



On the move...

Cromwell Polythene has moved to new premises, nearly doubling its existing warehouse and office facilities.

The company's new 30,000 sq. ft. headquarters will accommodate some 3,000 pallets and are in addition to its 10,000 sq. ft. dedicated recycling plant nearby.

The move, the company's third since it was founded 27 years ago, will allow continued expansion as Cromwell builds on its existing £9m sales turnover. "We are fortunate in having identified a site with great growth potential close to our existing location and within a short travelling distance of our Moxon Way recycling facility," says managing director James Lee. "We have ambitious growth targets across all our specialist divisions, which will be that much easier to achieve with the increased efficiencies that the new premises provide.

"Since moving to Sherburn-in-Elmet in 2002 we have been joined by Sainsburys, Eddie

Stobart, and now Debenhams, all of whom operate state-of-the-art RDC's, proving that Sherburn-in-Elmet really is in a prime location for UK-wide distribution, as it is located so close to main north-south and east-west arterial routes."

Cromwell Polythene stocks sacks and bags in most size, shape and colour variations, using both virgin and high quality recycled blends, depending on the application, as well as gloves, aprons and a wide choice of other polythene disposables for the washroom and sanitary waste service industries. The company also runs a thriving recycling division, recovering used packaging for its production partners, for whom it serves as a



The new 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse begins to take shape

valuable feedstock for re-manufacturing into Cromwell's popular range of fit for purpose refuse sacks.

The new address is: Orion Building, Seafox Court, Sherburn Enterprise Park, Sherburn-in-Elmet, Leeds, North Yorkshire LS25 6PL. Telephone and fax numbers are unchanged.



...and on show

Cromwell Polythene will exhibit a range of more than 200 different sacks, bags, and food contact products, as well as a wide choice of washroom and sanitary waste supplies, at this year's Cleaning Show, to be held at the NEC, Birmingham, 1-3 March.

A focal point of our stand will be a practical demonstration highlighting the importance of CHSA (Cleaning & Hygiene Suppliers Association) refuse sack accreditation. Using a box of proprietary medium duty bags we will show that so-called heavy duty bags from an unaccredited source may offer no superior performance benefits. "What



you see is not always what you get," says Cromwell director Paul Fleetwood. "CHSA membership and accreditation is a way of signalling the credentials of any supplier to the cleaning and janitorial equipment market. The Association provides a unique relationship between manufacturers engaged in product development and supply and distributors who, in turn, provide product to the 'away from home' cleaning market. The CHSA code of practice also provides Cromwell's customers with an assurance of professional conduct, customer service and quality, so that the product does



what it says on the box, so to speak," he adds.

Paul Fleetwood will be joined on the Cromwell Polythene stand (Number E13) by senior sales account developer Russell Stabler, both of whom look forward to welcoming visitors from the cleaning and janitorial sector.



Board expands

Cromwell Polythene has appointed two new directors, reflecting the company's continued expansion across all its specialist divisions.

Paul Fleetwood (left) has been promoted to sales director, while Garth Imison takes on the newly created role of operations director.

Since joining the company in 1998 Paul Fleetwood has held a number of positions, latterly key accounts manager in Cromwell's janitorial division, which has enjoyed dramatic growth, along with a major expansion of its waste management and cleaning products portfolio. He is also a director of the Cleaning and Hygiene Suppliers Association (CHSA).

Outside of the business Paul coaches a junior football team, is a keen cyclist and long-term supporter of the Lance Armstrong

Foundation, which unites, inspires and empowers people affected by cancer. One of Paul's most inspirational moments was when he eventually met the seven times Tour de France winner and full time cancer fighter in 2008 during the Milan San Remo cycle race.

Garth Imison joined the company in 2006 as business development manager, becoming general manager in 2008, where he has been instrumental in managing Cromwell's growth across all divisions. He has spent all his working life in the polythene industry, joining the company from Dispol UK, the specialist manufacturer of car protection products, where he was managing director.

Few of his work colleagues are aware of Garth's prowess in two somewhat unorthodox extra-curricular areas. He holds the 2006 world record for flat cap throwing and is a recorded operatic performer, having



"bashed pebbles together" as part of the sound effects at a school performance in front of Her Majesty the Queen.

Announcing the two appointments Cromwell managing director James Lee said: "It gives me great pleasure to recognise the contribution that both Garth and Paul have made to the business. Their promotion exemplifies our policy of recognising, nurturing and rewarding home grown talent."



Two more take a bow

Two new recruits have joined Cromwell Polythene's fast-expanding cleaning and janitorial division.



Jonathan Judge

Jonathan Judge joins the company as southern area sales manager. A well-known face within the automotive wholesale trade,

Jonathan was formerly with Bodyguards Industrial. He joins Cromwell refreshed from a short sabbatical, sunning himself while enjoying the Ashes in Australia with the barmy army.

Following an extended sales career, interrupted by intermittent spells working in the family removals business, Mark Taylor has been appointed sales account developer. Mark's admitted passions extend to "beer, food, surfing and golf", as well as his border collie Maverick (originally Eric), re-named after the Tom Cruise character in the film 'Top Gun', as his original name "was not cool enough for him", according to Mark.



