

Setting the Standards
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NEWS

New website goes live



The BSGA's website has had a complete make-over and, by the time this newsletter hits people's desks, the re-vamped site should be live online.

It boasts a host of new features, including simplified navigation, an improved news function, upgraded recruitment section, greater prominence for the 'signmaker search' and 'product search' facilities and a new 'training search' function.

"The site has a completely new look and the simplified architecture makes it much easier for visitors to navigate their way round the site to find exactly what they are looking for," explained BSGA Director David Catanach.

The original website was built about a decade ago using the best technology available at the time but over the years, as more and more information has been added has become unwieldy and difficult to navigate.

"It had reached the stage where it was challenging to find what you were looking for. The site is the premier communications

tool of the Association and an important marketing vehicle for members. It was time to bring it up-to-date," said David.

The new site has been built using the latest 'content managed system' software which will enable BSGA staff to add to and update the content virtually instantly.

"We want to make the site a really effective marketing tool for members and the new system means we can and will add news and pictures from and about our members as well as the industry and the Association as soon as we receive it."

The site has also been developed to be 'search engine friendly' and an ongoing campaign is being put in place to drive it to the top of the rankings for Google, Bing and Yahoo etc. "We want it to be the first port of call for anyone interested in signs or signage materials," said David Catanach.

The signmaker search facility is retained, but is given much more prominence and members will retain the facility to upload and edit their

own profiles. In the same way the product supplier search is being enhanced with a 'tag' facility for product names and there is an extra search facility for training courses, which will cover both government funded formal training and specific training courses provided by members.

"We're also working in partnership with Sign Directions magazine to boost the recruitment section on the site. People looking for new staff will have the opportunity to advertise on the site instantly and in the magazine for a single low price. It's a service the industry has been looking for, for some time and I want the BSGA website to be one of the 'go-to' places for recruitment."

The password guarded members' area of the site has been given a new look but retains all the confidential information for members including the technical guidelines.

"There's so much that is different about the site, the best way to see it all is to visit," added David.

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BSGA on the move

The British Sign and Graphics Association is on the move – quite literally.

The Association is moving from Peterborough, its home for the past 15 years, and will take up residence at the Northgate Business Centre in Newark, Nottinghamshire from July 1st, 2012.

The new location provides the association with improved accommodation and facilities and is better situated than the Orton Enterprise Centre.

"The offices in Peterborough were starting to look their age and there no sign of the landlords being willing to invest in improvements," said BSGA Director David Catanach. "As the lease was coming to an end, the Council made the decision to move our offices."

"The new offices in Newark provide ideal accommodation for the Association and are located in the Town Centre rather than on an industrial estate next to a motorway. The East Coast mainline runs through Newark and provides an excellent service for visitors who

would prefer to travel by train and there are first-rate road links as well.

All round, the new offices in Newark will suit the Association much better."

As from July 1st the Association's address will be:

**Northgate Business Centre,
Northgate,
Newark
Notts
NG24 1 EZ**

The new telephone number goes live in July 1, 2012 and will change to: 0845 338 3016

There will be no change to email addresses.

Sign and Digital UK

March saw us all make the annual pilgrimage to the NEC for Sign and Digital UK – and we're pleased to report that for the BSGA this year, the visit proved really worthwhile.

The show was celebrating its 25th anniversary and over the three days enjoyed an attendance of over 6000 people.

"The show stayed busy for three days and we had a steady stream of visitors to the stand which we shared with Sign Directions Magazine and the GraphicDisplayCommunity website," said David Catanach. "More importantly, some of the visitors, including a couple of big names in the industry, actually made the decision on the spot to join or, in some cases, to re-join the association and their applications are now being processed."

David also took the opportunity to visit all the associate members who were



exhibiting, including Sign Elite, Trade Signs, Roland, William Smith, Texel, Applelec and Universal Aluminium.

"The show provided a great opportunity to meet up with the members to bring them up to speed on BSGA activities and get their feedback. Virtually without exception, they reported that the show has worked extremely well for them and visitor traffic had been excellent.

"The economy in general may not be doing



that well, but the activity at the exhibition would appear to indicate that in the sign industry at least people are looking forward with more confidence."

WAGE GRANTS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

If you are operating a sign business and have considered taking on an apprentice, now might be the right time. The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has announced that it will provide wage grants to small/medium sized employers that take on new 16 – 24 year old apprentices.

The grant has a total value of £1500.00, with half being paid after eight weeks and the balance at 12 months. However, there are only 40,000 grants available and it's a matter of first come, first served.

These grants are in addition to any training costs – training of 16 – 18 year olds is fully

funded, while half the training costs for 19 – 24 year old are met.

NAS also offers to recruit, employ and mentor apprentices on behalf of employers. This service costs the employer £25 per week (+ apprentice wages) but is useful where there is a lack of a HR department. It also reduces the perceived risk to the employers themselves.

Apprenticeships in Signmaking are currently available on two levels – Intermediate (Level 2), which normally takes one year, and Advanced (Level 3) which normally take two years to complete.

Apprentices undertake on-the-job training at the workplace combined with off-the-job training, usually delivered by a local training provider or Further Education College.

Apprenticeships are available in England for Signmakers, Fabricators/Fitters, Quality Control Technicians, Sign Installation Engineers and Sign Designers.

For more information visit our website at www.bsga.co.uk or www.cogent-ssc.com (Cogent is the issuing authority for Apprenticeships in Signmaking).

AGM in Birmingham

The BSGA's Annual General Meeting took place at the NEC on the middle day of the Sign exhibition.

