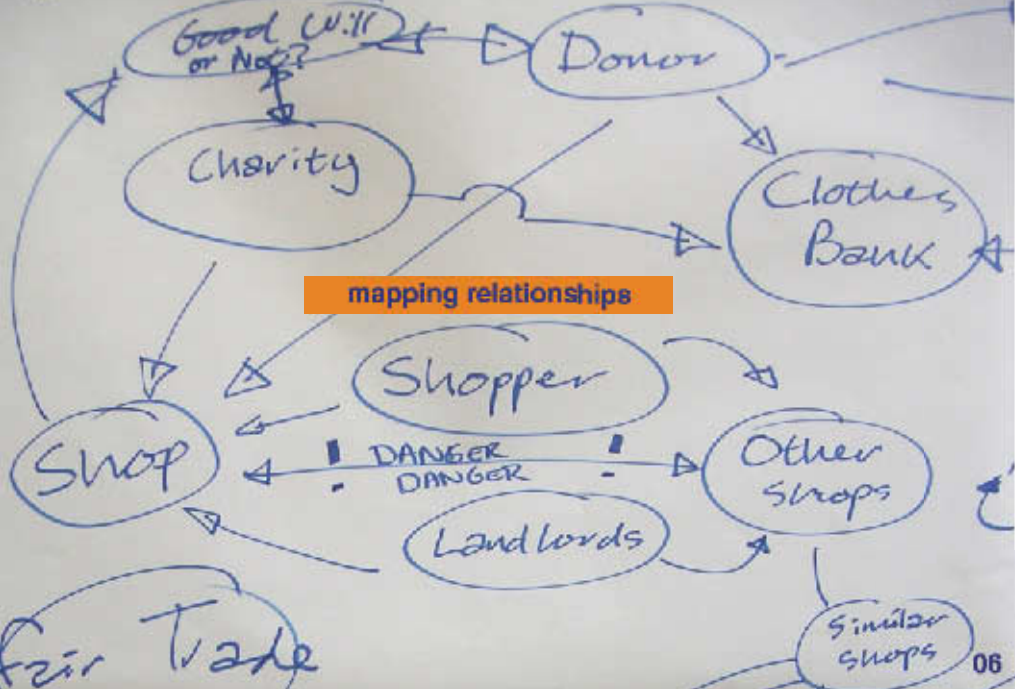
Alison Clarke
Professor of Material Culture
& Design History,
University of Applied Arts, Vienna







Who is involved? + where? + what?



research uncoverings

This section communicates the main points uncovered from the research. together with some concepts for how they could be embodied.

The findings and concepts are not intended to be answers. They are areas of interest which could be investigated further. Perhaps by delving more deeply into these areas, we may find the future of this alternative consumption space.

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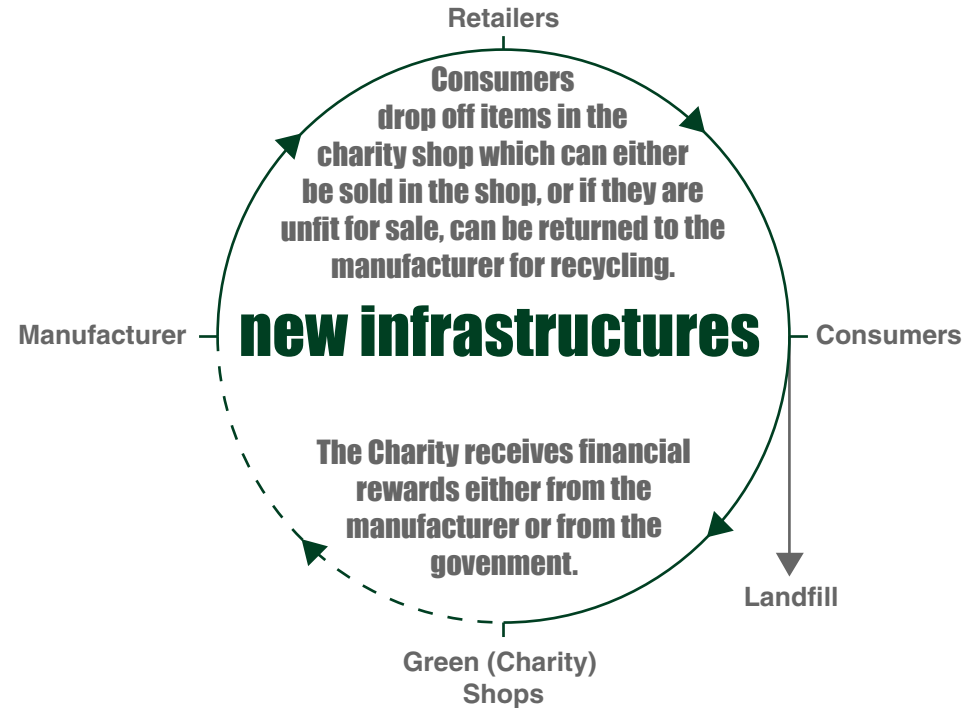
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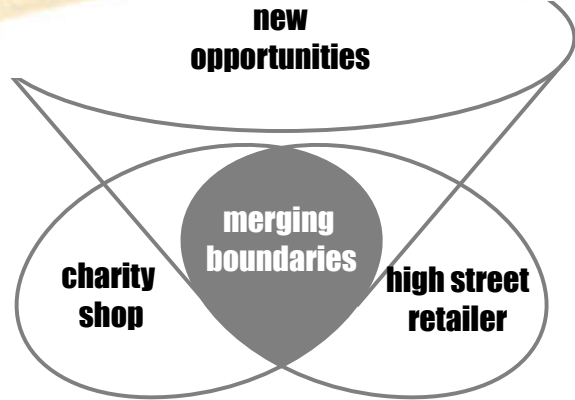
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re:cycling

