



Cromwell Recycling takes off

Cromwell's recycling division has moved into larger premises in Sherburn-in-Elmet, almost doubling the size of the existing facility and substantially increasing its growth potential.

The move follows last year's relocation of Cromwell Polythene's head office and warehouse complex, just a mile away.

The new 21,000 sq. ft. building, where plastics, board and other materials are sorted, graded and baled before being re-processed, is in addition to more than half an acre of outside storage, and allows for continued expansion of the division, which last year recovered some 6,000 tonnes for recycling.

Formerly an engineering plant for the production of mining machinery, the historic site sits alongside an air strip that formed part of a Royal Air Force station during the Second World War. From 1940 Blackburn Aircraft used a Ministry of Aircraft Production factory on the site to build approximately 1,700 Fairey Swordfish naval torpedo aircraft.

With the end of the war, the airfield returned to its civilian roots and today, only

a small part of it is used for flying by the Sherburn Aero Club. One of the original Blackburn factories was demolished for development and the main factory site is now an industrial area and home to Cromwell Recycling.

"The relocation of our recycling business to much bigger premises on the same industrial park is a major vote of confidence in its continued growth," says Cromwell's CEO James Lee. "Last year alone saw a 40% increase in tonnage and we've every confidence that we can sustain the recovery of post-industrial packaging, which serves as the raw material in the manufacture of new recycling sacks and other products."

Cromwell's 'closed loop' philosophy is at the heart of the company's sustainability strategy. The recycling division works with



The iconic Fairey Swordfish, photographed over Portsmouth Harbour by Lee Howard. Picture courtesy Fly Navy Heritage Trust

more than 150 companies in industries as diverse as agriculture, food manufacture, pharmaceuticals and waste management. Used polythene such as pallet wrap, garment covers, sacks, and film is recovered, alongside hard plastics such as pallets, food trays, buckets and tubs.

Coinciding with its physical expansion Cromwell Recycling has also appointed a new buyer, Anthony Oldridge (see page 3).



Healthy outlook

Cromwell Polythene marks its return to ISSA InterClean in Amsterdam with the launch of a new healthcare range that builds on the company's 'Wave' examination gloves.

Complementing the blue nitrile, clear and synthetic vinyl gloves introduced last year, Cromwell had added disposable aprons, available in blue or white and packed in dispenser packs of 100 or rolls of 200.

Also available is a range of UN accredited clinical waste sacks, manufactured from a high proportion of recycled polyethylene. The range includes yellow sacks – available with or without printing and used for incinerating hazardous waste, including

category A waste; printed orange bags for the treatment of infectious and potentially infectious waste at a licensed or permitted facility and yellow striped or 'Tiger' bags, in which offensive/hygiene waste may be landfilled.

Available in varying capacities and packed loose or in rolls of 20 or 25, the specialist sacks are held in stock at Cromwell's 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse for immediate despatch.



Completing the 'Wave' line-up is a range of healthcare disposables, including sanitary bin liners, draw tape sanitary liners, water soluble strip bags in both red and green, specimen bags and black refuse sacks.

Commenting on this year's show sales director Paul Fleetwood said: "Our debut in 2010 proved a great success, both in cementing relationships with existing distributors and in opening new accounts with whom we are now successfully trading. Our healthcare products are part of a 200-plus range of bags, including refuse sacks, box liners and food contact products," he adds. "We stock bags in just about every size, shape and colour, using both virgin and high quality recycled blends, depending on the application."



CHSA warning: watch out for sharks

With the macro-economic environment getting increasingly uncertain, buyers of plastic refuse sacks, industrial cotton mops and paper products need to tighten their monitoring and watch out for shark suppliers, warns the Cleaning & Hygiene Suppliers Association.

Gordon Butt, the CHSA's auditor for its Manufacturing Standard Accreditation Scheme, explained: "As the economic uncertainty continues we are seeing an increase in the cutting of corners by disreputable suppliers of cleaning and hygiene products and it is distributors and end users who are being affected. We randomly and regularly audit both members and non-members of the scheme and we have seen a jump in the number and extent of deficiencies amongst non-members. Some net deficiencies caused by, for example, reducing the number of sheets or shaving a little of the width or length of each sheet of a paper product are running as high as 20%. This is the equivalent to a distributor or end user buying five boxes of product and only getting four; it's clearly

unethical and could be an offence if the dimensions are on the label and the labelling does not reflect the reduction. But there is no legal requirement to label the dimensions of the product and some suppliers are exploiting this and being vague with the labelling; if they tell you the number of sheets but not the dimensions of each sheet then you have no way of knowing if something you have always understood to be one size has suddenly 'shrunk'. Even if the label is changed, a buyer can't relax and may need to change old habits. For example, the 150m centre feed roll or the 200m mini jumbo toilet roll traditionally bought by product code may have changed in width or length and could be labelled accordingly. But if you go on buying by product code you could be getting something much shorter than you think."

