

GBN members awarded top honours at Business Awards



Left to right: Michael Buerk, Sian Pritchard and Angie Watkiss of HMM and Councillor John Hawkesby portfolio holder for Economic Regeneration Bedfordshire County Council

Three GBN member companies were singled out for their achievements at the recent Annual Business Excellence Awards. Sandy-based company Harry Major Machine (HMM) won the coveted Sustainable Business Category, sponsored by Bedfordshire County Council. Leighton Buzzard-based Grundfos Pumps were given an award of merit in the same category. And top honour of Company of the Year was awarded to founder GBN member Briton Electronics.

On winning the Sustainable Business Award, HMM company secretary Sian Pritchard said, "Under difficult times, we have achieved a lot and this award is testimony to the efforts of all our staff to ensure we move forward as an environmentally and socially responsible business that is in the very best position to innovate and diversify to meet future needs".

HMM's success story is both testament to Sian's hard work and to the company taking advantage of help on offer to

smaller firms. Sian attended the Business Environmental Training Initiative (BETI), which helped her to address the control of pollution, waste, land, soil and water.

She then used BETI to cascade training to her staff and to gain their involvement – so much so that with staff cooperation and commitment, the company reduced the amount of waste being sent to landfill by 50% over 12 months.

Peer support from fellow GBN member Degussa Goldsmidt helped HMM successfully achieve ISO 14001 in October 2004. The EMS assessors particularly praised the company for the high level of staff motivation, knowledge and confidence.

The changes made throughout HMM have also helped it win new business in the pharmaceutical sector and further diversification will protect the business and safeguard future jobs.

Grundfos Pumps' award of Merit resulted from the company designing-in energy efficiency to all their products,

running environmental workshops for their staff and developing an environmental management system, staff suggestion scheme, walk to work initiatives and addressing utility usage, waste minimisation and embedding sustainability into their basic company values. In addition, Grundfos has recently bagged a national environmental award (see story on page 3).

Other honours in the sustainable business category went to Kempston's Newnorth Print, which was Highly Commended. The company has worked with Envirowise, the Environment Agency and Action Energy to set a series of environmental performance objectives to improve business efficiency, reduce costs and minimise the company's impact on the environment.

GBN is part of the Bedfordshire and Luton Sustainable Business Partnership (BLSBP), which provides a range of help for smaller businesses. For information visit www.blsbp.co.uk.

STOP PRESS . STOP PRESS

GBN has just established a partnership with NQA - one of the major players in the ISO 14000 field - to provide an exciting opportunity for GBN members who attend our monthly environmental management systems

support seminars.

The agreement will enable GBN members to access an exciting programme of support and training that will be delivered by experts involved in assessing and developing the revised ISO

14001 standard. The seminars will be open to GBN members only and will enable all members - both those developing a formal system to registration, or an informal system for 'good housekeeping', to learn from

the experts and share best practice.

Please make a note to reserve 8.30 to 10.30 on the third Wednesday every month and watch out for the full programme, which will be sent out shortly.

The GBN Interview

Bill Burton managing director of Briton EMS Ltd (formerly Briton Electronics) and GBN founder member

Coming from the electronics industry, which has been subject to stringent laws and regulations since the 1980s, Bill Burton is no stranger to dealing with environmental issues. What's more, he has gone from a position of being forced to comply with regulations to being a passionate supporter of the business benefits of environmental management.

Briton EMS Ltd (formerly Briton Electronics) was established in 1979 as a cottage industry designing printed circuit boards (PCBs) and using outworkers for assembly. Some 25 years on the company has two factories involved in designing and building the complete product, which is then shipped to end users.

"If it's going to save the planet we've got to do it."

The environmental story for Bill starts with ozone-depleting CFCs being phased out by 1996. Prior to this, the electronics industry was routinely using CFC solvents to clean flux residue from PCBs. Bill says his reaction at the time was: "If it's going to save the planet we've got to do it." Eliminating CFC solvents took imagination, determination and a carefully considered approach to business processes.

In 1991, Briton looked at alternative cleaning processes but then realised that it could eliminate the cleaning stage altogether by using a new



type of flux and soldering machine. Bill says: "We funded the investment in a new soldering machine almost entirely from savings on solvent and energy and reduced our environmental impact significantly."

Having bitten the bullet, Bill and his colleagues then went on look at other areas of their business and realised significant cost savings, improved efficiency and better waste control by splitting rubbish, reducing landfill, and reducing electricity consumption and using green electricity suppliers.

The company is now registered to ISO 14001 and has recently achieved a BSI Kitemark for its manufacturing process. The next challenge for Briton is the WEEE

Directive and lead-free processes and restriction of hazardous substances, but, with his typically practical approach, Bill is tackling the issues head-on by working with Briton's suppliers.