Charity Shops already play a role in recycling. Should more emphasis be placed on this aspect to appeal to environmentally conscious shoppers? Could there be a role for them in the future as Centres of Excellence for recycling?



crossing boundaries



Many charity shops already sell new retail goods, offering products and foods. How successful are these sales? Does the mixture of old and new goods side by side create a confusing message to the consumer? Would they be more successful if they were more distinct? In the future could there be mainstream retail environments run by charities offering more ethical shopping?

THE INDEPENDENT
Monday 1 March 2004

Fairtrade produce tempts shoppers with
a conscience as sales surge to £100m

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
Environment Editor

IN TERMS of our shopping
habits, you might say it's the
new organic, and today the
news prove it. Sales of avoid-
ing the

organic
supermarket

health food shop

information



people ← information

information → people

How can a charity communicate more about itself to its customers? Is there much room within the shopping experience for the consumer to learn more about the charity, its work and its products?

Are there more ways in which the information could be communicated more effectively? What kind of information would the public be receptive to?

"Decentralising" the information could free up space in the retail enviroment. Making it part of the packaging means that the consumer takes it home with them. There they will be able to assimilate the information at their leisure.

By purchasing an item from this range you are helping to support..



It is essential for a charity shop that stock is circulated within and between shops. Is it possible to utilise this to "take the show on the road" like the rag and bone men did to sell their wares?



the shopkeeper

The Shopkeeper plays a very important role within the charity shop. They may be responsible for selecting goods sold in the shop, the window displays and most importantly, for building a relationship with the consumer, which may not necessary happen in the confines of a conventional retail outlet. But what does the volunteer get from the experience? What more could be done to encourage and reward volunteers?



"... as if by magic, the shopkeeper appeared"





In the retail market understanding the consumer is very important. In outlets like Reckless Records and in the fictional High Fidelity, the shopkeeper identifies with the customers themselves. This may work successfully in specialist shops. Could this work in charity shops? Or might it alienate other potential customers?



consumer motivations

"My favourite charity shops are the ones where you can have a good rummage."

consumer
motivation

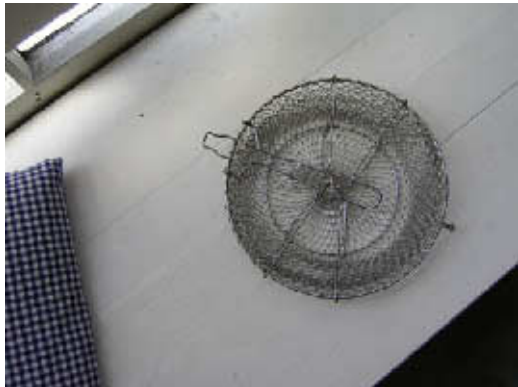
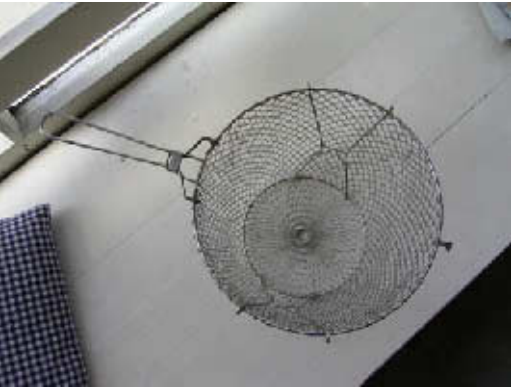


donor
motivation

"I drop my donations into the charity shop closest to my house"



