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Responsibility Report  
2023 Updates



“ Our focus is to bring you transparency and showcase our authenticity. ”

I am delighted to introduce you to our RUSKIN 2023 Responsibility Report. Last year, we took the time to craft a full annual report exploring our responsibility and sustainability practices. This covered a deep-dive into our products, our planet and our people, detailing not only where our progress sat in that precise moment, but also our future direction of travel. We were immensely proud of its positive reception: our focus is to bring you transparency and showcase our authenticity. As such, we have decided to provide you with a brief update to present further progress we have made and new processes we've implemented over the past 12 months.

As ever, this is an ongoing journey. It is our responsibility as a business to continue to treading softly, hold our values close, and provide you with the sort of true artisanal craftsmanship that we can be proud of.

— Alli Abdelal, Founder & Designer



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## 2023 UPDATES

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## SUPPLY JOURNEY

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Last year, we pledged to improve the visibility of the RUSKIN supply chain, so that we would be able to clearly present every step of our product journey to our customers, demonstrating how it connects all the way down to farm level.

To that end, we have now added the full traceability of both our leather and tweed ranges to our website. This includes detailed information about our raw materials, design concepts, manufacturing, testing, packaging and end-of-life processes.

We are delighted to provide our customers with transparency and accountability over how our supply chain functions. The RUSKIN product supply journey is readily available to explore on our website, under "Our Craft".

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## PACKAGING SOLUTIONS

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In 2022, we pledged to find a new local supplier for our dust-bags so that we could give back to our community. We are delighted to have implemented this: each RUSKIN bag is now packaged in a 100% natural cotton fabric dust-bag, handmade by an independent woman-owned business, Six Acre Meadow.

All of our packaging options are responsibly sourced and fully recyclable. Our mailer boxes are made in the UK out of 100% recycled cardboard.





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# RESPONSIBILITY REPORT

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# WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON...

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1

To continue to produce inclusive marketing collateral that is reflective of the diversity of the wider population. Our aim is to be respectful and considerate, and use our platform to tell stories that spread positive messages about equality and discuss topics related to diversity and identity.

2

Continue to work hard on building a community around our brand to bolster our brand messaging and share our ethos, while fostering authentic connections. Create momentum by sharing initiatives our brand is launching that hinge on our mission.

3

Continuing to showcase and spotlight the end-to-end supply chain process, particularly for our tweed products. We have made headway in this area with updates to our website, and we endeavour to increase the visibility of this information across all RUSKIN materials online and in print.

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**Responsibility Report**  
**2022 In Focus**



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# RESPONSIBILITY REPORT

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“ Transparency is the first step towards progress and innovation. ”

As I reflect on the past few years, I am immensely proud of what we have been able to achieve. We are a small yet mighty business, driven by a clear mission and collection of steadfast values. Our mission is to create a collection of bags that are contemporary in spirit and classic in technique, while innovating with a rare natural fibre to reimagine its potential.

For us, success is only attainable if we take great care to provide you with the highest quality, responsibly crafted products, while simultaneously protecting our people and our planet. We are pleased to share this report with you to provide an accessible overview and bring transparency to what is happening behind the scenes.

There is still plenty more work, learning and growth to come, and we are not perfect, but I believe transparency is the first step towards progress and innovation.

— Alli Abdelal, Founder & Designer







## SLOWING THE PACE

We believe in a quieter kind of luxury that intentionally slows the pace. We are patient. We believe that by working with the rhythms of artisanal production, we can respect the limitations of the environment and at the same time bring you the kind of exquisite, crafted design that we can be proud of.

# 3

### OUR THREE AIMS

- To create artisanal designs that last
- To protect traditional artisanal workmanship
- To keep our supply chain short and transparent

## DESIGN

We view the initial design stage as a call-to-action; a vital opportunity to find unique and innovative ways to create alternative solutions, which ultimately change the status quo of a fast-moving industry addicted to mass-produced, disposable goods.



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## OUR PRODUCT

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## PROVIDING A TRANSPARENT AND TRACEABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

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The RUSKIN collection was born out of a desire to create an innovative fabric that can be traced to its source and have a positive impact.

Our aim is to connect our supply chain all the way down to farm level, so that we understand conditions on the ground.

As our collection grows, we will continue to provide transparency around the sourcing and production of our materials.

