



## RWM debut for K-bag®

**Cromwell Polythene has been awarded the UK license to market the K-bag®, a lightweight bag that is easy to open, making it more hygienic and of particular benefit to the physically impaired.**

The K-bag® will make its debut at this year's RWM exhibition, 11-13 September, at the NEC (stand number 19R69).



The company will have sole distribution rights among local authorities and the waste management sector for K-bag® technology, typically used in the manufacture of bags made from thinner gauge material, such as kitchen caddy liners or those used in supermarkets for bagging loose fruit and vegetables and bakery products. Unlike some conventional bags, however, K-bags® can be easily opened by those with impaired vision or dexterity.

The K-bag® has many other applications, including those where users wear disposable gloves.

"It's common to see people finding it difficult to open bags made from thinner gauge materials and having to resort to blowing into the bag or licking their fingers, neither of which is particularly hygienic, especially where food or waste is involved," says James Lee, Cromwell Polythene's CEO. "There are many other instances where hygiene is paramount or physical impairment may be an issue."

With the K-bag® Cromwell will work with its production partners to develop a range of products, including compostable bags for organic waste, as well as thicker sacks for heavier duty use. The technology can be applied to most bags, though it is especially useful with thinner materials, which, characteristically, have been subject to



*The easy to open K-bag®*

'blocking', a condition in which two layers of film adhere to one another, apparently fused and are difficult to open.

Combined with Cromwell's LOWCO<sub>2</sub>T™ technology, K-bag® products will weigh less, bringing about substantial savings in CO<sub>2</sub> and other emissions throughout the supply chain and the products' lifecycle - from production to consumer and eventual landfill.

A short video, showing the K-bag® in action, may be seen on the Cromwell website.



## NEC return for recycling

**Cromwell's recycling division returns to the RWM exhibition, keen to demonstrate how it continues to grow.**

Following the division's move to larger premises in Sherburn-in-Elmet earlier this year, there has been a substantial increase both in the range and volume of materials it recovers from the waste stream.

"Not only are we collecting a much wider range of plastics, for example, covering everything from pallet wrap to polystyrene, from agricultural film to metalised and printed film, but we're also recovering significant quantities of card and hard plastics in the form of food trays, pallets, buckets and tubs, including

most recognised polymer types," says director Mark Fuller.

"There is a growing trend towards customers consolidating their non-residual waste streams," he adds, "with companies of all sizes recognising that what they have previously consigned to the skip or sent to landfill may have a second life value as someone else's raw material."

Complementing its service to major companies Cromwell Recycling set up a resource recovery arm aimed at smaller



*Agricultural film*

businesses within a 75-mile radius of its Leeds base and has recently launched the Knapsack® (see story page 2), a convenient system that enables SMEs and those without a formal waste management arrangement in place to recover plastics and card from the waste stream.



# And now the Knapsack®

**Cromwell Polythene has launched a convenient and cost-efficient means of recovering plastics and card from the waste stream for small and medium size businesses (SMEs) and those without formal waste management arrangements in place.**

Called the Knapsack®, the system uses a rigid metal frame, available in fixed or mobile versions for added flexibility, which is placed in a convenient location in the user's warehouse, yard or wherever waste materials are generated. Polythene sacks, supplied by Cromwell, are held in place by the frame, allowing the user to fill them with used plastics and card ready for collection.

Following a free waste audit, in which Cromwell Polythene calculates the likely volumes of packaging material generated, a collection frequency is agreed, providing a regular and secure disposal route through an accredited re-processor.

Waste transfer notes and compliance certificates are provided, as well as free collection for 10 bags or more.

"There are many SMEs, who, for a variety of reasons, are wasting money by failing to segregate their waste and comply with the duty of care provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the pre-treatment of waste legislation," says managing director Garth Imison.

"The Knapsack® system makes it easy for them to recover potentially valuable plastics and card from the waste stream that we can successfully recycle as part of our 'closed loop' sustainability strategy.

"Not only does that enable them to meet their environmental obligations, but it immediately converts their waste into a precious raw material that can be re-processed and used in the manufacture of new product," he added.



Convenient and cost-efficient

## Spoilt for choice

"Even those customers who regularly order a range of products from us may not fully appreciate the bespoke service that we provide," says sales director Paul Fleetwood, who reports another successful return to ISSA InterClean in Amsterdam.

"The exhibition is not just about meeting new people; it's just as important in re-affirming our existing customer relationships, especially if they are unaware of the full extent of the Cromwell offering," he adds.

"Which is why we're actively reminding them of our ability to produce bespoke bags, printed in any style and colour to suit a customer's individual requirements. Whether you're in the market for one of our 200 plus stock items or something tailor-made to suit your specific needs, you really should speak to a member of our cleaning and janitorial team."



## Food waste saints and sinners

**Some 60 per cent of local authorities currently collect food waste or are considering the introduction of a food waste collection scheme, according to a survey by Cromwell Polythene, supplier of Ecopond® compostable sacks and bags to the waste management and recycling sector.**

Welsh local authorities remain the most prolific food waste recyclers, all of them having a collection scheme in place. Statutory recycling targets set by the Welsh Assembly are undoubtedly a driver, although the survey also found that where one local authority collected food waste, neighbouring councils tended to follow suit.

