



Is clothes collection in the pink?

By Ann Bronkhorst

Slim plastic bags bearing pink lettering and that familiar pink breast cancer ribbon are the latest version of 'charity' flyers coming through doors in East Finchley. Are they just as misleading?

It's perfectly legal, of course, to collect and sell people's unwanted clothing. In this case, the collector, Intersecond Ltd, claims to be donating money to a 'project' (not a charity) in Lithuania called Do Not Delay. The project is said to provide 'information and screenings for women in Lithuania to help prevent breast cancer.' All this sounds fine, but questions remain.

Making contact

Several organisations are involved: Azzara, registered in Lithuania as a company, and Intersecond Ltd, described as Azzara's 'appointed agent in the UK and Ireland'. Raimondas Biguzas, Intersecond's director pointed me in the direction of the website, www.nedelsk.lt, where I found quite persuasive information about the 'project' available in English.

Putting Intersecond into a search engine brings up a great deal of material. Comments, mostly negative, come from a huge number of regional newspapers and media in England, Ireland and Scotland. Individuals on various blogs and forums voice their suspicions that Intersecond is "simply a clothing scam".

This allegation has been vigorously denied by Intersecond and by Mr Biguzas. All clothes

they collect, he said, are sold to possible markets worldwide, mainly Poland, Ukraine, Georgia and Lithuania. He claimed bogus collectors, using the Intersecond name, had often stolen the donated clothes and at one stage "almost bankrupted us".

Clothes Aid, a British co-ordinating and advisory body for charities that handle clothes, told me that last year, in the Havering area, 8-10 Intersecond employees were found with a large quantity of clothing tonnage that was not legal. None spoke English. Police arrested them but could not secure a translator so released them.

Trading standards concerns

A senior trading standards officer in Scotland said: "Trading standards colleagues throughout the country have received enquiries with regard to Intersecond. The emotive wording (on the bags) reflects that of a charity but there is no registered charity number or any reference to charity work."

Here is the problem: if Intersecond does provide funding for a good cause in Lithuania, where is the independent proof? In the absence of hard facts, it may be wiser to donate our old clothes to a local charity shop.

Walk-on part for Dilly

By Sheila Armstrong

Tricia Gilmore's infectious laugh won her a part in local film maker Karen Fraser's latest film *Bel Air*, filmed this summer in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

Talking recently to *THE ARCHER* Karen said that she wrote the part especially for her neighbour Tricia. There was also a part for Dilly, Tricia's lively 15 year old Papillon dog, who made her acting debut. Filming was timed to coincide with the Aldeburgh one-day summer festival and also featured the locals who dress up and parade in the town on that day.

The film concerns a girl swimming out to sea to overcome a deep fear. At another level it explores the way that the elements, the air and the sea, support us and all life, hence the title *Bel Air*. Filming took place in the town, on the beach and five miles out to sea.

Karen hopes that there will be a premiere locally as well as in Aldeburgh later in the year,



Photo Sheila Armstrong

so watch this space. She can be contacted at zenfraser@google.com.

And although Dilly is new to filming her owner is not. Long time East Finchley resident Tricia has been a film extra and model for some years. She can be contacted on gilmore867@btinternet.com.

Song and dance

By Jane Fletcher

Finchley Children's Music Group is to accompany the world-class Rambert Dance Company for the London premiere of *Eternal Light* at Sadler's Wells from 11 November. The piece features a specially commissioned choral score by popular composer Howard Goodall.

Rambert will be accompanied by different choirs at each venue on its regional tour. The talented FCMG Senior Choir will perform alongside Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford, for the London dates.

This year marks FCMG's 50th anniversary, and their collaboration with Rambert is just one event in a year-long programme of celebrations. Over the past 50 years FCMG has given young people the opportunity to develop their musical skills and perform in some of London's major concert venues and abroad. The Group's most notable achievements include regular appearances at the BBC Proms and the City of London Festival. In July 2007 a choir of 40 youngsters was selected to back Madonna at the Live Earth concert.



The FCMG choir in action. Photo courtesy Simon Weir/FCMG

Young voices join the dance

Eternal Light is Artistic Director Mark Baldwin's second major work for Rambert. Live music has always been an integral part of the Rambert experience and the introduction of live choral music is an exciting new venture for the company. Rambert's creative team said they were attracted to FCMG's professionalism and vocal

quality.

One singer, Charlotte Senior, 12, said: "It's original music. I've never done anything like this before, so I'm very excited. Thinking about it gives me butterflies. I cannot wait to see the dancing."

Eternal Light is at Sadler's Wells from 11-15 November. For more information and to book tickets visit Rambert's website at www.rambert.org.uk.

Freecycle grows and grows

The Barnet version of the trading and swapping website Freecycle has celebrated its first birthday with 4,000 Barnet members - and rising.

Users post up their unwanted goods and items on the message board, in the hope that a fellow member will make a treasure from their trash. The aim of the site is to reduce the amount of rubbish society creates by giving unwanted items free to a new home. Some of the weird and wonderful postings on the Barnet site have included a 'wanted' post for a five-bedroom house in Hendon, which had to be rejected, and an offer of a single squash ball.

John Heyworth, the Freecycle Barnet founder, said: "It's quite amazing how successful the site has become. It started off with just a few friends, but the site is growing rapidly, with just over 175 new users a week. I'm really pleased with what we've managed to achieve so far, and I can't wait to see how next year's birthday will find us."

The non-profit organisation was initially founded in 2001 by Deron Beal in Tuscan, Arizona.

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