

Tarefa 12 professor Monster

Dirty Britain

Before the grass has thickened on the roadside verges and leaves have started growing on the trees is a perfect time to look around and see just how dirty Britain has become. The pavements are stained with chewing gum that has been spat out and the gutters are full of discarded fast food cartons. Years ago I remember travelling abroad and being saddened by the plastic bags, discarded bottles and soiled nappies at the edge of every road. Nowadays, Britain seems to look at least as bad. What has gone wrong?

The problem is that the rubbish created by our increasingly mobile lives lasts a lot longer than before. If it is not cleared up and properly thrown away, it stays in the undergrowth for years; a semi-permanent reminder of what a tatty little country we have now.

Firstly, it is estimated that 10 billion plastic bags have been given to shoppers. These will take anything from 100 to 1,000 years to rot. However, it is not as if there is no solution to this. A few years ago, the Irish government introduced a tax on non-recyclable carrier bags and in three months reduced their use by 90%. When he was a minister, Michael Meacher attempted to introduce a similar arrangement in Britain. The plastics industry protested, of course. However, they need not have bothered; the idea was killed before it could draw breath, leaving supermarkets free to give away plastic bags.

What is clearly necessary right now is some sort of combined initiative, both individual and collective, before it is too late. The alternative is to continue sliding downhill until we have a country that looks like a vast municipal rubbish tip. We may well be at the tipping point. Yet we know that people respond to their environment. If things around them are clean and tidy, people behave cleanly and tidily. If they are surrounded by squalor, they behave squalidly. Now, much of Britain looks pretty squalid. What will it look like in five years?

01. The writer says that it is a good time to see Britain before the trees have leaves because

- a. Britain looks perfect.
- b. you can see Britain at its dirtiest.
- c. you can see how dirty Britain is now.
- d. the grass has thickened on the verges.

02. According to the writer, things used to be

- a. worse abroad.
- b. the same abroad.
- c. better abroad.
- d. worse, but now things are better abroad.

03. For the writer, the problem is that

- a. rubbish is not cleared up.
- b. rubbish last longer than it used to.
- c. our society is increasingly mobile.
- d. Britain is a tatty country.

04. Michael Meacher

- a. followed the Irish example with a tax on plastic bags.
- b. tried to follow the Irish example with a tax on plastic bags.
- c. made no attempt to follow the Irish example with a tax on plastic bags.
- d. had problems with the plastics industry who weren't bothered about the tax.

05. The writer thinks

- a. it is too late to do anything.
- b. we are at the tipping point.
- c. there is no alternative.
- d. we need to work together to solve the problem.

06. The writer thinks that

- a. people are squalid.
- b. people behave according to what they see around them.
- c. people are clean and tidy.
- d. people are like a vast municipal rubbish tip.