

# First Consumer EPS Recycling Point opens in the UK

**T**he first expanded polystyrene (EPS) recycling collection point in the UK for members of the public opened in Northampton this week.

Environmental Affairs Manager, EPS Packaging Group.

“We hope to see at least half a dozen consumer EPS recycling points set up across the UK during the next few months,” continues Barnetson.

“This is another exciting development that is being put into place by the UK EPS Packaging industry. We have already achieved huge successes – our recycling figures for 2002 were 40 per cent of EPS packaging manufactured in the UK. This placed us ahead of glass and aluminium and top of the league in plastics.

“Now we want to make it possible for consumers to recycle their EPS packaging. Placing collection points on manufacturers’ sites is the first step. We hope that this scheme will demonstrate to Local Authorities the viability of collecting EPS in their own recycling banks,” concludes Barnetson.

**Jonathan Haddock, MD, left, and Mick Willis, Environment Manager, SCA Tuscarora.**



**Aaron Stansbie, 7 years old, inaugurating the UK's first public EPS recycling point**

The collection point is on the property of, and is managed by EPS Packaging Group member, SCA Tuscarora, who will remove the EPS daily and recycle it back into new protective packaging.

“I am pleased to announce that, for the first time ever, the residents of the Northampton area do not have to throw a polystyrene pack away – Tuscarora can recycle it,” says Jonathan Haddock, Managing Director, SCA Tuscarora.

Typically, an expanded polystyrene pack only appears in a consumer’s home, when a high value product such as a TV or computer has been bought,

which may only happen once or twice a year and at Christmas. This has made it extremely difficult to collect from householders.

SCA Tuscarora is leading the way in a national initiative that will see all major manufacturers of expanded polystyrene packaging setting up similar collection points for consumers to take their EPS packaging to be recycled.

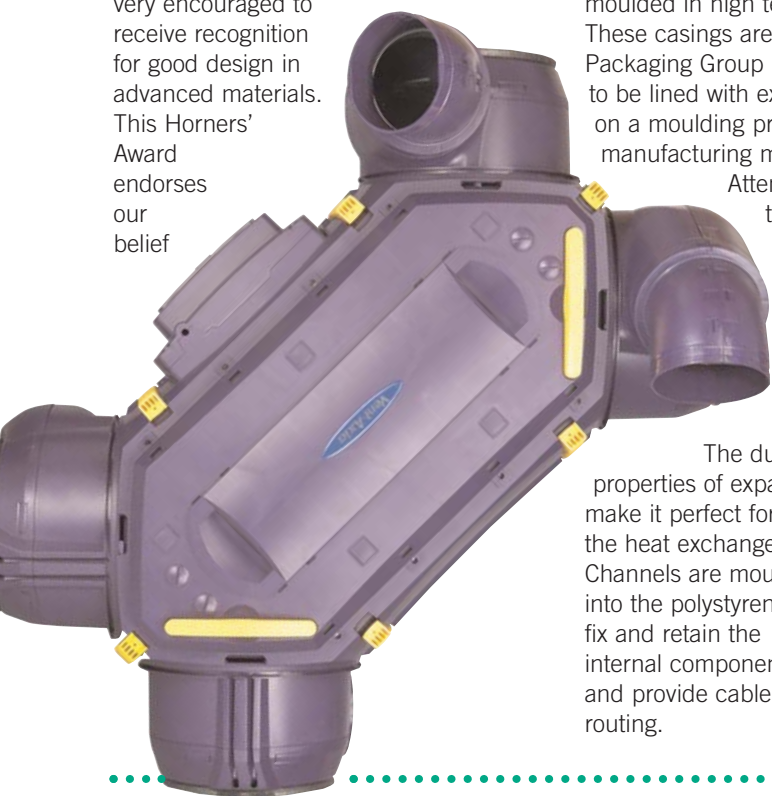
“Consumers regularly enquire about how to recycle used expanded polystyrene through our website [www.eps.co.uk](http://www.eps.co.uk) and the Group was keen to respond to their requests for help,” explains Andrew Barnetson,



# Vent-Axia Wins Horners' Award

**V**ent-Axia's Air Minder\* – a whole house heat recovery system – has won the Horners' Award 2003, the annual award for excellence in plastics design and processing that is jointly organised by the British Plastics Federation (BPF) and the Worshipful Company of Horners.