artifact museum

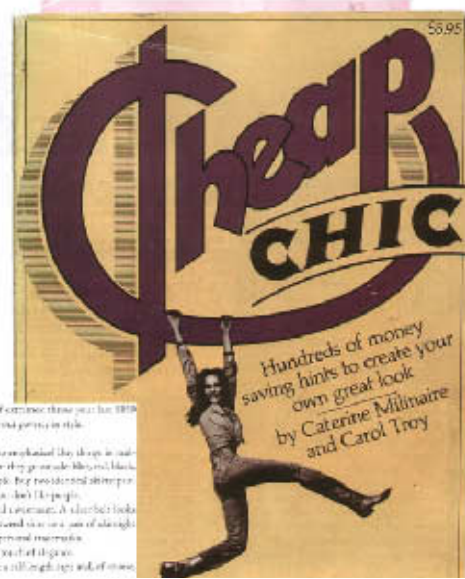


People go to charity shops for different reasons. For some it is to buy cheap items, for others it is to find something different, something that no-one else may have. Some people also stumble across articles which may be an inspiration to their work.

What role does the charity shop play as an artifact or social museum?

opening worlds

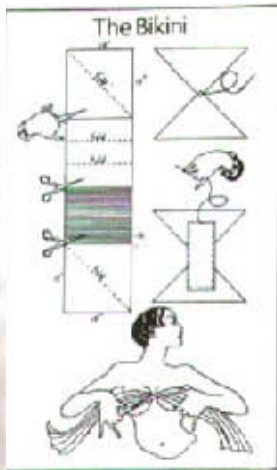
New ways to reach new audiences
& sustain current ones?



No.1 mini	No.2 sarong	No.3 skirt	No.4 bikini
summer series			

traid secrets

Price £1 or
50p with materials purchased here



Traid would like
to share with
you some top
tips for
customising
clothes.
Just add your
own personality.



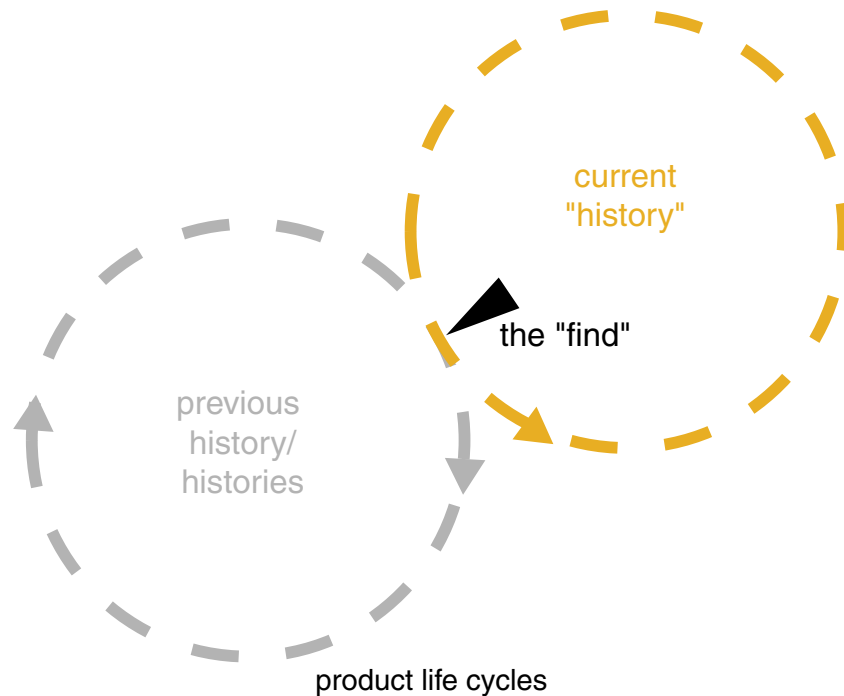
on sale in all
good charity shops*

* all profits go to charity

the find

Products purchased in a charity shop often have a story associated with the actual purchase. This is different from most conventional retail experiences. They are often deemed "a find". It is not just about buying something, it is about *discovering* something. What part does the randomness of items in a charity shop play in the psychology of the consumption experience?

how are meanings attributed to the product?