Mark Taylor



Cromwell awarded Ecopond® distribution rights

Cromwell Polythene has been appointed sole distributor for Ecopond® compostable bags among local authorities and the waste management sector in England and Wales.

The appointment represents a major development for the company, which has already secured its first significant Ecopond® contract with an order for 8.2 m compostable kitchen caddy liners for Denbighshire County Council (see story opposite).

The kitchen caddy liners represent part of a broader range of biodegradable bags for the collection of kitchen and garden waste. Manufactured from starch or lactide acid-based derivatives of plant sources, the Ecopond® products meet the stringent requirements of the European composting standard, requiring

more than 90 per cent of the plastic mass to be converted into biomass, CO₂ and water, without harmful residue. The range is made from a fully formulated bio-plastic, based on polyesters of polylactide acid (PLA) and other proprietary ingredients, derived from vegetable material. Sacks fully decompose within the normal 6-10 week composting cycle.

Announcing the distribution agreement operations director Garth Imison said: "We are flattered to have been selected by the Chinese manufacturer Kingfa to handle Ecopond® distribution in selected English and Welsh markets and delighted to have got off to a flying start with our first significant order for Denbighshire County Council."



Recycling Council opts for full BPF membership

The British Plastics Federation (BPF) is the most powerful voice in the UK plastics industry, with more than 400 members – Cromwell Polythene among them – across the supply chain.

From the beginning of this year the BPF Recycling Council is to be integrated into the Federation under a new identity and as a fully-fledged business group - the BPF Recycling Group.

Recycling Council chairman, Mark Burstall said, "The Recycling Council feels confident

that BPF and Recycling Council policies are well aligned and there are major opportunities for the Council to broaden its offering to potential members. "The Recycling Council has been very successful at increasing its membership in the last years. By fully entering the BPF, the offering to recyclers will be very impressive indeed and we anticipate a future boost to membership. This move will enable greater interaction between recyclers and converters using recycleate."



Compostable bags contract awarded by top-performing council

Cromwell Polythene has won a major contract to supply compostable kitchen caddy liners to Denbighshire County Council, which topped the 2009 recycling league table for local authorities in Wales.

This is the first contract to be awarded since the company was appointed sole distributor of Ecopond® compostable bags to the council and waste management sectors in England and Wales.

Cromwell will supply Denbighshire with 8.2 million bags over the course of the two-year contract, which it won in a competitive tender.

The five-litre bags, which conform to European standard EN 13432, will be supplied free of charge to local residents as part of a recycling strategy that has helped Denbighshire collect 2.2 kg of food waste per household per week, one of the highest recovery rates in Wales. Households will receive an initial two rolls of bags, each of which contains 104 bags. Each roll includes a bright yellow tag that serves as the re-order form for further supplies, which are provided by the collection crews.

Kitchen scraps are disposed of in bright orange kerbside containers that are emptied weekly, with the waste being processed in an in-vessel composting facility before being used for agricultural purposes.



Commenting on Cromwell Polythene having won the contract, senior waste management officer Alan Roberts said: "We enjoy good food recovery rates in Denbighshire, the bright orange containers making it difficult for residents to ignore. Seriously, we knew it would be a challenge to get residents to embrace food recycling, so we deliberately opted for an eye-catching kerbside container, also ensuring that we supplied free liners for their kitchen caddies. The system is working well and we're now looking forward to cracking 60 percent as we roll out the service to more people,".



Perf 'n' Turf aids turf root structure

Cromwell Polythene has launched a micro perforated, recycled polythene film, ideally suited to UK climate conditions and specially developed for professional landscaping and turf production.

Named 'Perf 'n' Turf', the porous low density polyethylene (LDPE) comes in 125 micron rolls which, once used, may be recycled again. The product has been extensively trialled, where it was shown to minimise root damage while maximising the harvesting cycle – typically taking just five weeks from turf laying to lifting.

Perf 'n' Turf is superior to woven products, suppressing the build-up of harmful algae and weed growth and providing uniform drainage. "The membrane minimises root damage, while prolonging evaporation, thus maintaining the turf at its ideal root



climate throughout the growing process and during transportation," according to operations director Garth Imison.

"Because it is manufactured from non-reacting, inert polymers, the film will suit all soil types. Moreover, once the turf has been laid, the Perf 'n' Turf may be cleaned and processed for recycling into new film," he adds.



From trash to cash

The incentive to recycle waste packaging is not just driven by environmental and legislative imperatives.

On the contrary, such socially responsible behaviour may also produce a tangible financial gain, as Dewsbury-based Chemfix Ltd has discovered over the past year.

Manufacturer of an extensive range of multi-functional resins for use in the construction industry and DIY markets, Chemfix generates a steady flow of cardboard, pallet wrap and hard plastics waste.