Greater Manchester, for example, has a higher concentration of separate food waste collection schemes, as does Devon, whereas such schemes tend to be sparse in the Midlands and the north-east. "Unsurprisingly the highest concentrations are in those regions where there is a treatment facility in place, such as an IVC or AD plant," says Cromwell's CEO James Lee. "By contrast, English councils have the lowest incidence of food waste recycling, partly as a result of the emergence of new waste-to-energy plants and partly because there are a number of MBT facilities coming on stream in the next few years, which separate the organic waste anyway."



Innovative solutions

The survey was undertaken in preparation for the launch of Cromwell Polythene's new retail web site, [www.cromwelldirect.co.uk](http://www.cromwelldirect.co.uk), which provides a re-ordering mechanism for those residents in areas where local authorities only supply an initial quantity of caddie liners, wheeled bin liners and other recycling products.

For those councils who prefer to manage the re-ordering process themselves Cromwell has developed innovative solutions, such as packing rolls of compostable caddie liners in a polythene bag that hangs from residents' wheeled bins, thus protecting the liners from the rain, while also providing the council with a more convenient and hygienic means of delivery. Rolls of bags have an in-built 'more bags please' tag, also to be hung from wheeled bins when a replacement roll is required. The tags are compostable or can be recycled. A number of councils are already using the new system.



# Star performers take a bow

**Cromwell Polythene is re-launching its clinical waste sacks range, making extensive use of star seal technology to maximise carrying capacity, while optimising leak resistance.**

The new range, which includes yellow sacks for transporting hazardous waste for incineration; orange sacks, for waste that is disposed of by a licensed or permitted facility; and yellow sacks with a black stripe, also known as 'Tiger' bags, for waste collection and disposal that is not subject to special requirements in order to prevent infection and which are disposed of by deep landfill.

Used by leading healthcare, clinical, and specialist waste collection companies, to help comply with European legislation for the collection, transport and disposal of appropriate wastes as detailed in the European Waste Catalogue (EWC) classification 18 01, the UN approved yellow and orange LLDPE sacks come in 5 kgs, 8 kgs and 10 kgs capacities and are supplied

in rolls of 25, packed eight rolls per carton. CHSA approved 'Tiger' bags are available in 10 kgs capacity and are supplied in either an LLDPE blend or 100 per cent recycled LDPE blend, which features a standard gusseted bottom weld.

All sacks make use of Cromwell Polythene's exclusive LOWCO<sub>2</sub>T technology to reduce the weight of the bags, bringing about substantial savings in CO<sub>2</sub> and other emissions throughout the supply chain and the products' lifecycle.

Announcing the new range sales director Paul Fleetwood said: "Star seal technology enables bags to be manufactured without gussets, eliminating gaps along the seals where leaks sometimes occur. It also leads



CHSA approved clinical waste sacks

to a less formed shape, allowing the sack more easily to mould itself to the contours of a container, in those instances where one is used, distributing the weight of the content evenly around the bag.

"Compact packaging means less space taken up in vehicles, which provides a further boost to the sustainability of these products."



# Recycling fund-raiser rules the waves

**An unusual partnership between a Lancashire housewife, whose husband was saved from drowning; Farm XS, which helps farmers to recycle their waste plastic; and Cromwell Recycling, the resource recovery division of Cromwell Polythene, is raising money for Southport Lifeboat, an independent lifeboat rescue service.**

Pat Howard's husband Terry was rescued by the lifeboat service when he became trapped, waist deep in rising water, off the Southport coast after becoming disoriented by the sudden onset of freezing fog. Eventually, after guiding rescuers to his position using his mobile telephone, he was airlifted to hospital and treated for hypothermia.

When his wife subsequently visited the lifeboat house to thank the crew for saving



Southport Lifeboat

his life she discovered the basic conditions under which they operated, with no toilet or shower facilities. Resolving to raise money for the voluntary run service, which is responsible for its own financing and fundraising, she devised a grass-roots recycling scheme, recovering plastic milk bottles from local schools, hospitals and other locations.

The bottles are stored and baled by the authorised Farm XS franchisee for south-west Lancashire, Robert Pilkington, before being purchased and returned to the production cycle by Cromwell Recycling for re-processing.

"We've been working with Cromwell Recycling for some time," says Robert Pilkington. "When we were first approached by Mrs Howard she was recovering bottle tops. With our encouragement she switched to plastic bottles, which are easier to bale and which, naturally, weigh more and generate more funds. As someone who was already a keen recycler herself, Mrs Howard was eager to ensure that the plastics recycler was an ethical company, with a clear sustainability strategy and we knew that Cromwell met these criteria."

