

## The History of Littering



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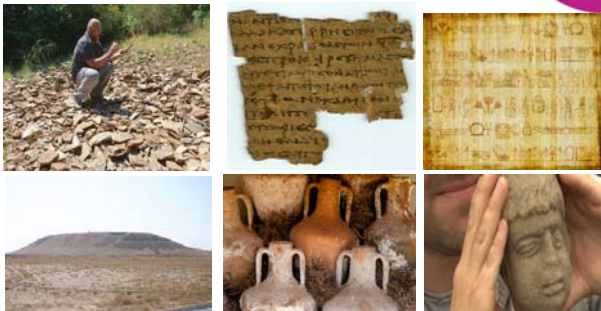
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## Is it litter or an historical treasure?



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## The background of Littering



- Litter – a 'bed'
- Applied to animals straw scattered around.
- Litter one of key elements contributing to the Great Fire of London 1666.
- Sweeping of streets recognised profession throughout history.
- Money could be made by collecting dust and rubbish from domestic properties.
- Litter was seen as a resource



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## When and why did litter and littering become a problem?



- Traced back to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when greater levels of consumerism led to increased waste production.
- The need for more and better goods meant lifespan of products were reduced and therefore quickly became obsolete.
- 1950's saw the coining of the phrase 'the throwaway society'
- Argument that littering is a class phenomena caused by working classes new wealth and ability to travel but unused to the ways of the countryside and civic well-being of towns.
- Communist even saw littering as symbolically attacking capitalism by defiling the private property of the wealthy.

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## Litter – Lazy vandalism or a deliberate act of resistance to private property



- *'A place dedicated to the people (parks) has not really passed into the possession and usufruct (right to enjoy other people's property) of the people unless they are allowed to do exactly as they please in it..... To leave behind them any rubbish which they are too lazy to conceal or take home with them'*
- One landowner complained, when a family was asked to remove litter from a picnic they had held on his land, the father replied, *"if you can afford a place like this, you can afford to have somebody pick up the mess"*
- The Times 1925



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## Key Actions Taken To Address Littering



- **The Litter Act** (1958), fines of £10 introduced to abate the nuisance of litter
- **Environmental Protection Act** (1990) made it a criminal offence to deposit or leave litter in a public place - £2500 maximum fine.
- **Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act** (2005) extended enforcement powers to include dog fouling, fly-tipping and graffiti. Included businesses, private land owners, occupiers and managers of land to recognise their responsibility for maintaining the quality of the local environment.
- Under CNEA (2005), both duty bodies and citizens have rights to take legal actions to have areas cleaned up.
- Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (England only) guidance on how to carry out enforcement powers - regularly updated.
- 2017 England developed first National Litter Strategy



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## Behavioural Change



- First national clean up 1951 for The Festival of Britain
- 1954 Keep Britain Tidy formed by the Women's Institute
- National development of long-running behavioural change campaigns
- Are they making a difference 65 years on?

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## Getting Tough – Litter Enforcement



- 1990 On the spot fines for littering introduced.
- 64,000 littering fines were issued by covert patrols in England in 2012 year, a 90-fold increase in 15 years.
- Private enforcement increasingly popular with councils
- Damned if you do , damned if you don't!
- New litter strategy increased fines up to £150.
- No apologies as the only people it affects are those dropping litter!



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## Is Litter Only a UK Phenomena?







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**Not Just The UK Then?** 



**HEY TOSSER!**  
It's a dirty look

You may think it doesn't matter, but every bit of litter gets noticed. Don't be a tosser, put it in the bin.

 [apsa.nsw.gov.au/11111111](http://apsa.nsw.gov.au/11111111)

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**The staggering facts** 

**2.12 Billion Tons**  
...of waste Globally each year

**99 percent of the stuff we buy is trashed within 6 months...**



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**The Unthinkable needs to be thought about** 

**BY 2050, SCIENTISTS PREDICT THAT OCEANS WILL HOLD MORE PLASTIC THAN FISH**



**OCEANS WILL HAVE**

By 2025: 1 tonne of plastic for 3 tonnes of fish	By 2050: 1 tonne of plastic for 1 tonne of fish
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## Littering – one planet is not enough



- 20,000 trackable objects classed as debris.
- These include old satellites and used rocket stages as well as fragments from disintegration, erosion, and collisions of man made objects.
- 100 million pieces of orbital debris measuring smaller than 0.4in (1cm) surrounding Earth.



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## NASA's \$400 Littering Ticket For Skylab debris in Australia



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## Is it possible to prevent littering?



- If it is simply 'a habit' – it can be broken through behavioural and enforcement actions.
- Remove the excuses – zero tolerance.
- It has been shown the 'broken window' syndrome can be reversed if areas can be regenerated.
- Reduce the reliance on street cleaning services to remove a publically created problem – civic responsibility.
- Austerity has reduced ability to provide the same level of cleansing.

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## 'The crux of the matter'



**Litter is the experience of negativity – 'when the positive order on which contemporary life is dependant displays its hidden existence'**

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## The 'Zero Waste Society'



- Takeaway society usually means throw away society. Littering can be seen as a by-product of this.
- Civic involvement and the Blue Planet effect will not be enough on their own.
- Litter is at the end of a process that involves production, consumption and disposal.
- Litter needs to be tackled at source by preventing the opportunities to create it.

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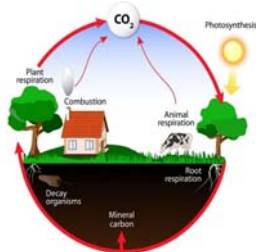
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## Lessons from the natural world



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## Beginning the process



- **Fiscal penalties** - plastic taxes (bottles, single use cutlery, drinking straws, takeaway packaging, fruit netting, cling film, crisp packets and plastic wrap).
- **Greater sustainability in product design** - end of life vehicle initiative
- **Better waste processing/ higher quality recyclables** – China’s ‘Operation Green Fence’ impact
- **Increased enforcement** – higher fines imposed on offenders
- **Greater public awareness /involvement/responsibility** for preventing littering and other negative environmental behaviours.
- **Improved public services** – recycling and street cleansing

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## The truth of the matter is.....



**“We are the first generation to know we are destroying our planet and the last one that can do anything about it.”**



**Tanya Steel WWF UK Chief Executive**

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## Contact details



**Wayne Priestley, Principal Advisor**

**Email: [wpriestley@apse.org.uk](mailto:wpriestley@apse.org.uk)**



Association for Public Service Excellence  
2nd Floor Washbrook House, Lancasterian Office Centre,  
Talbot Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M32 0FP  
Telephone: 0161 772 1810  
web: [www.apse.org.uk](http://www.apse.org.uk)

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