



CHRISTMAS 2005 EDITION

BSGA NEWS



NEWS IN BRIEF

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE BSGA

Contacting the BSGA is now a whole lot easier. In October Headquarters at Peterborough moved into the fast lane of the information super-highway with the introduction of personalised e-mail addresses for Albert Baxter and Sue Collins. You can e-mail Albert at abaxter@bsga.co.uk and Sue at scollins@bsga.co.uk. The previous e-mail address info@bsga.co.uk remains active as a general contact address from the Association's website.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MONITORING

The BSGA have recently lodged objections to the revised Local Development Plans submitted by Powys, County Council and Tendering, District Council; both of which placed unreasonable restrictions on the number and style of signs that might be used in their areas.

We will keep you informed of the progress and any responses to these objections through the pages of the Newsletter and the web site.

Developing the BSGA Website

www.bsga.co.uk

what's your opinion?

Plans are afoot for a major update of the BSGA web site (www.bsga.co.uk) and we want to hear from any members who have views on how the site should be developed.

The current site was launched five years ago and it was developed to perform three primary functions – to provide a comprehensive information service to members (including the technical guidelines online); to provide a marketing service for members (through the signmakers and sign suppliers search facilities); and to provide background on the BSGA for signmakers who may be interested in joining the association or for sign buyers who need to understand why they should select a BSGA member for their next project.

Whilst the site has attracted a regular flow of visitors, the BSGA Council believe the time is right for an upgrade to the site. The twin aims being, to increase the level of information available to both members and non-members and to attract even more visitor traffic.

The principal changes under consideration include:

NEW STYLE HOME PAGE – which will be changed regularly to increase interest levels and provide up-to-date news, information and offers (we would be working in close co-operation with the Sign Directions team to achieve this).

ADVERTISING – the potential for both signmakers and sign suppliers (if they are BSGA members) to advertise on either the home page or search pages on the site. Roll over banner ads would provide instant links to the advertiser's own site.

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES – an improved search facility on the technical guidelines to make finding the sections you need a lot easier.

MEMBERS FORUM – to be located in the password-protected members only area of the site, the forum will give members (and their employees) the opportunity to raise and discuss any matters they feel will be of interest to the industry.

GENERIC SEARCH ENGINES

Type 'signmakers' or 'sign industry' into Google or Yahoo, and you will get to the BSGA. However, we want to make our site the first stop for anyone looking for information on signmakers or the industry in the UK, and to achieve this we are considering sponsoring the site (on a pay per click basis) on one or two of the major generic search engines. By doing this we can guarantee we are at, or very near, the top of the list.

If you have any comments on the above proposals or if you have other ideas which you feel would improve the website, we'd like to hear from you. Write to us at the BSGA office or email to info@bsga.co.uk

A more interesting Search Page.



Local Development Plans

You Can't Put A Sign There!

As reported elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter, the Association have recently lodged objections to the Development Plans submitted by Powys, County Council and Tendring District Council; both of which placed unreasonable restrictions on the number and style of signs that might be used in their areas.

The monitoring of local council's Development Plans is an important aspect of the work done by the BSGA on behalf of its members and, as the year draws to a close, Edward Butterfield has been reflecting on the Government's intent with regard to advertisement regulations and the importance of the Association's Development Plan monitoring programme.

The original consultation document on outdoor advertisements was issued in 1999. The government today through the offices of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) wants to bring advertisement control in line with the general planning permission process. The aim they hope will reduce the number of appeals and as a result the total cost of the appeal process to the taxpayer.

For sign makers the key question was, where does signage sit within this general framework? The possibility that the Planning Policy Guidance for Outdoor Advertising Control (PPG19) could be abolished has receded but if local plans take precedence over amenity and public safety then obtaining consent for advertisements could become far more difficult.

Central Government's intention, as outlined in the Consultation Paper, was to delegate the responsibility for decision making down to local

councils or failing those, to parliamentary select committees. This would ensure that planning decisions on controversial projects, such as the building of terminal five at Heathrow, did not impact on the national political scene.



Signage was thus caught up in the slipstream of national planning regulations, the potential outcome being that the existing criteria for approving advertising, namely public safety and amenity, would no longer be primary when a local council was considering a planning application for signage. These would become secondary to the requirements of the council's Development Plan.

In this environment planning applications would firstly be judged against the requirements of an individual council's Development Plan, of which there could be more than five-hundred in the UK, only then would the issues of amenity and public safety be considered. This could signal the end of national planning regulations as far as the control of advertising was concerned.

