



The Bishop of London at the Holy Trinity balloon release in 2004.

Balloon's incredible four-year journey

By Julia Cooper

A balloon released by children at Holy Trinity School has arrived home after a four-year odyssey and a round trip spanning more than 1,000 miles.

The balloon was one of hundreds released by children in 2004 when the Bishop of London visited the school to mark the opening of the new library and office extension.

Each balloon had an identifying tag attached, and it was this tag that caught the eye of German primary school teacher Margarethe Scheider-Göte while on holiday on the island of Norderney in northern Germany in August.

She kindly posted the tag back to the school, writing (in perfect English): "When

I walked along the beach I noticed the label and a small piece of the balloon in the sand. Your balloon probably fell into the sea and was dropped on the beach by the waves."

Holy Trinity headteacher Tim Bowden said: "It arrived in its envelope full of sand: it is the genuine article."

Mr Bowden said the school intends to develop its international links and hopes this act of friendship from across the waves will lead to exciting new contacts with the Ms Scheider-Göte's school.

Fruity poems wanted

Local primary schools are being given the chance to take part in the Pound a Poem scheme to raise money for the Rays of Sunshine children's charity.

Children aged five to 11 can write poems on the theme of fruit and vegetables and pay £1 to enter the competition. The best poems are published in the Pound a Poem book, and there is a prize of a family holiday for the national winner, as well as prizes for the winners' schools. To find out more, visit www.poundapoem.co.uk.

New life for unwanted items

Recycling isn't just about newspapers and tin cans. Clothes, mobile phones and batteries are all welcome in your black box. Here's what happens to them when they leave your home.

Textiles and shoes

Shoes (tied together in pairs), unwanted clothes, blankets and materials can all be recycled.

1. Shoes, clothes and blankets are sent to D. Robinson & Son, in Northampton, for sorting.

2. After being separated into piles, many hundreds of items are sent to the developing world, depending on their condition.

Did you know? At least 50 per cent of the textiles we throw away are recyclable yet the proportion of textile wastes reused or recycled annually in the UK is only around 25 per cent.

Yellow Pages

1. Raven Recycling in Croydon receive regular deliveries of Yellow Pages collected in Barnet and manage the process of turning them into something useful.

2. They send the Yellow Pages

to a recycling plant where they are 'mashed' into pulp in a machine.

3. At the pulp stage the Yellow Pages are no longer yellow but are sold on as greyboard, used as a key component of that durable household wallpaper, woodchip.

Did you know? Millions of copies of the Yellow Pages get turned into animal bedding, cardboard, Jiffy bags, egg boxes and loft insulation. Some paper mills can now recycle them into newsprint.

Mobile phones

Before putting your mobile phone out for recycling, remember to remove the sim card and pop the phone in a plastic bag.

Mobiles are bagged up and sent to a recycling agency, Carphone Logistics in Wednesbury, where the component parts are broken down and environmentally disposed of. The phones contain a range of metals, plastics and several valuable components such as silver that can be extracted and re-used.

Did you know? Every time you put out a mobile phone to be

YOUNG ARCHER

What a belter

By Julia Cooper

Haris Bandey is a force to be reckoned with. The Holy Trinity School pupil has gained his black belt in karate at the age of just nine. Year 5 pupil Haris, who lives in the High Road, has become the youngest member of Friern Barnet's Makenki karate club to earn the prestigious belt.

Haris started practising karate when he was six and has risen through the ranks, gaining 11 belts before being presented with his black one back in July. He trains three times a week and won a bronze medal at the National Youth Championships last year. He said: "I love karate, I've made a lot of friends and am very proud to get my black belt."



Super karate kid Haris Bandey.

Citizens of the future

By Helen Drake

The history of School Councils stretches back approximately 40 years, but with citizenship now being taught as part of the curriculum, more emphasis is being placed on the role of School Councils in relation to "active citizenship".

School Council UK says: "Our vision is of young people as decision-makers, stakeholders and partners in their schools and communities". School Councils empower children to take responsibility and give them a voice in the running of their schools.

Discussing and deciding

School Councils are usually made up of representatives from each year group, elected by their classmates. Some have budgets, some don't. Members can raise topics for discussion themselves or on behalf of their classmates, or be asked for their opinions on matters raised by staff and governors.

In recent times at Martin Primary, council members have debated school dinners, toilets, travelling to school, rules for the school field and a new behaviour policy. At Holy Trinity School, council members have decided whether to spend school funds on days out or playground equipment, and have even helped to interview new teaching staff.

Innovative ideas

So what is it like to be a member of School Council? Shannon Walsh from Martin Primary explains: "I am one of the School's reps for Year 6. School Council does more than just make improvements. It is a chance to share ideas to make them better and to discuss things with our teachers. School Council have asked for new clubs like dancing, singing and drama. It has organised and helped the teachers try loads of new things. Huff and Puff, a time when children can get out playing equipment, was School Council's idea. We have even got an allotment on the field."

Maggie Driscoll, former Headteacher at Martin Primary, says: "I have always firmly believed in listening to the children's voice and have endeavoured to involve children in our decision-making processes at the school. The children come up with brilliant ideas, often better and more innovative than adults would have done."

For more information on School Councils go to www.schoolcouncils.org and for more information on the citizenship agenda go to www.teachernet.gov.uk

recycled, you raise money for the Tree House Trust, based in North London, an educational charity for children with severe autism. Each phone can be worth up to £9.

Engine oil

If draining your engine, put the oil in a sealed upright container and leave it next to your black box.

1. M2 Environmental Solutions transport engine oil from ECT Recycling's depot in Mill Hill to their depot in Cottenham, Cambridgeshire.

2. There, the oil is transferred into huge holding tanks. Samples go to a laboratory to establish what sort of oil it is and the best way to clean it.

3. The oil is cleaned, separated, shaken and 'cracked'. The 'cracking' is simply a result of the oil and any water residues separating. Finally, after these processes have been completed, only the 'good oil' is left. Mixed with kerosene, it becomes RFO: 'reclaimed fuel oil'. This can be sold to factories for their industrial heating systems.

Did you know? Oils and fuels are the most common cause of

water pollution. Just one litre of oil can contaminate one million litres of drinking water.

Batteries

To recycle household batteries, put them in a plastic bag inside your black box. Complete, undamaged car batteries should be left next to your box.

1. G and P Batteries, the UK's largest collector of waste batteries, takes your household and car batteries from ECT's recycling depot in Barnet to their factory in Willenhall in the West Midlands for re-processing.

2. Batteries are separated into those containing lead acid and those which don't. They are either recycled in a furnace or treated chemically. Each battery's chemistry requires a different recycling process to achieve the most effective recovery of material.

3. Recycling batteries allows the component parts to be removed and made into new batteries, or reused as raw material, such as scrap metal and plastic.

Did you know? It takes 50 times more energy to make a battery than it gives during its life.