The only way buyers of soft tissue products, plastic refuse sacks and industrial cotton mops can be certain they are getting what they pay for and not being surreptitiously ripped off is to buy from Manufacturing



Standard Accreditation Scheme members. Graham Fletcher, general secretary of the CHSA, said: "We regularly audit our members and deficiencies will ultimately result in expulsion from the scheme.

"This means buyers can be certain they are getting what they pay for, even when times are tough. Anyone concerned about the quality of their purchase can call us for a free audit. Gordon will come out and thoroughly check the products, either giving you the ammunition you need or putting your mind to rest."



This stark warning from the Cleaning and Hygiene Suppliers Association, the trade body representing suppliers to the cleaning industry,

underscores the importance of buying from companies such as Cromwell Polythene, founding member of the CHSA Manufacturing

Standard Accreditation Scheme for plastic refuse sacks. The article first appeared in Cleaning and Maintenance's on-line newsletter.

Cooking – but not the books!

Steven Roe has been appointed Cromwell's internal accountant, heading up the four-strong finance department.

Having spent all of his career in financial services, most recently in Leeds University's estate services finance department, Steven is a member of the Association of Accounting Technicians and is in the final stage of his studies for the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.



Steven Roe

"This doesn't leave a great deal of spare time, but what time I do have I like to spend cooking and with friends and family," he says.



Sales team reorganises

Long-serving senior sales account developer Russell Stabler has been promoted to sales office manager as part of a wide-ranging reorganisation of the Cromwell Polythene sales team.

Russell joined the company as an office junior in the accounts department, moving into the sales office after 18 months. "Since then he has more than demonstrated his natural flair for this side of the business, making a significant contribution to Cromwell's cleaning and janitorial division," says sales director Paul Fleetwood. A passionate Leeds United fan and follower of football generally, Russell is also a keen fitness enthusiast, visiting the gym five days a week.

His promotion follows the appointment of Becky Milner as sales administrator ('The Cromwellian', August 2011) and will enable him to oversee the sales office, allowing



Sales office manager Russell Stabler with (left) Simona Cussans and (right) Becky Milner

Becky to focus on customer liaison.

Completing the trio of sales moves is Simona Cussans, who has taken on a new role – sales and marketing co-ordinator – following a successful stint as sales office assistant. Another sports fan, Simona is a season ticket holder at rugby league team Castleford Tigers.

Other key sales personnel include Richard Rowling, sales manager for the public sector; Lewis Ishmael, technical sales administrator and Jonathan Judge, 'Wave' product manager.



Bag it, then bin it, says Rhondda

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) has launched an imaginative scheme aimed at encouraging local youngsters to recycle their lunchtime litter, while also reducing the volume of such litter on the routes to and from school and in the town centre.

Known as the Respect project, the initiative is the brainchild of the Streetcare Cleansing team, which noted an increase in the amount of litter in the town centre, where comprehensive school students congregate to eat their lunch. In a bid to encourage them to take their litter away, the students are being provided with free plastic carrier bags by their schools, while specially liveried recycling bins have been placed in five of the comprehensives – hopefully to be expanded to all 19 in the county borough.

The multi compartment containers allow students to recycle plastics, cans, food waste and general litter, including the degradable plastic carrier bags, supplied by Cromwell

Polythene. The company has supplied an initial 100,000 bags to kick start the Respect programme.

The bright green bags feature the Respect logo, which has been designed by the RCT design team themselves and which also appears on the recycling containers and in promotional literature supporting the scheme. "The vest-style carrier bags, normally supplied for retail use, are printed in bold primary colours to give them a more 'cool' appearance and avoid the students feeling self-conscious about using them," according to Paul Fleetwood, Cromwell's sales director.

Students are being encouraged to form their own eco groups to monitor and motivate their peers, with the incentive of a cash



The Respect logo, designed by the RCT design team

reward, linked to the volume of recyclate that they collect, to the school that tops the Respect league table at the end of the year.

"We take waste and litter seriously in Rhondda Cynon Taf and continue to invest heavily in ensuring that we educate people to think greener and recycle everything that we can," said Councillor Anthony Christopher, deputy leader and cabinet member for front line services.



Recycling buyer appointed

Cromwell Recycling's continued expansion has led to the appointment of Anthony Oldridge as a buyer. He will work closely with divisional director Mark Fuller, who says:



Anthony Oldridge

"With a 40 per cent increase in year-on-year tonnage, we've reached the point where we can more than justify the appointment of someone full time to help procure materials. Anthony has already made a difference to this important part of our business."

Previously self-employed, teaching business English and presentation skills in the Czech Republic, Anthony studied writing at University, before travelling for four years throughout Europe, South East Asia, South America and North Africa, "all of which set me up perfectly for the various roles in business development that ultimately led to my true vocation here in recycling," he says.



Compostable? It's in the bag

Cromwell Polythene's compostables range has been extended (see table) and now includes a comprehensive selection, from 7 and 10 litre caddy liners to 80 litre bin liners and 240 litre wheeled bin liners, all certified to EN13432, the internationally recognised proof of their compostability.