At present the regulation and control of advertising falls under the remit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) however, given the recent deluge of proposed parliamentary legislation, plans to revise the planning regulations have slipped down the priority list of the Government's legislative programme. This change of emphasis in Whitehall has not however stopped councils from updating their local Development Plans, far from it; many have published amended policy documents. If allowed to go unchecked these could give councils the power to determine future policy on advertising in their locality.

One could argue that the national regulations still apply however; a local Development Plan may contain policies relating to signage which, if not challenged, could be detrimental to our industry. Should this occur and the legislation permitting local Development Plans to take precedence be empowered, our national planning regulations would be lost, only to be replaced by a myriad of local regulations each with their own idiosyncratic requirements. This would be a nightmare scenario for our industry.

To avoid this possibility the BSGA, together with the Outdoor Advertising Association, made the decision in 2004 to monitor local council's Development Plans as they were submitted and to lodge objections where appropriate; the aim being to prevent restrictive policies becoming law.

The Association appointed planning consultant Chris Thomas to review all newly published local Development Plans and to lodge objections on their behalf, where he felt the proposals ran contrary to current national guidelines relating to signage.

This year the Association have appealed successfully against a number of proposals for example, the requirement in the Haringey, Borough Council draft Development Plan, which stated that internally illuminated fascia box signs would not be accepted on listed buildings and in conservation areas. This phrase was subsequently removed from the document.

Similar objections were lodged against Lambeth Council's Development Plan. The council however refused to make any further changes and our objections will now be submitted to the inspector before a public enquiry.

Fife council in Scotland issued a plan restricting size, numbers and colours of signs; the BSGA have lodged an objection to this and other similar proposals from Swale, Wigan and Carlisle councils.

In summary, if such policies are allowed to go uncontested and remain dormant in local Development Plans around the country then ultimately, when national legislation is passed making considerations of amenity and public safety subservient to individual local Development Plans, our national regulations would be history.

The latest news from the ODPM is that they intend to issue draft proposals prior to Christmas and after studying these, the BSGA will comment in due course.

The role of the British Sign and Graphics Association in monitoring local Development Plans is a vital one. It is essential for the future of the sign industry in the UK that we have clear national planning regulations. National regulations provide a fair and uniform way of dealing with advertising and signage; we should continue to be robust in our defence of the existing arrangements. They should not be undermined by stealth.



Meet Our Newest Members...

It's always a great pleasure to welcome new members to the BSGA; in this issue we are pleased to include short features on three companies who joined the Association recently. Thanks to all of them for providing the background information and photographs.

ENGINEER CONTRACT SERVICES

Engineer Contract Services have joined the BSGA as an Installer and are based at the Twickenham Trading Estate, just across the road from the rugby stadium.



The Company employs 26 people and offers full installation and maintenance services to advertising sites in the London area, including highly regulated sites on the London Underground and British Rail. The Company's services range from large sign installation and maintenance projects, through to basic cleaning and poster site installs.



Sean Bolger, Managing Director at ECS said, 'With fifteen years experience in this environment, our expertise allows us to provide timely responses, which meet client needs and support them in the development of projects.' He also commented that, 'ECS focus on quality of workmanship, safety, competitive pricing and are committed to providing clients with a high standard of customer service.'

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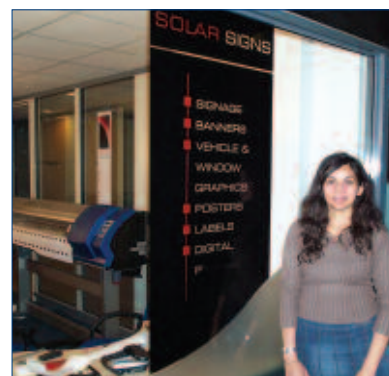
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SOLAR SIGNS

Solar Signs are our newest Affiliate member and can be found in The Business Design Centre, Islington. They are a relatively young company, having been established in July 2005, although proprietor Jaaya Kumari has several years experience in the sign industry.

Jaaya trained as a textile designer and after graduating with a BA (Hons) in Textiles and Fashion, worked as a freelance textile artist on projects with museums, schools and other arts organisations throughout the U.K. She claims to have fallen into the sign industry by chance after moving to London, not realising that sign making would soon become a passion. Solar Signs offer a range of services including digital printing, banners, vehicle and window graphics, built up letters and illuminated box signs.

One final comment from Jaaya herself, 'It's been a long hard struggle and I know I still have a lot to learn, but I feel I am now beginning to gain respect in what is a male dominated industry.'



