

Have you heard about the quiet revolution?



By **VICKI OWEN**

IT IS a menace of modern life, from the annoying tinny sound escaping someone else's headphones when you are sitting on a bus to the buzz of an extractor fan when you want a relaxing bath.

But now a quiet revolution is under way, spearheaded by a mark to recognise and promote quiet products – from kettles, to planes, vacuum cleaners and cars.

Already many companies are adopting the Quiet Mark – a purple Q of approval awarded to manufacturers that incorporate 'quiet' into their designs – and in March the not-for-profit trading arm of the Noise Abatement Society will showcase a Quiet House at the Ideal Home Show.

Former actress Poppy Elliott, founder of Quiet Mark, said: 'We hope that by increasing awareness of brilliant quiet products we will boost demand for them and encourage more manufacturers to incorporate low-noise technology as standard practice into their designs, to benefit everyone – people buying the products, their family and their neighbours, as well as industry.'

Quiet Mark has 40 global brands signed up, including Samsung, Mitsubishi and Philips and has been endorsed by the Department for Environment. Firms of all sizes have products tested by the Association of Noise Consultants and pay to list their products in the Quiet Mark Directory at quietmark.com. The website also runs a monthly competition where many of the products can be won.

These range from dishwashers and washing machines to tumble dryers, paper shredders, kettles, juicers, food blenders and mixers. There are scooters, extractor fans, air-conditioning, garden tools, power tools, cooker hoods, sound-barriers, noise-cancellation headphones and vehicle reversing alarms.

Lexus, which is promoting its own 'Quiet Revolution' – an advertising campaign for its CT 200h hybrid car – is a partner of Quiet Mark, which expects to announce Ideal Home Show partners and Govern-

From drums to hairdryers – manufacturers are making a noise about products that don't disturb

ment endorsement later this month.

Poppy Elliott's grandfather, John Connell, set up the Noise Abatement Society after he became increasingly frustrated with the level of noise after the Second World War – 'everything from technology and things like dustbin lids being clattered in the morning,' Poppy said.

At the time there were no regulations to recognise noise as pollution. He went on to set up the Noise Abatement Society in 1959.

He campaigned for less noise in the Sixties and managed to get the first Noise Abatement Act through Parliament in 1959 after knocking on the Aviation Minister's door at 3am to show him, with a pack of journalists standing behind him, what it felt like to be woken up by flights through the night. The Noise Abatement Society is now run by his daughter, Gloria Elliott, mother of Poppy.

Poppy said: 'We have some great new Quiet Mark award winners for 2013. Yamaha have just been awarded Quiet Mark across the whole of their new range of "silent" electronic instruments – for 2013, including pianos, drums, guitars, trumpets and violins. This range goes really well with our Love Your Neighbours campaign, so you can play your drums all night and won't wake the whole street.'

She added: 'The Rockwool home insulation company is also a new award winner, with a new product MultiRock – the fibres are made of rock – which also has sound insula-



SHHHHHHOPPING: Meditators publicise quiet rooms at Selfridges

tion properties to keep your noise in and the neighbours' noise out.'

The Corinthia Hotel London in Whitehall was given an award for designing 'peace and quiet in the heart of the capital's buzz' while on a slightly smaller scale, London-based hairdresser Trevor Sorbie is trying to 'soundscape' his salons with more insulation, quieter air conditioning and hair dryers.

Poppy Elliott said the quietest tumble dryer was AEG's Sensidry 7, 8 and 9 series, which also has an 'extra silent cycle'.

One small firm to have benefited is Quiet PC in Malton, North Yorkshire. Founder Glenn Garrett says he would not have been able to afford to test the noise levels of his PCs without Quiet Mark.

He said: 'I would have had to pay to use university resources. Instead

I sent my products to Quiet Mark to be tested and after winning the Quiet Mark, paid to be listed.'

Other Quiet Mark-approved products include Philips Wake-up Lights, which wake people up with bird song and light designed to imitate the sun instead of alarm bells, Ecodan air conditioning, EnviroVent extractor fans and Magimix food processors.

Meanwhile, store group Selfridges is running a 'No Noise' campaign, a concept that it says was thought up by founder Henry Gordon Selfridge in 1909.

The campaign started on January 7 and will run until the end of February. Outlets in London, Manchester and Birmingham feature silent shopping areas, where customers have to take off their shoes and hand over their phones before entering.

SPEAKING OUT: Quiet Mark founder Poppy Elliott with a quiet hairdryer