Commenting for Cromwell Recycling, director Mark Fuller said: "We already work with Farm XS and others to recover and recycle agricultural plastics, including silage wrap and sheeting, containers, fertiliser

bags, seed bags, cardboard and so on. The plastic milk bottles can just as usefully and easily be used as feedstock in the re-manufacturing process."



## Competition corner

Congratulations to Luke Ledgey of Harvest Healthcare, Harrogate, winner of the competition in our last issue, for successfully identifying the Fairey Swordfish as the torpedo aircraft formerly built on the site now occupied by Cromwell Recycling.



There's another £50 worth of M&S gift vouchers to be won in this issue and once again, it couldn't be simpler.

Just answer this question: What is the name of the new easy-to-open bag making its debut on Cromwell's stand at this year's RWM exhibition?

Email your answer, together with your full contact details, to [info@cromwellpolythene.co.uk](mailto:info@cromwellpolythene.co.uk), making sure that we receive your entry no later than the closing date of 30 September, 2012.

TIP: You'll find the correct answer in this issue of The Cromwellian.

**Good luck!**

# Who's kidding who?

Things aren't always what they appear, according to Cromwell CEO James Lee.



Heard about the 'free beer tomorrow' offer? As the less gullible know, tomorrow never comes, so how about the above?

Regrettably, it's just as unlikely as the 'free beer tomorrow' promise. And yet, such offers abound within the cleaning and janitorial sector.

Take this apparently genuine promotion:

**Special Offer**

**Heavy Duty Black Refuse Sacks**  
"18"x 29"x 39"  
**£6.40/box 200**

Now in our book 'heavy duty' starts at 30mu, which, using these calculations, would weigh 7.8Kgs net per box of 200.

Film grade recycled polythene granules, suitable for making black refuse sacks, cost around £600/tonne - raw material value £4.68.

A conservative manufacturing cost to extrude said granules into film and convert to bags would be £300/tonne - a further £2.34 per box.

Do the math, as they say and you'll see that the material and production cost alone is £7.02. To this the cost of packaging, palletisation, transit packaging, transport and a reasonable profit should be added, though even without these calculations it's easy to see that a realistic selling price is much more than £6.40.

There may, of course, be a number of explanations. The bags may be imported. The manufacturer may have access to cheap raw materials. Or, Cromwell's interpretation of heavy duty may be too generous.

## Imported products

Global manufacturing costs are levelling out, so lower production costs in the Far East have to be balanced by ocean freight costs, duty and other UK charges. More often than not these days, all-in costs for imported products run close to bags of European origin, so it's unlikely that importing alone may account for such a price difference.

Polymer and waste polythene for recycling (more relevant in this case) is traded globally, traders are wise to the value of recycle and processors are paying top prices for material.

Not too many years ago even 40mu would have seemed a bit on the thin side to be labelled heavy duty, but with advances in polymer and recycling technology 25mu could be the heavy duty of the future. But what if the future is now? Then a 16 per cent reduction in material might explain the apparent cost 'saving' in our example.

All things considered, the third scenario is the most likely. Magic bag factories that convert cheap material into quality bags with low conversion costs simply don't exist, so in the end, you get what you pay for.

## What's on the box is in the box. Or is it?

Heavy duty means different things to different people.

Why have we allowed this to happen and what can we do to tackle the problem? Over the years, advances in polymers have made it possible to make thinner films and down-gauging (light-weighting) has become commonplace. Customer perceptions of quality are often based on a simple eyeball appraisal, which focuses on box size and description of content, rather than what's in the box and bag performance.

Such is the confusion surrounding the true specification of bags that manufacturers, sometimes acting on instructions from resellers, have mostly abandoned the practice of marking the full description of contents.

The CHSA went some way to addressing this issue with its Refuse Sack Accreditation Standard, recognised by leading players since its inception and now familiar on boxes sold into the janitorial, cleaning and hygiene industry.

Mission accomplished you might think, so what's the problem?

The supply of refuse sacks is fragmented, with many manufacturers, importers and



merchants selling to other so-called 'distributors', often with no direct supply chain from manufacturer to end user.

While the CHSA markings offer some guarantee, there remains a plethora of 'brown box' products without wholly accurate descriptions or CHSA markings, which, to the uninitiated, may appear to be fit for purpose.

Because some continue to buy on price alone, without like-for-like comparisons against a known standard, they support the brown box market, encouraging unscrupulous resellers to cut corners - reducing thickness by a few microns or size by a few millimetres, or even inches.

In addition to basic description, including design weight, the CHSA scheme requires its members to mark cartons with the associated 'dumb bell' markings, minimum net box weights (contents), and individual member scheme number.

It's possible that different suppliers may offer different minimum net box weights, but with some simple testing, the buyer can compare alternative products and come to a more informed decision.

The industry still has a way to go before the playing field is level, but at least there is a workable standard. For the rest, I remain unconvinced about the demand or appetite for fair play from certain buyers. For them, price is everything, with some ready to turn a blind eye to the need for recognised standards, especially if it entails paying a small premium.

Free beer tomorrow? Petrol at 99p per litre? Refuse bags less than production cost?

Who's kidding who?



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