



## 10 Minutes For The Planet

### Recycling: a second life©

by Sarah Heath and Catherine Balter-Kendall

Stressed syllables are underlined and in **bold**.\*

Hello! I'm Sarah Heath and you're listening to 10 Minutes for the Planet on EnglishWaves.

If the word 'recycling' is starting to feel slightly **overused** and daily news of how human beings are **trashing** the world has **developed** into slightly irritating **white noise**, a few facts should be considered: statistics to **jolt** people out of their inaction and lethargy and into **decisive**, positive change.

When **figures** are converted into an easily **comprehensible** image, the shocking **scale** of the problem might be better understood: every two hours, the human race **discards** enough rubbish to fill the world's largest container ship. That equates to 12 such **container** ships every day, which totals 4,380 of such ships every year.

A new study by the World Bank has **calculated** that without **drastic** and urgent change, global waste will increase by 70% by the year 2050. This increase will largely be created by **urbanisation** and a **surge** in the world population.

The Royal Statistical Society voted in their annual International Statistic of the Year. Last year, it was revealed that 90.5% of all plastic has never been recycled. Since mass production **took off** around 60 years ago, 6.3 billion metric tons of plastic has been made – with so little having been recycled, where has all that plastic gone?

**Improvements** are being made through **government** policy changes and greater **awareness** but **the bottom line** is that we are all in this together. Recycling isn't **sexy** and takes effort but if every **household** took **responsibility** for recycling – or upcycling – as many items of rubbish as possible, a very large **dent** would **be put** in

**overused** (adj.) too often employed

**to trash** (vb.) to damage, to ruin

**white noise** (exp.) a continuous background noise we no longer pay attention to

**to jolt** (vb.) to push forcibly

**figures** (n.) statistics

**scale** (n.) size, extent

**to discard** (vb.) to throw away

**drastic** (adj.) extreme

**surge** (n.) a sudden large increase

**to take off** (phrasal vb.) to become very common, to boom

**awareness** (n.) knowledge

**the bottom line** (exp.) the most important fact in the situation

**sexy** (adj.) attractive

**household** (n.) family or group of people living in one unit

**to put a dent in** (exp.) to reduce slightly

trash which currently needs to be **buried**, burned or thrown into the sea.

Most people have heard of recycling bottles, cardboard and paper, and tins but less well known are batteries, reading glasses and inhalers. Wine bottles can **apparently** be turned into a whole **array** of 'new' things like lamps, vases and coat hooks. Creative types have **turned** grand pianos **into** bookshelves and garden fountains. One very **determined** ecologist transformed a 747 jet engine into a conference table!

However, there are smaller more **manageable** things which can be very easily **achieved** at home which, if everyone participated, could make a considerable difference. For example, recycling old crayons: a scheme in California called The Crayon **Initiative** accepts broken and old crayons to **melt down** and make new ones which they then send to children's hospitals.

A charitable organisation in Japan collects old **dentures**. They remove the metal, including gold and silver, from these **artificial** teeth which can then be sold on to be melted down. To date, the charity has raised over \$250,000 all of which has been donated to UNICEF.

The One World Running fitness awareness program collects old but still useable trainers and sends them to Africa and Nike's-Reuse-a-Shoe **campaign** recycles all old sports shoes and uses the materials to make sports **surfaces** such as running tracks and children's playgrounds.

**Corks** from bottles of wine are ideal for using in insulation, sports **equipment** and the organisation ReCork reworks the corks into soles for shoes.

Getting into the more bizarre end of the recycling spectrum is collecting hair – both human and animal. A charity called Matter of Trust accepts hair **donations** from hairdressers and pet grooming salons to make **sausage-shaped** "booms" which are used **to soak up oil spills** at sea. Hair soaks up oil so why not make use of the kilo of hair and fur each of America's 370,000 hairdressers and 200,000 pet grooming salons produce each day?

Slightly more morbidly, a **rendering plant** in Germany accepts the bodies of deceased pets and uses the residual animal fat to make glycerin for the **cosmetics** industry. And slightly more disgustingly **albeit** ingenious,

**to bury** (vb.) to be put in the ground

**array** (n.) range, variety

**to turn sth, into sth.** (phrasal vb.) to convert sth. into sth.

**manageable** (adj.) possible to do without great difficulty

**to melt down** (phrasal vb.) to reduce to liquid form by heat

**dentures** (n.) false teeth

**cork** (n.) the traditional stopper for a wine bottle, the material it is made of

**to soak up** (phrasal vb.) to absorb

**oil spill** (compound n.) accidental release of oil

**rendering plant** (compound n.) a factory where waste animal products are converted into fats or feed

**albeit** (conj.) although

Southampton Airport in the UK, has installed 25 chewing gum recycling bins. The chewing gum is reused in the production of tyres, toys and mobile phone covers.

And what about all those plastic bottles? Enterprising builders, largely in third-world countries, have started to build their homes with them! Roughly 14,000 bottles, all of the same size, are needed to **construct** a two-bedroom house. The bottles are filled with sand to make them more solid but they retain a **flexibility** which is ideal in earthquake-prone areas. These plastic-bottle houses are **bullet-proof** and weather-resistant. In Nigeria, the empty bottles are donated by hotels, restaurants as well as **private** individuals.

Far and away the most **adorable** way to recycle must be an initiative started by The New Arc Wildlife Sanctuary in Scotland who have asked women not to throw out their old mascara **wands**. These wands act as little brushes to be used to clean oil, mud, fly eggs and infections from baby birds and rabbits. **It just goes to show** that even the most unlikely items can be brought back to life in a different **guise**!

Tune in next week for more stories on the environment, here on English Waves.

**bullet-proof** (adj.) designed to resist the impact of firing from a gun

**wand** (n.) a long thin stick

**it just goes to show** (exp.) these examples confirm that...

**guise** (n.) external form, appearance

**\*Tip!**

The following words are frequently mispronounced in English:

**decisive** the “cis” rhymes with mice , **government** the “gov” rhymes with love,

**determined** the “mined” rhymes with pinned, **campaign** the “paign” sounds like pain,

**surfaces** the “face” rhymes with miss, **sausages** the “sages” rhymes with bridges,

**private** the “pri” rhymes with try,