"You don't need a lot of formal systems in place to make environmental improvements..."

It is this wealth of experience and the conviction that environmental change makes good business sense that prompted Bill to become one of the founder members of GBN. He believes the principles on which the Network was founded still hold true. "The message is really that you don't need a lot of formal systems in place to make environmental improvements, it can be done

by using sound management practice and running systems efficiently," says Bill.

So, how would Bill like to see GBN evolve and progress? "We're hoping that we'll be able to get more resources in terms of a full-time executive officer to gain closer and more consistent contact with businesses. What we really need is a champion as our own resources are limited. Someone who is available on a daily basis to provide support on a continuous basis for those who need it would

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be ideal," he says.

GBN was set up to support local businesses who wish to make improvements to their environmental performance, and Bill still believes this is one of the main aims of the Network. "Far too often smaller companies meet obstacles when trying to take initiatives and quickly become disillusioned because there are too many barriers," he says. "GBN is there to help companies overcome these obstacles and realise that you can make a difference."

For Bill, persevering with environmental improvements has paid off. The company won the Environmental Good Practice Award in 2003, and followed this up with the prestigious Company of the Year Award in late 2004.

Bedfordshire Waste Exchange Results Show Growing Local Success Rate

Just published is the Bedfordshire Waste Exchange's yearly report, which shows extremely encouraging results.

The Exchange now has almost 450 members, with around three new members joining each week. As a result of this, last year the BWE

helped to divert approximately 2200 tonnes of waste from landfill, through reuse or recycling. This figure continues to rise as more members take advantage of the service. It is proving to be a cheaper and more environmentally-conscious method of waste disposal.

New and existing members can take advantage of site visits to help identify materials for reuse or recycling through BWE, which minimises waste within companies.

The BWE website is regularly updated, with new materials becoming available every week, to be included on

BWE's mailing list and receive regular BWE "materials alerts" email project manager Sam Griggs at sgriggs@linden-consulting.co.uk.

For more information, visit www.bedfordshire-waste-exchange.co.uk or contact Sam Griggs on 01799 524328.



Grundfos Pumps Beats Allcomers to Win National "Green" Award

Leighton Buzzard firm Grundfos Pumps has walked away with a top award from the recent National Business Awards held in London.

These awards, which have been running for three years, have been described by Gordon Brown as "the UK business Oscars", and are highly sought after. The combined turnover of the businesses that submitted entries in 2004 totalled an incredible £337bn; this translates to 30% of the UK's GDP.

Up for the Environmental Awareness Award category against tough competition – BP, Unilever, Cardiff Harbour Authority and Rockware Glass – and following a gruelling three round selection process, Grundfos was finally announced the winners at the Gala Dinner.

Grundfos is one of the world's largest pump manufacturers and is committed to developing pumps and pump solutions that minimise the impact on the environment by being as energy efficient as possible.

This is important as pumps account for 20% of the world's total energy consumption and, by choosing a variable speed pump, the energy required to operate it can be reduced by as much as 70%. Grundfos has also made great strides in producing pumps that only use renewable energy.

Peter Reynolds (pictured left), director of sales for Commercial Building Services, collected the award on behalf of the company and said: "This is a fantastic achievement. Pumps are often a forgotten commodity, yet they can make a real



difference in saving energy. We have for many years been encouraging installers, consultants and contractors to specify energy saving pumps; this now gives us a real opportunity to tell consumers they do have a

choice, and their pump can save energy, which will have a positive impact on the environment and also save them money at the same time."

Simon James receives tankard as GBN thanks



Simon James, who stood down as executive officer for GBN before taking up a new post with CarlBro as technical director (Environmental Impact Assessment) earlier this year, was back in Bedfordshire recently on business.

Despite now mainly working from Leeds, Simon's home is still in Bedfordshire, and Charles Neame, GBN chairman, took the opportunity to meet up with Simon in Silsoe just before Christmas.

On behalf of the membership, Charles presented Simon with an engraved tankard, as thanks for his work for the network during his extensive association with GBN. Many members will know Simon personally through his breakfast seminars and other training activities for GBN, or in his role as environmental consultant. We hope that Simon will be able to contribute to a GBN event during the course of the 2005 programme.

You can contact Simon at simon.james@carlbro.co.uk

GBN Seminar gives local companies help to deal with transport issues

GBN recently organised a seminar for members to help them address issues associated with transport, including traffic, congestion, car parking, distribution and logistics.

The event, hosted by GBN member 3M, drew on the expert facilitation of training coordinator for the Business Travel Initiative Steve Macey, who led a discussion about problems businesses face on a daily basis, and went on to explain the kinds of measures they could take to remedy some of them, and also how they could save money, space and time by developing environmentally friendly and sensible travel policies.

