



Who am I

Graduated and fully paid up member of The School of Life, left school at 16 and travelled across Europe spending a year in Italy, then onto Canada. Matured a little and went to college to study Business and Finance followed by a correspondence Law degree.

I have had an array of work experiences, anything to pay the bills or for the next adventure. From painting and decorating to working in a pub, waitressing both in a cocktail bar and silver service. Travel consultant, legal administrator, estate agent, market trader, youth worker, event management, funding co-ordinator, project management and Landscape Gardener - design, build and maintenance.

Adventure, community and environmental Expeditions to Belize and Ghana where I was the Deputy Expedition Leader with Raleigh International. Spent six months sailing 26ft yacht around the UK and 5 months driving a 1968 VW camper van around Europe with my 4 year old as companion.

2020 proprietor of Emma's Soap and Mum to Megan



Emma's Soap 10th Birthday

How did it all start:

People always ask me 'Why do you make soap?' I reply with the same answer, necessity! I just could not find a product that I was happy to use on my own and my daughters skin.

There were many triggers to establishing Emma's Soap. I always wanted to be self employed, like most to have the perfect job that was stimulating and fun. It was my ambition to create a product and successfully distribute that product without impacting on the environment, whilst making a living. A product that was necessary, useful, different.



To be the boss, the designer, drive the business to success, using all my skills from marketing to accounts. The ultimate question I always had was: "Am I capable?"

The initial inspiration:

It all started when I was having coffee with friends, following a bereavement of a mutual friend we started looking at the ingredients of several household cleaning products.



A Visit from MI5

With my new book on how to make soap I went about sourcing materials, which proved difficult, learning about oils, the different grades from extra virgin to pomace, extraction and bleaching, quality and purpose. I had no idea that Sodium Hydroxide was Caustic Soda!

The method to make soap looked pretty frightening to, it was chemistry not ideal for the family kitchen with a 4 year old running around. Having finally sourced the said Sodium Hydroxide on line, my ingredients and book sat on top of the fridge, whilst I ponder the experiment and turn to main job being a mum.

One sunny morning in our sleepy coastal village in Devon I was entertaining a neighbour who's son was the same age as Megan, we were enjoying coffee and the children were having fun playing when came a knock at the door, two officers, demanding to come in, they showed me their badges they were from MI5 counter intelligence security agency! MI5 - thoughts were racing through my mind, what had I done to warrant such a visit? I did not want would not let them in, the officers both female politely but firmly insisted on coming in despite my reluctance and objections, it was not convenient and that I was happy to step outside.

Which soon led to analysing the ingredients on well-known brands in most bathrooms. The information we were discovering was frightening which flare up many more question and subsequent research. At the time I was pregnant and I soon realised that what ever I was putting on my skin, my semi porous skin was getting into my blood stream and that of my unborn child.

I decide to make a personal change, it soon became apparent that to do this was really difficult, I looked at hundreds of natural alternative products, I did not want a cupboard full of lotions and potions, put this on for that, then that to remove this. I just wanted a bar of soap, that you can wash your hands, face, hair, the entire body even your clothes. A bar of soap that would not dry your skin, but instead do its job whilst nourishing the skin. I could not find a truly honest chemical free, ecological, environmental bar of soap.

Undeterred and being a DIYer, I found a book on how to make soap, it was a start.

Your whole body functions more smoothly when your skin doesn't have to fight to perform its natural function. Our skin holds our body together, shielding us from the outside world. It is our protective covering, our first barrier to fight illness and disease, a passage way to our blood stream - why would you put a chemically laden product on it?



Palm Oil

I was invited to a talk at the Schumacher college, in Dartington. The speaker Gunter Pauli delivering a lecturing on his book, The Blue Economy, the purpose to stimulate

In my cottage, badges were shown again with a full explanation of their purpose, they were part of counter terrorism, a stream of very serious questions followed.

Demanding to know what I was doing with Sodium Hydroxide, at which point I remembered my new project and got really excited about it. I began telling the officers that I was about to embark on making soap, I soon retrieved the book and was full of enthusiasm telling what my intentions were and which recipe I plan to try first. The atmosphere in the room soon changed and the officers became much more relaxed and even began smiling. I was not a terrorist. It turns out I had bought Sodium Hydroxide from an organisation that was making bombs, my purchase had been traced consequently MI5 had been watching me and wished to determine if I was part of the terrorist organisation they were tracking.

The officers found the entire situation quite funny, I naturally was a little shocked, actually gobsmacked that I was a suspected terrorist, as was my guest. We all ended up laughing and they wished me well on my new venture explaining to me that Sodium Hydroxide was in fact caustic soda and I could purchase it from a hardware shop.

I started making soap, mixing batches every other day, trying different recipes, mostly failing, terribly when the next trigger happened.

entrepreneurship and sustainability.

The chairman gave an introduction and summarised by handing over the audience to Gunter stating 'Your Ecover audience' which we were, we were all from Totnes and the surround area, like minded environmentalist who just would not be using chemical laden brands to do their washing up.

Gunter's response was "I hope not", jaws dropped. The explanation followed, Gunter who was 50% shareholder, chairman and CEO of Ecover, went on holiday to Borneo and was horrified at the mass destruction caused by Palm oil plantations. Palm oil is used in a myriad of products from cosmetics, processed foods to bio fuel and especially soap. Ecover uses Palm Oil and Gunter wanted to change that, he found a waste product from the sugar



cane industry that could achieve the same goal that Palm oil did in the Ecover products, but the other shareholders deemed the project too expensive. Gunter left Ecover.

This was inspiring, having relaunched a company and built it to great success he walked away on principle!

I had been trying to avoid Palm oil, this was no easy task back in 2010 as often this oil was labeled as vegetable oil (it was not until 2015 that it became a legal requirement to state Palm oil)

For the record in my opinion there is no such thing as sustainable Palm oil

I applaud the movement to establish sustainable Palm Oil. My research has led me to the opinion that there is still much work to be done to make this credible and provide a transparent Material Identity Scheme (MIC)



The next phase 8 months of experiments

I spent eight months experimenting with oils and butters, perfecting a recipe by adding and deducting ingredients adjusting percentages. Then calculating the saponification rates of each oil minus deductions for the lye formula. Cold processed soap takes 28 days to cure before you can use it on your skin so detail notes on each batch were essential.

Finally I had a bar of soap that I was happy with, I gave some to family and friends and they kept asking for more! Did I have a product that could be marketed and sold?



Set up in 2004 to establish clear ethical and ecological standards for producing palm oil, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is currently the largest sustainability- focused organisation within the palm oil sector.

However its standards do not ban deforestation or destruction of peat lands for the development of oil palm plantations. Plantations need to meet the criteria of being well-managed with good environmental, social and economic standards. RSPO set a date!

All plantations pre-2005 were exempt.

Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) comes from plantations that were established on land cleared before 2005!

New plantations are allowed to remove forest as long as the land is not deemed "high-value conservation forest." Each member country can interpret "high value" based on its unique situation, basically subject to personal opinion.

Furthermore, supply chain model is used for CSPO. 'Mass Balance' is also allowed which is the mixing of certified and non-certified palm oil in a controlled environment, ensuring that the volume of certified palm outputs never exceed the certified inputs!

Most, actually all the recipe in my book on how to make soap contained Vegetable oil which turned out to be a blanket name for Palm oil.

I had to design my own recipe. The book had become redundant, it taught me the methodology now I need to learn the chemistry!