Now, following the acquisition of two compact baling machines – one for cardboard, the other for plastics - up to three tonnes a month of material is being recovered from the waste stream and re-processed by Cromwell Polythene's recycling division as part of its 'closed loop' supply of bags, sacks and other waste management products. "This has been a great result for us, with more than 30 tonnes recycled within our first year," says Chemfix operations manager Peter Hanslope. "We shall shortly be due for our ISO14001 audit and the move to recycling is also playing a key part in reducing our environmental impact.

"Another big advantage of the new set-up is that our costs will remain static while our recycling revenue stream increases in line with additional activity," he adds.

In addition to packaging waste, Cromwell Polythene has helped the company recycle a variety of redundant hard plastic containers, contributing to the estimated £300 per month that Chemfix is already saving as a result of the scheme. "It's a win-win for the company as it sees both a commercial and an environmental benefit," says Mark Fuller, director of Cromwell's recycling division. "It's a scenario that is becoming increasingly familiar, not just to the environmentally aware major corporations, but to SMEs, too."



Chemfix – saving £300 per month by recycling material recovered from the waste stream

Why plastic packaging does not deserve its 'bad rep'

(written by Cromwell Polythene's managing director James Lee and reproduced from Resource magazine, where it was first published)



As an unashamed fan I was delighted to be asked to defend the unmerited 'bad rep' that plastics seem to have earned. No doubt what I say will challenge what most people believe – including the editorial team at 'Resource'. Indeed, some of the facts are counterintuitive, but misinformation abounds, fuelled by media coverage demonising plastic bags as a serious threat to the environment.

Modern, lightweight plastic is often the first choice for packaging because it offers unrivalled protection for minimal weight – a typical polythene bag used for food packaging can carry up to 2,500 times its own weight. Not only does plastic meet the most stringent food safety hygiene requirements, but no other material can match the savings it delivers in fuel and CO₂ emissions throughout the supply chain.

Although highly visible, polythene bags are not a major component of litter or domestic waste; many studies prove that they represent less than one per cent of all litter. In landfill, plastic films of all types make up just three per cent of waste.

Plastic packaging helps reduce waste, particularly food waste. In countries lacking our sophisticated packaging and distribution systems, around half of food is wasted from harvest to table. In the UK, this figure is around three per cent.

Polythene carrier bags are integral to the distribution chain – both for hygienic containment and protection, minimizing

waste through spills and breakages.

Moreover, polythene refuse sacks are commonly used for the safe containment and disposal of domestic, healthcare and other hazardous wastes. Since their introduction over 40 years ago, they've been vital in the virtual elimination of waste-related public health outbreaks in the UK.

The manufacture of plastic packaging films uses one-third the energy, results in half the pollution and requires one-eighth the raw material of paper production, according to a Winnipeg University study.

Bags for life use more raw materials in their construction and are bulkier and heavier to transport. That's OK providing they are reused at least four times, but research has shown this doesn't always happen. Unless they are recyclable and recycled, it is likely that they, too, will ultimately wind up in landfill.

Taxing or banning plastic bags?

There is a great deal to be said for the well-intended efforts of environmentalists to reduce our impact on the planet, but it is important to understand that bans or taxes can bring about unintended, sometimes harmful, consequences.

According to a 2007 Packaging and Films Association analysis of HM Customs statistics by Mike Kidwell Associates, volume of imported plastic bags in Ireland (including substitute bin liners) increased after the introduction of their bag tax - from 29,846 tonnes in 2001 to 31,649 tonnes in 2006. WRAP Chief Executive, Liz Goodwin, also acknowledged this, saying: "We have got to remember that taxes and levies can have perverse effects – such as making

people use more plastic not less."

Assuming a switch to paper, as happened in Ireland, taxing plastic bags would send more biodegradable, methane-emitting paper to landfill. By contrast, plastic remains inert in landfill. Research by the Carrier Bag Consortium revealed that the tax-saving switch to paper bags by eight high street retailers in Ireland resulted in at least four times the weight of paper waste going to landfill compared with plastic.

No one claims that bags in hedgerows or the oceans aren't an issue, but this is litter - a result of anti-social behaviour - not the 'environmental disaster' that some claim.

So, the much-maligned plastic bag may well have become the icon of consumerism - although certainly not self-styled. Intelligent consumers should, however, consider the wider issues and not allow plastic to become a scapegoat for their environmental conscience.



Plastic? Fantastic!

- Plastic shopping bags comprise only 0.05% of landfill
- On average, one trip to the supermarket has the same environmental impact as one person's entire annual consumption of carrier bags
- Plastic shopping bags use 70% less material today than they did 20 years ago
- 59% of people re-use ALL their lightweight plastic bags and a further 16% say they re-use MOST of them

Competition corner

Congratulations to Janet Grantham of Griffiths & Nielsen (G&N Laboratories) for successfully finding the missing words in last issue's soccer-themed word search.

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

Just answer this simple question: Over what period do Cromwell's new Ecopond® sacks decompose?

Email your answer, together with your full contact details, to info@cromwellpolythene.co.uk, making sure that we receive your entry no later than the closing date of 28 February, 2011.

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



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