

### **Background Document: Burley History**

1975 After a twenty year career with two of Britain's largest electrical appliance manufacturers, John Barson decided to strike out on his own, creating Burley Appliances. Back in 1975 Burley consisted of John Barson, a garage and a few components.

For the grand sum of £5 John commissioned three wrought iron basket designs. It took John all day to assemble his first electric fire. The next day he drove into Leicester with his fire and sold it. Things looked promising but production would have to speed up if the family were not to face starvation!

The first of several turning points came when John visited the electrical buyer at Harrods. Returning with an order for 12 fires, there was no looking back. John took on his first employee and found a bigger garage. John's son and daughter, after leaving school, also joined the Company.

1981 The real breakthrough came when Burley became the approved supplier to the Northwest Electricity Board. Within 3 years Burley supplied all 14 of the British Electricity Boards (around 900 outlets).

1985 The export market, a totally unexplored area for Burley began to be developed. This market goes from strength to strength. Today Burley exports to all major countries throughout the world.

1993 The next major development for Burley was the introduction of the Empingham model. This was the first model of its kind that could be both inset and freestanding. Today, this has been widely accepted as industry standard.

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- 1998 The 90's also saw Burley move into the gas appliance market, introducing the first flueless gas fire to be sold in the UK. This market continues to grow.
- 2002 The Barson family tradition continued with the appointment of John's son Steve as Managing Director.
- 2005 Burley developed an innovative new range of electric fires featuring **Sensa-Switch** touch control, remote control and an integral ioniser to freshen room air.
- 2008 The well-known but slightly outdated logo has been replaced by a new, modern corporate image. This new look coincided with the publication of brochures featuring contemporary new hang-on-the-wall models as well as the ever-popular inset and basket fires.

Burley's dedicated contracts department published its own brochure aimed specifically at Builders, Councils and Housing Associations.

Burley's reputation for quality products has allowed the company to develop from a small family concern to become one of the UK's leading manufacturers of electric and flueless gas fires. It currently supplies approximately 1500 independent retailers around the United Kingdom and 40 countries worldwide.