Our approach is a collaborative process that allows us to remain in creative control and to establish grounded partnerships with all those in our value chain, from the Lake District to Yorkshire to Italy.



We recognise that the materials we use are finite resources and therefore need to be used sparingly and wisely. We have always placed great emphasis on traceability and we are actively involved in each step in the journey of our products to ensure that we are doing all we can to source responsibly.

We are pleased to have all of our tweed products accredited by the British Wool Board. As a British Wool manufacturing partner, each of our products have been professionally vetted throughout the entire supply chain to ensure they comply with the highest standards in manufacturing and contain a high British wool content.

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## OUR PRODUCT

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## RUSKIN TWEED

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Our tweed collection is woven from the wool of the rare, protected breed of Herdwick sheep that live and roam freely in the mountains of the English Lake District. Herdwicks are an endangered breed, with 95% concentrated in the Lake District in Cumbria. Our tweed has been carefully sourced and can be traced to just a handful of farms from the region.

Production and processing takes place in three mills in Yorkshire, who work proactively to reduce water usage and repurpose waste. Our raw wool is carefully cleaned and combed before being slowly spun into a fine worsted yarn. It is then sent to be woven and washed in natural soap and well water, drawn from below the mill, to shrink and interlock the fibres. Finally, our fabric is dried and pressed before being shipped out to Italy. The result is a high performing, low-impact fabric.

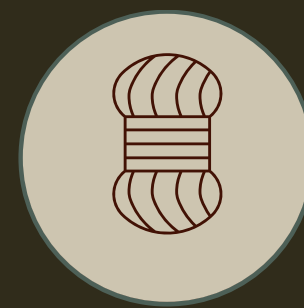


### NATURAL ELEMENTS

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Herdwick require only the natural elements to thrive. They are sheared annually in order to live comfortably and free of infection.

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### BRITISH WOOL BOARD

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Our wool is procured from selected wool growers who must comply with strict standards relating to land preservation and animal welfare.

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### HEALTH & WELFARE

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Minimal use of medication and healthcare products

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### LOW-IMPACT FABRIC

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Finished tweed is not dyed, treated or altered in any way.

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## OUR PRODUCT

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All of our leather is sourced from tanneries in Italy - considered gold-standard by the Leather Working Group - who are working to minimise their waste, particularly in relation to water, chemicals and power. Our supplier consistently achieves high environmental standards and reduces its use of resources, in accordance with the Leather Working Group Environmental Protocol. Since receiving this award, they have continued to reduce water and energy consumption, as well as increasing recovery and recycling activities.

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## RUSKIN LEATHER

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We make every effort to extend the lifecycle of our bags, and in turn reduce the impact on the environment. We provide a repair service at no additional cost so that any bag may be returned to our workshop in Italy. Our artisans will make every effort to restore each bag to as close to its original condition as possible.



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## OUR PLANET

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## WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

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### EXCESS

It is difficult to completely eradicate waste from any production process, however we are working hard to reduce unnecessary excess wherever possible. Leather tanning processes require water, energy and chemicals, which create discharges, waste and atmospheric emissions. However, these by-products are rich in proteins, amino acids and collagen molecules, which can be treated and used as raw materials in other sectors. This makes an effective contribution to recycling: 98.7% of waste produced at our leather supplier is recycled.

### LESS

Our fabric finishers require a consistent supply of water to wash, scour, dry and set our fabric. Their location in the Pennines means there is no shortage of the purest, softest water, but that has never been a reason to take it for granted. As such, they have devised an open-width scouring range, which allows our fabric to pass through continuously at its full width. This requires dramatically less water (10% of a traditional Dolly scouring machine), therefore less energy to heat it and less soap is needed. A strict recycling policy reduces waste and minimises packaging to move closer to their aim of zero waste to landfill.

### EXCHANGE

Generating steam is vital to our fabric-finishing processes, and heating water to boiling point consumes a lot of energy. Consequently, our mills have developed a heat-exchange system to capture heat before it escapes through the chimney, reusing it to heat all the water that we use for washing and scouring. Combined with their full-width scour machine, this technology means we use up to five times less water and energy than less advanced systems.

### INNOVATE

Ongoing development of drying technology helps us to minimise energy used in drying scoured or dyed fabrics, ensuring we save energy with every single metre of fabric we dry. Our finishers are ISO 14001 certified and everyone in the company is committed to maintaining our EMS (Environmental Management System) to address the use of raw materials, water, energy and waste.