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THINK SIGNS

Think Signs are based in Bournemouth have joined the Association as a Full Member. According to Creative Director Darrel Griffin, 'There's a great blend of skill and experience in the Think team, which means we can combine sign making know-how with exciting graphic and interior design ideas.'

The company has a portfolio of local and national clients, supplying bespoke sign systems and digital print with an emphasis on innovative design. They have the latest solvent inkjet technology and plan to invest in further new plant in the near future, which may require moving to larger premises.



Managing Director, Warren Hoare says, 'There is no getting away from the importance of first-class customer care and professional business practice; becoming Full Members of the BSGA underlines our continued commitment to our customers, our business values and our growth programme.'

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Ghost Riders in the Sky

The first meeting of the BSGA Bikers Club was to have taken place on 17th November, at HQ Peterborough. The three founding members had promised to pose for festive pictures in leathers and Santa hats, but on the day Murphy's Law kicked in and we were left with empty chairs and a single, token crash helmet.

What happened to wreck our carefully laid plans? One poor soul spent the day tucked up in bed with a hot Lemsip and his teddy bear; another's bike suffered a major

mechanical failure en route to the meeting and the third; he got a bad case of stage fright and declined to have his picture taken.

You will be pleased to hear that all three have since recovered from their various ailments and in an attempt to make amends have provided a few pin-up pictures for the delight of their fellow bikers.

This was to have been a tongue-in-cheek item, a bit of fun for the festive season, but word got out and, over the last couple of weeks, biking members of the BSGA have been calling to ask how they go about joining the club.



Members signed up so far include... Craig Brown and David Corbett both of Signs Express, Bob Fitzhugh, Hawes Signs and Joe Johnson of Ringway Signs Ltd, Jez Taylor of William Smith & Sons and Ian Turner of Tunewell Juice Group.

We've also had a number of suggestions for bike club events, which include a day out at a race circuit, to give members the chance of getting together and showing off their bikes!

If you're a bike fan who wants to get involved in the BSGA Bikers Club or have suggestions for other days out, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your suggestions to info@bsga.co.uk and we'll keep you posted on progress through the Newsletter.



How Good is Your Technical Knowledge?



Put yourself to the test with the following multiple-choice questions:

Question 1: What does A.T.L. stand for with regard to lamp light output?

- (a) Attention to Light
- (b) Average through Life
- (c) All tubes lit
- (d) Any terminal live
- (e) None of the above

Question 2: What is the initial output for a 5ft (65W) Cool White, hot cathode lamp?

- (a) 4450 Lumens
- (b) 5100 Lumens
- (c) 5750 Candelas
- (d) 4800 Lumens
- (e) 4800 Candelas

These are just two examples of the question that Merson Signs of Glasgow put to their staff regularly. The company have found a unique way to use the wealth of information contained in the BSGA Technical Guidelines as part of their ongoing training and development programmes.

Once a fortnight staff at the company are e-mailed six multiple choice-questions, based

on a pre-selected section of the Technical Guidelines, and asked to submit their answers. As an incentive to participate, the top scorer in each quiz is awarded a prize.

Roddy Angus, Managing Director at Merson Signs said, 'The quiz has generated a lot of interest and it helps keep everyone's technical knowledge up to speed.' He also commented that the company have seen other benefits come from it, 'Our people have been able to apply the information gained through answering the quiz questions to current projects, which can only be good for the business.'

The idea of using the Technical Guidelines in this way is a new one on us but if your company have found another novel way to benefit from the Technical Guidelines we'd like to hear from you. Please send your comments to info@bsga.co.uk

If you're itching to know the answers, they can be found by consulting the relevant Technical Guideline in the member's area of the BSGA web site www.bsga.co.uk. In this case it's Guideline C2.2: Internal Illumination of Box Signs that you want. Alternatively here they are; **Technical Quiz**

Answers: 1(b) and 2(d)

NEWS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

We've almost reached the end of another edition and, as I'm sure you will appreciate, it can at times be a bit of a struggle to find interesting news items for the Newsletter, at least that's my excuse, so this is a call for help. If there are any interesting or amusing stories that you can't wait to share with your fellow members, or you wish to comment on some burning issue, please drop us a line; either by e-mail to one of the addresses above or if you prefer using more traditional materials, quill pen and parchment perhaps, to the Peterborough office address. All contributions will be gratefully received and we will do our best to include as many as possible, always assuming they are printable!

...AND FINALLY

ALL THAT REMAINS FOR THIS ISSUE IS FOR US TO WISH YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.