This book
belongs to

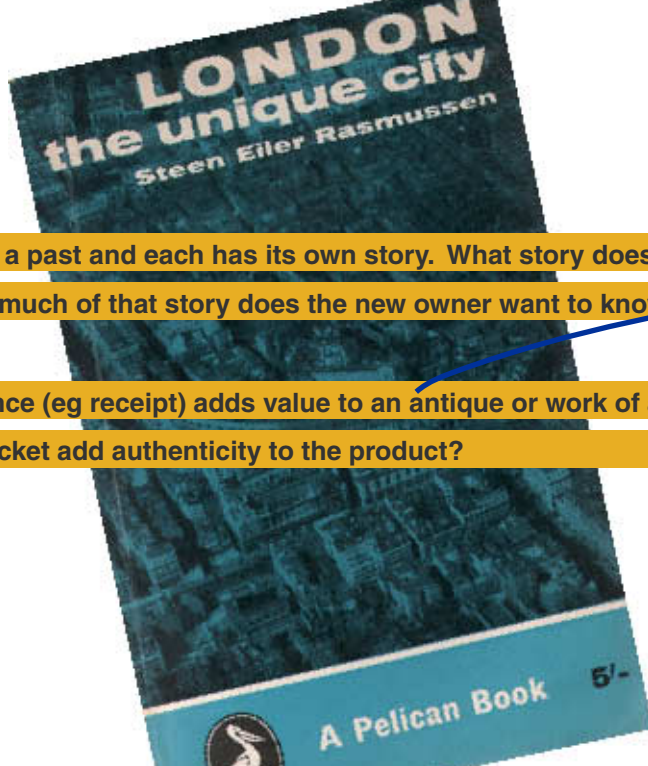
MARINA COATH
OF THE A.S. Club

Voyeuristic?

Can the provenance say too much?



the story



Every product has a past and each has its own story. What story does it have to tell? How much of that story does the new owner want to know?

Just as a provenance (eg receipt) adds value to an antique or work of art, does this 8^D bus ticket add authenticity to the product?

LONDON: THE UNIQUE CITY

and sensible man, who has used his eyes well when travelling and who now puts down a series of practical and aesthetic details which he recommends as suitable for London. It is characteristic of his reasoning that there is not the slightest explanation of the great lines of the plan itself but plenty of indications how it ought to be carried out in details right down to paving, arrangements of waste-pipes and gutters, and decoration of town-gates. With regard to the aesthetic of the plan of streets he says:

In the disposition of the streets due consideration should be had, what are complaint headings for, and therefore not to pass through the city all in one line without varieties, useful breakings, and enlargements into piazzas or complaint distensions, which ought to be built exactly uniform, strong, and with beautiful fronts. Nor should these be all of them be square, but some of them oblong, circular, and oval figures, for their better grace and capacity. I would allow none of the principal streets less than a hundred feet in breadth, nor any of the narrowest than thirty. . . .

His design shows a chessboard-plan in which he has introduced four diagonals connecting the main entrances to the town and wherein the most important junctions take the form of what he calls piazzas. According to his description markets were to be held there. These squares might also be used for 'parking' and he proposed their embellishment by fountains. The plan, of which the blocks were too large and the intersections of the streets bad, was unsatisfactory, and Evelyn, who could not give up his idea, has twice tried to improve it by introducing a more sensible scale and by basing it more on the plan of the old London. But he kept the diagonal streets which mercilessly intersected the chessboard-plan. This way of forming a town-plan which - just like Wren's - is closely related to contemporary plans for forests and gardens was really quite revolutionary and has apparently influenced L'Enfant's plan for Washington (1791).

Robert Hooke like Wren was a mathematician. His plan has been lost. But it is known to have been a very regular

TOWN-PLANNING SCHEMES IN 1666

gridiron plan. A Dutchman, who made an engraving of the Great Fire, has in one corner inserted what he calls 'a new model for the rebuilding of the city London, destroyed by fire'. It is quite possible that it is Hooke's.



plan (7). From *A View of the Fire*, by Dutchman

A plan deserves more attention than it had. In contrast to Wren's and Evelyn's only a description of a large printed September 1666. It gives directions as telling out of the area devastated by the fire. Hooke had worked at the streets and had let it as he thought they could without considering how they would be parcelled out (it would always be possible as in old London to divide up by alleys blocks that proved too large). Knight on the contrary designed the whole town divided up in long, narrow blocks which easily could be parcelled out without waste. First, he places two 60-feet-broad main streets running from west to east parallel with the river. Then he inserts six cross streets of the same width at a right angle to the river. Each large block arising between these main streets is divided up by secondary streets only 30 feet broad, ten parallel with the river and one at a right angle to it. This will produce blocks of an average size of 500 feet by 70 feet, just big enough to allow two rows of

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Limegrass would like to thank all the contributors to the workshop for their generous support.

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Limegrass would also like to thank Hannah Ball for her help editing the video interviews.

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The issues that emerged from the workshop are very widespread and are not intended to be fully resolved. By presenting these ideas as a scrapbook, it is hoped that this format will capture the dynamics of the workshop and also be used as a source of inspiration.

One of the aims of the workshops is to get people thinking about things in different ways. In some of the areas uncovered by the research, there may be commercial value in pursuing further.

The workshop has questioned what a charity shop of the future could be. It has suggested many permutations it could change into, but is there any need for the charity shop to change? Mainstream retail has had to reinvent itself many times in keeping with changes in consumerism. There is no

reason why an alternative retail space should be exempt from it.

One thing that emerged strongly from the session was that, although change can be a positive, maintaining the "alternative" aspect of the charity shop is considered very important. Many lessons may be learnt from mainstream retailing, but perhaps care needs to be taken not to alienate the existing customer base who find this aspect an appealing factor.