

## 'The fresh air helped me think clearly'

**ANYA PEARSON, 41, came up with the idea for her sustainable and ethical clothing range, Frank & Faith, while walking on Ringstead beach in Dorset. She lives in nearby Dorchester with husband Mark, 34, a chartered accountant, and their two children, James, three, and Evie, one.**

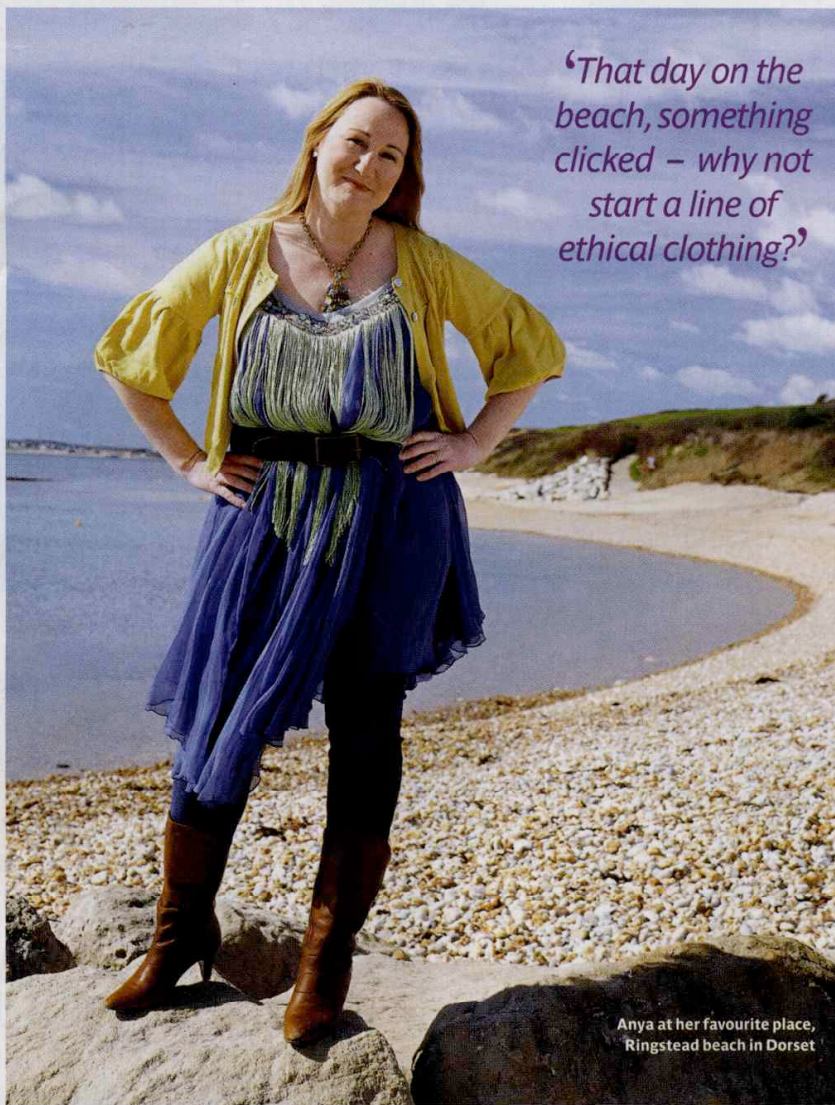
**T**his beach is the locals' best-kept secret. It really is stunning at any time of year – a sweeping bay, fringed with a mixture of shingle pebbles and sandy patches. Apart from a small wooden refreshment shack, all you see is sky, sand and sea. In the dead of winter, it's a great place to go for a bracing walk, to blow away the cobwebs and, in summer, a sandbank creates a warm, shallow lagoon for the children to play in, when the tide's out. Even in high season, when swarms of tourists invade most of Dorset, this beach is mainly populated by locals. I love the fact that you're more likely to bump into friends and neighbours here than hordes of holiday-makers. My business idea took shape at Ringstead in the bright sunshine of early summer, two years ago. We'd

come here with a group of friends and I was watching my son, James, playing happily in the sand with the other children. It was such a peaceful scene that it struck me how lucky I am. I thought, 'I don't want this to change – I want my children to be able to grow up here, and for their families to enjoy this place.'

I'd been looking for a new career path since moving from London in 2004, soon after James was born. I'd spent 20 years working in the fashion industry – my last job had been as knitwear buyer for Warehouse – but I'd never considered going it alone. That day on the beach, something clicked. In such natural surroundings, my next step seemed obvious: the fashion industry is a huge polluter, so why not start a line of fashionable clothing that wouldn't leave a huge carbon footprint? By the time we left the beach that evening, I had a plan.

There was a lot of groundwork to be done. I had to find an organic cotton yarn that could be knitted on knitting machines, and hunt down one of the last proper knitwear factories in Britain, but I managed it. I became the designer and buyer, while my husband gave his business acumen. We initially sold through Adili.com, the ethical product website, but now sell through our own website and various small boutiques. Our cotton is sourced and dyed in Europe, rather than Asia, and the cloth is made in Britain.

I still find myself drawn to the beach whenever I need to think. It's where I'm at my most relaxed. I'll buy a pint of prawns and a cold beer (or hot tea in winter), sit on a boulder and stare out to sea. The fresh air distils my thoughts and brings clarity, the colours and textures inspire my collections and the superb light means I can bring my colour samples down here to choose shades. Hopefully, what we do might go some way to ensuring others can continue to be inspired by beautiful spots, like Ringstead, for years to come. ■



*'That day on the beach, something clicked – why not start a line of ethical clothing?'*

Anya at her favourite place, Ringstead beach in Dorset