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## OUR PLANET

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### 01

The British wool we use is 100% natural and renewable, as Herdwick sheep grow a new fleece each year. The wool is biodegradable and will naturally return to the ground through a biological process, leaving no trace within 2-5 years. Similarly, the abundant natural resources that surround our mills are critical to the processes that help us produce fabric finishes of an extremely high quality.

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## RENEWABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE MATERIALS

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### 02

Energy is integral to our production processes; we deliberately opt for renewable sources wherever possible. Our mills in Huddersfield have 390 solar panels fitted to their roofs to harness power from the sun. This allows us to generate sufficient electricity to significantly lessen the load on the grid. At times of reduced usage, we are able to send the excess electricity back to the grid, completing the circle of minimising energy use, thereby reducing our environmental impact.

### 03

We are committed to using renewable packaging solutions. All of our Direct-to-Consumer packaging and tape is made from recycled paper and card and we exclusively use cardboard shipping boxes which are fully recyclable at end use. All our bags are shipped with dust-bags that are intended to prolong the life-cycle of the product and to be reused. We have eliminated single-use plastic packaging and collateral containing plastics.

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## OUR PEOPLE

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## EMBRACING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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We are fully aware of the importance of building a diverse workforce that celebrates the strengths and the potential in each individual. We have the greatest respect for our employees and all those in our value chain who bring unique insights, perspectives and experience to our company. This approach pays off as we build a strong bond within our team that pushes the needle on creativity, innovation and productivity.

- We are a female-founded business
- We are a living-wage employer
- Three-quarters of our head-office staff are people of colour
- Our workforce is fully remote, which improves accessibility for employees with disabilities, caring responsibilities, or any other personal circumstances that would make in-office work particularly challenging
  - We make a conscious effort to support other female-led businesses, which can be seen through our selection of photographers, as well as designers for installations in our Oxford studio

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## PRESERVING TRADITIONAL CRAFT

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Our standards for quality mean that each RUSKIN bag is crafted by hand by a small team of artisan craftsmen and women from a workshop in Rome, Italy. Our artisans bring a whole lifetime of knowledge, experience and material intelligence to each bag that is created. This means that each bag is a completely unique piece, drawing upon years of experience in materials, processes, and applications in research and development.







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## 2022 FOCUSES

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### B-CORP ACCREDITATION

Commence our application to become a certified B Corporation. B-Corp companies are leaders in the global movement for an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative economy. This certification is unique in its ability to measure a company's entire social and environmental impact, and we hope to implement as many initiatives as possible in order to achieve this accreditation.

### PACKAGING SOLUTIONS

Continue to identify sustainable packaging solutions to extend the life cycle of our bags that reduces waste and explores circular economy opportunities. We also aim to find a new supplier for our dust-bags in order to give back to our local community and independent businesses.



### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Systematically integrate inclusive practices in company policies and marketing activities to continue to reflect the diversity of our consumer base.

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## IN CONCLUSION...

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“ We have a collective responsibility to do everything we can to combat the ongoing climate crisis, making decisions that will support a sustainable future. Whilst it is important to pause, to reflect and celebrate our progress thus far, we recognise that we must not lose momentum as we continue driving to create a company we can be proud of and one that we are truly able to sustain.

The pledges in this report form the roadmap against which we will hold ourselves accountable. We will strive to continue building responsibility reports to track our progress annually, as well as offering you transparency into our processes and practices. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey ahead.

— *Alli Abdelal, Founder & Designer*



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## SOURCES

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Environmental Overview  
W.T. Johnson & Sons

Gruppo Mastrotto  
2022 Sustainability Report

Laxtons

Leather Working  
Group ESG  
certification

LEATHER WORKING GROUP ESG CERTIFICATION IS THE MOST CREDIBLE AND COMPREHENSIVE AUDIT OF LEATHER MANUFACTURERS AVAILABLE TODAY. THE AUDIT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED OVER 15 YEARS IN COLLABORATION WITH BRANDS, LEATHER MANUFACTURERS, AND NGOS, AND COVERS CRITICAL AREAS OF LEATHER MANUFACTURING TO DRIVE COMPLIANCE WITH APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND GOVERNANCE.



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## CONTACT

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