Next up was Roy Bufton from 3M's UK distribution centre, who shared his company's knowledge on how to cut down environmental impacts by reviewing transport and logistics. The company has

worked with subcontractors to ensure that transport used for deliveries is appropriate, lorries that are sent out with deliveries make a return journey equally loaded to eliminate unnecessary journeys, and that customer deliveries are prioritised to ensure deliveries are made with the frequency that's needed. According to Roy, "Taking a considered approach to distribution and logistics not only benefits the environment and cuts down on traffic congestion, it makes business sense because it saves us money."

Finally Matt Peachey of Mid Beds District Council gave a talk on the Elms Viking Partnership and how progress has been made by cooperation and liaison between industry and the local authority.

For information, please visit www.btravel.info.



In Brief - Environment Update

GBN Programme of Events

Free Energy Efficiency Training Event

10 February

At: Bedfordshire County Council offices, Cauldwell Street, Bedford



MK Energy Agency is to hold a free energy efficiency training event. The day will start at 9:30 am and finish at 12 noon. Tea and coffee will be provided.

MKEA Training is a vital tool to help educate and promote good practice in energy efficiency in businesses.

The BEET programme can provide this training to help employees understand the benefits of energy efficiency in their own homes where they can then transfer this knowledge into the workplace.

The training covers meters and bills, understanding heating systems and controls, saving energy through behavioural measures, physical measures to improve energy efficiency, grants and discounts and more. These energy efficient practices and measures can easily be transferred between home and the workplace, helping reduce home energy bills and helping businesses to use energy more efficiently too.

BEET is funded by the European Social Fund and Bedfordshire County Council and so is provided free of charge to small-to-medium sized businesses in the administrative area of Bedfordshire County Council.

To book your place on the 10th or to arrange for an energy review and training session to take place at your work premises, please contact Janet Millar at MK Energy Agency. Tel: 01908 665566 email: janet@mkea.org.uk

Business Environmental Training Initiative (BETI)

22 February - Tourism and Leisure

16 March - Service Industries

The next round of Business Environmental Training Initiative (BETI) courses is now underway, backed by European Social Fund and Learning + Skills Council funding. GBN is a partner in the BETI project.

BETI benefits SMEs within Bedfordshire and Luton by offering them the chance to attend a one-day environmental awareness training course, which will equip them with the necessary tools, information and expertise to meet increasingly complex environmental legislation. The course is free of charge and is nationally accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH).

The training itself works by providing initial training for one company representative, usually a manager, and then assigning a mentor to give that individual support as the training is cascaded to others within the company.

There will be more courses running later on in the year, and businesses are encouraged to express their interest at the earliest opportunity. Contact Garth McKenzie on 01234 228568, or email: garth.mckenzie@bedscc.gov.uk. or visit www.beti.info.

Disclaimer

These updates are for guidance only. GBN is not in a position to give definitive advice on matters concerning the law and you should always consult your legal advisors on these matters. GBN does not accept liability for any errors, omissions or misleading information.

Prosecutions

 Cranfield based pushchair and nursery products company

Kidz Kargo was fined £1,500 for burning rubbish instead of disposing of it legally. It was also ordered to pay £1,150 costs.

The Environment Agency had sent a warning letter to the company only ten months earlier. Investigators found a skip containing waste including metal bars, buggy parts, such as wheels, plastic tie material and a large amount of ash.

Environment Agency officer Louise Earey said, "We are happy with this result. Companies need to be aware that using unauthorised disposal methods to avoid legitimate disposal costs will not be tolerated."

 Marshall Brothers' vegetable packing operation was fined

£12,000 and ordered to pay £2,114.33 costs after it admitted polluting Hobhole drain at Butterwick with liquid

waste from rotting vegetables. The liquid from the rotting vegetables was at least 100 times the strength of crude sewage. Much of the oxygen in the water had been removed by the pollution and there were very few invertebrates surviving.

 Thames Water was fined £12,000, and ordered to pay costs of

£1,020 after polluting the River Mimram in Hertfordshire with raw sewage when a blockage caused raw effluent to seep into the surface water drains.

The incident, caused by a blockage in the sewer which allowed raw effluent to seep into the surface water drains and flow into local residents' grounds, resulted in considerable pollution and damage to a 100m stretch.

An overflow occurred in exactly the same spot in August 2003. However, no action was taken in time to prevent the second incident from occurring.

Useful Websites

www.gbn-bedfordshire.org.uk

www.beti.info

www.bedfordshire-waste-exchange.co.uk

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

www.edie.net

www.envirowise.gov.uk

www.detr.gov.uk

www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk

www.envirolinkuk.org

www.netregs.gov.uk

GBN Contacts

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