"Recent confirmation by Communities Secretary Eric Pickles, that weekly food or organic waste collections will qualify for support from the Government's £250 million Weekly Collection Support Scheme, provided a further impetus to those local authorities considering expanding their schemes to include these materials," says Cromwell's sales director Paul Fleetwood. But there are many other forms of organic waste for which these products are also suitable.



Code	Description	Size	Carton. quant	Note	Cromwell unit
COMP4040	Caddy bin liner - 7 ltr	200 x 400 x 400mm	1040	Food Waste	roll of 26
COMP4545	Caddy bin liner - 10 ltr	450 x 450mm	720	Food Waste	roll of 20
COMP7285	Bin liner - 80 ltr	365 x 725 x 850mm	260	Food Waste	roll of 26
COMP112135	Wheeled bin liner - 240 ltr	565 x 1125 x 1400mm	130	Garden Waste	roll of 13

Friend or foe?

Plastic bags continue to be demonised as a threat to the environment, even though scientific studies prove otherwise. In this article CEO James Lee argues that banning or taxing plastic bags in supermarkets is a retrograde step.



CEO James Lee

Plastic bags are mainly derived from oil refining by-products, which would otherwise be flared off. Moreover, polythene bags are 100% recyclable and can also be made from recycled plastic.

Modern, lightweight bags use less material, can carry up to 2,500 times their own weight and are the most efficient means of transportation and distribution, reducing fuel and CO₂ emissions, compared to their bag-for-life counterparts, which are heavier, bulkier alternatives.

Although highly visible, polythene bags are not a major component of litter or domestic waste. In fact, studies prove that they represent less than 1% of all litter. Plastic films of all types comprise only 3% of the waste in landfill.

Packaging – specifically plastic packaging – reduces waste, particularly food waste. In countries without our sophisticated packaging and distribution systems around 50% of food is wasted from harvest to table. In the UK this figure is some 3%.

Polythene refuse sacks are used every day for the safe containment, collection and disposal of domestic waste, healthcare waste and other hazardous wastes. Since their introduction over 40 years ago, they have played a vital role in the virtual elimination of waste-related public health outbreaks in this country (UK).

Degradable/biodegradable

Most degradable plastics are based on commodity plastics, derived from oil. They break the first rule of sustainability and send out the wrong message because they are designed to be thrown away.

Degradable plastics have limited re-use possibilities and recycling post-consumer degradable plastics does not work. The plastics industry has worked hard with others to establish markets for recycled material, including refuse sacks, damp-proof membranes for construction work, garden and street furniture and wood substitutes. The list is growing, together

with the percentage of recycled material used, but this is under threat through contamination of feedstock with elements of degradable plastic. Degradability is clearly not a desirable characteristic in some of these second life products.

Most degradable plastics contain additives which cause the plastic to break up into smaller pieces, fragment, and in doing so release CO₂, a major cause of global warming.

Biodegradable plastics made from vegetable/corn starch-based polymers have their place (e.g. in food waste composting schemes) but the production of raw material from crop growing, through harvesting, transport, and processing, uses oil, just like the production of bio-fuels.

Manufacture

The manufacture of plastic bags uses one third of the energy, results in half the pollution and one eighth of the raw material requirement of paper bag production.

Bags-for-life use more raw materials in their construction and are bulkier and heavier to transport. Fine if they are re-used at least four times (the latest UK Life Cycle Analysis by the Environment Agency shows that a cotton bag would have to be re-used over 300 times to match the low impact of a single lightweight plastic bag re-used just once as a bin liner, for example) but research shows that this does not always happen. Unless they are made of recyclable plastic and recycled themselves, it is likely that such bags will ultimately be thrown away and take up more space in landfill.

The use of plastic bags in Ireland, including substitute bin liners, analysed through HMRC figures shows that the amount of imported plastic bags went up after their bag tax was introduced, from 29,846 tonnes in 2001 to 31,649 tonnes in 2006. By contrast, 59% of people re-use all their lightweight plastic bags and a further 16% say they re-use most of them.

Taxing plastic bags would send more paper to landfill - assuming a switch to paper, as



has happened in Ireland - where it will degrade to give off greenhouse gases in direct contravention of the EU Landfill Directive. Plastic bags can be recycled, but if they are disposed of in landfill, they remain inert and will not give off CO₂ or methane.

There is a great deal to be said for the well-intentioned efforts of environmentalists to reduce our impact on the planet. However, bans or taxes can sometimes bring about unintended consequences that may actually be worse for the environment.



Competition corner

Congratulations to Darren Hughes, client officer (waste) with East Cambridgeshire District Council for successfully answering the question: What is Cromwell Polythene's stand number at this year's RWM exhibition? (Answer: 1472).



There's another £50 worth of M&S gift vouchers to be won in this competition and entering couldn't be simpler.

Just answer the following question: What was the name of the torpedo aircraft formerly built on the site now occupied by Cromwell Recycling?

Email your answer, together with your full contact details, to info@cromwellpolythene.co.uk, ensuring that we receive your entry no later than the closing date of 30 April, 2012.

As always, the correct answer may be found in this issue of The Cromwellian.

Good luck!

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