"We are delighted and very encouraged to receive recognition for good design in advanced materials. This Horners' Award endorses our belief



in well-chosen plastics materials for engineering applications, which began in 1936 with our first – and the world's first – window mounted fan." comments, Managing Director Kevin Sargeant.

The manufacture of the Air Minder begins with a 'snap together' two-part outer casing, which is injection moulded in high temperature ABS. These casings are taken to EPS Packaging Group member, Tuscarora, to be lined with expanded polystyrene on a moulding press using advanced manufacturing moulding techniques.

Attention to shrinkage and tolerances is paramount to ensure the outer casing and expanded foam have an airtight seal.

The durability and insulation properties of expanded polystyrene make it perfect for lining the heat exchanger cell. Channels are moulded into the polystyrene to fix and retain the internal components and provide cable routing.

**“The durability and insulation properties of expanded polystyrene make it perfect for lining the heat exchanger cell”**



This innovative process has been developed in partnership with Vent-Axia and it is the first ever process achievement of this kind.

The Horners' Award Chairman, Bill Madden concludes: "The adjudication panel this year was unanimous in selecting the Vent-Axia Ltd 'Air Minder' as the winning entry. The innovative design and fabrication technology used in the manufacturing process is a great example of how plastics can be used to create products for new market opportunities."

\*The Air Minder lets your home breathe by removing polluted, stale air and replacing it with a constant supply of clean, filtered air with running costs at less than 20p a day. Tighter building regulations are said to be creating a market for such products.

# New Chairman

**G**avin Birnie, becomes Chairman of the BPF's EPS Packaging Group on 10 December 2003. The Group's EPS moulders account for 85 per cent of UK manufacturers of EPS packaging.



**T**his is already an exciting year for Birnie, in November he was promoted to designate Managing Director of Styropack UK; a position he will take on – when the incumbent, John Yeoman, retires – at the end of the year.

The climate for manufacturing continues inclement in the UK, but Birnie is upbeat and determined to point out the positives whilst acknowledging some of the hurdles that are faced by the EPS Packaging industry.

"Our industry provides a cost-effective means for manufacturers and food processors to package their products safely and send them anywhere in the world. That is no mean feat and I am keen to remind our customers, our suppliers and all our business partners of the outstanding value that EPS packaging offers," says Birnie.

"As an industry, EPS packaging is known for its flexibility and quick response to customer's requests. We can efficiently serve a broad range of clients – from a multinational that requires reliable hourly deliveries to a small market gardener who needs a few boxes to pack his broccoli".

Despite these positive comments Birnie does have concerns and he is a keen

supporter of the lobbying work undertaken by the British Plastics Federation: "The Climate Change Levy (CCL) is having a negative impact on our industry, which was already extremely energy-efficient when the tax was introduced. The BPF has successfully stopped a planned increase to the CCL and continues to fight for its abolition.

"The rising cost of insurance premiums to manufacturers is another issue that dents the ability of Group members to invest in new equipment or take on new

**“...as an industry, we are innovative, highly technical and well-equipped to meet any challenge our customers present us with”**

employees to grow their business. I am very pleased that the BPF is in constant dialogue with Government on this and other issues that impact on our industry – its work is a vital support for all plastics manufacturers in the UK."

The EU Packaging Waste Directive is another area of legislative activity that the BPF keeps under close scrutiny. In this instance, the EPS Packaging Group is in an unusually strong position having worked hard to increase recycling of its used products.

Recently, the Group launched a rollout of the first EPS recycling points for consumers in the UK. All of its members will be providing a consumer collection point on at least one of their sites over the next few months and all the material collected will be recycled back into new packaging.

"Working to increase recycling is one of our key activities", explains Birnie. "I think the EPS Packaging Group may be a unique example of an industry that has increased the recycling of its used products from 10% to 40% of manufacturing output in three years.

"It is a proud record and I fully intend

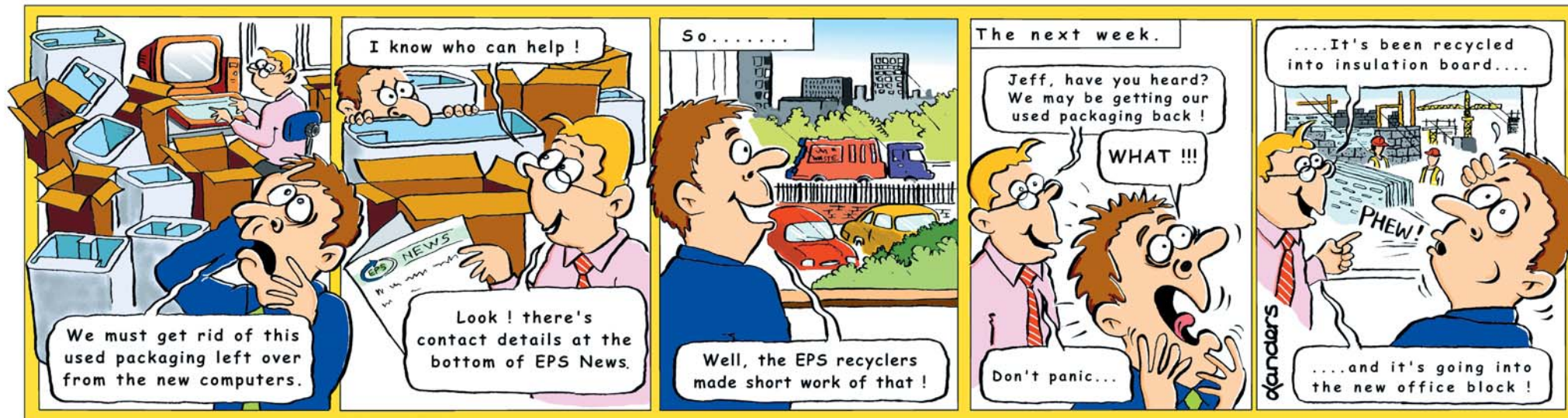
to ensure that Group continues and builds on the great results that it has already achieved," says Birnie.

Another important area of work for the EPS Packaging Group is market development. Birnie is fully committed to continuing this: "The Group is currently targeting the pharmaceutical sector – EPS not only protects products, but its outstanding thermal properties means it can assist in maintaining a cold chain for temperature-sensitive products in transit.

"EPS packaging is extraordinarily versatile in its moulding abilities and as an industry, we are innovative, highly technical and well-equipped to meet any challenge our customers present us with.

"The industry must promote EPS products into new sectors and ensure that potential customers are fully informed of the benefits of using EPS packs", concludes Birnie.

Gavin Birnie is dynamic and forward-thinking, and in his new role of Chairman of the EPS Packaging Group, he clearly intends to make an impact. Watch this space!



**The British Plastics Federation (BPF) and its colleagues in the Manufacturing Alliance\* hosted a packed fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference this autumn.**

"We staged this event to draw attention to the role of manufacturing in the economy," explains BPF's Philip Law.

"Labour Party MPs and delegates should know that the manufacturing sector employs 4 million people in the UK and it accounts for two-thirds of the UK's direct exports".

Peter Davis, BPF Director General told EPS News: "We rammed home the point that our industry is innovative, efficient and essential to the entire economy.

"Currently, the Government is hampering us by increasing taxation, National Insurance Contributions

(NICS) and Climate Change Levy (CCL) and excessively regulating.

"We renewed our calls for a Manufacturing Board to be set up at the Department of Trade and Industry, with business people and unions appointed to lead a real manufacturing regeneration strategy.

"The fringe meeting was a great success in putting over our message and denting the Government's – very evident – complacency on manufacturing," concludes Davis.

\*The Manufacturing Alliance members are the BPF, British Rubber Manufacturers' Assoc, Packaging & Industrial Films Assoc, Flexible Packaging Assoc, Gauge and Toolmakers Assoc, Polymer Machinery Manufacturers & Distributors Assoc, Northern Ireland Polymers Assoc, British Coatings Federation and the Scottish Plastics and Rubber Assoc.

**EUMEPS, the European EPS packaging manufacturers organisation, is hosting a major conference on 10, 11 June 2004 in Rome.**

The event will be market-focussed seeking to promote greater understanding of OEM and customer requirements. Delegates will be invited to look at the future of EPS packaging and to consider how this unique material can be further utilised.

#### Online Info

The EUMEPS website has been relaunched. It is packed full of information about recycling with an accredited Life Cycle Analysis available on the site and a worldwide contact database of EPS manufacturing organisations.

Definitely worth a look at [www.epsrecycling.org](http://www.epsrecycling.org).

**If you would like a copy of our new leaflet that provides useful information about the thermal properties of EPS packaging and how it can protect your temperature-sensitive products in transit, please email [info@eps.co.uk](mailto:info@eps.co.uk) to be added to our mailing list – you can expect to see your copy in January 2004.**