There was an excellent turnout for the AGM including one special visitor, Hans-Joachim Kremser of the German Sign Association.

While the AGM provide the setting for delivery of formal reports on the year's activities, the main business of the day was

the election of officers and Board members.

David Dyke of Subcon Design was elected Vice President of the Association. Mike Hall, of Mike Hall Technical Services, Ian Turner of Tunewell Transformers and Andrew Evans of Walsall College, were re-elected to the Board.

In addition three new Board members were elected namely:

- Rod Hill of Morgan Signs
- Rob Lambie of UK Sign Group
- Haylee Benton of Trade Signs UK

"We now have an exceptionally strong Board and the new blood and fresh outlook will help us take the Association forward to a brighter future," said David Catanach.

(A feature introducing the new Board members will appear in the next issue)

Signscope – a sign business on a different scale

As a part of his role as Director of the BSGA David Catanach likes to visit member companies to 'see how they tick' and one of his recent visits was to Ramsgate-based Signscope, a part of the Blaze Group. He reports:

"You actually don't have to look further than their client list, which includes many High street retailers and key blue chip clients in every sector to understand that this is a sign business on a different scale.

However, the Signscope facility at Ramsgate still comes as something of a shock to the system when you arrive. They have 70,000 square feet of covered factory space on a four-acre freehold site and offer every aspect of sign manufacture - in-house.

The factory does everything from metal fabrication and letter making, through vacuum and thermal forming of plastics, routing, large format digital printing and screen printing to every kind of lighting.

Just to complete the picture, they also provide graphic design, CAD design capabilities and offer planning applications as well.

The whole factory has obviously been laid out to aid work-flow and offer a high quality end product. Signscope are accredited with ISO9001, ISO1400, OSHAS18001, Safe Contractor, Chas, IPAF and Eurosafe as well of course as being a BSGA member.

Key to the on-going success of Signscope is delivery of the highest level of customer

service combined with the highest standards of quality management.

Signscope view membership of the BSGA as important to the business because it helps reinforce that 'we take care and provide quality to our clients'.

Membership of the Association underscores the fact that Signscope is a professional sign business that takes quality and customer service seriously and this is recognised by both existing and potential clients.

It also allows the company to support the work of the BSGA in areas such as education and training, planning and other legislative matters that are vital to the future of the sign industry in the UK.



Applelec opens 8000 square foot factory in Leeds

BSGA Associate Member Applelec has vastly increased its production capabilities with the opening of an 8000 square foot factory in Leeds.

The development is the result of the company posting record sales in 2011, the most successful year in its history. With a growth in demand for Applelec's LED Light Sheet product, the new Totem modular freestanding sign range and its luxury illuminated letters, more space was essential.

Ian Drinkwater, Applelec Managing Director said: "The new Leeds factory provides us with the manufacturing space we have needed as demand has increased for key products such

as LED Light Sheet and other products and services we offer to the sign trade."

The factory is now fully operational and staffed with ten skilled letter makers to offer an increased capacity for signage fabrication.

The opening of the Leeds factory will be complemented by the development of Applelec's Bradford manufacturing facility, including an expansion of the LED clean assembly facility and a new showroom. The clean room expansion provides a larger work space for the high volume of projects utilising LEDs and ensures work takes place in a clean and dust free environment.

Smart Group removes the logo

We are happy to report that Smart Group has, after receiving an approach from the ASA on behalf of the Association, removed the BSGA logo from their website.

The fact that it had remained on the website was, evidently, an oversight and the company moved to take it down within two days of being approached by the Advertising Standards Authority.

The BSGA logo is now a trademark and its registration forms part of a determined effort to ensure that the logo is used only by bona fide members of the Association and is protected from misuse.

"Over many years the Association has worked extremely hard to promote the badge as the sign of a quality sign maker. Those who are entitled to use it have met the entry requirements of the BSGA and have signed up to the Code of Practice and Obligations of Membership.

"It is therefore vital that we police its use rigorously and we will take appropriate action against any business that uses the badge and is not a member of the Association," said Director David Catanach.

New Members

Signworld

Established in 1996 and now operating from a modern 17,500 sq. ft. facility in Broughton near Chester with a range of professional sign making equipment and a dedicated passionate team, Signworld earns its reputation for producing a wide range of quality signage to a varied array of retail & industrial clientele spread across the United Kingdom.

Since the early days Signworld has evolved into a group company with numerous sub divisions specialising in Signage, Maintenance, Exhibitions & Displays, Commercial Fleet markings, Graphic Design, Website Development and Web Management.

Signworld's newly constructed and Prestige premises in Broughton Chester together with additional investments in technology has further strengthened its position in the market place and are now widely considered by procurement professionals as the company to work with on small, medium and larger projects requiring the skills of a competent production company.

Signworld have a dedicated team of over twenty five employees comprising of Office, Factory and Site staff who are industry qualified professionals in their fields, operating three continuous fitting teams each with fully equipped vehicles. Signworld can and do service, maintain or install signage anywhere in the UK.

Amari Plastics

Amari Plastics has re-joined the BSGA as an Associate Member.

Formed in 1975, the business is now one of the leading UK distributors of industrial, display and engineering plastics to the sign and other industrial sectors. Brands available from Amari include Plexiglas (acrylic sheet), Makrolon (polycarbonates), Dibond (aluminium composite), Kapa (display board), Ex-cel (foam sheet) Vivak and Apet (polyester) and Polystone (polypropylene sheet). It also offers its own branded products including Acrycast, Acryglas XT, Amarifoam, Amaribond and Stericlad.

In addition, Amari carries the full range of CAD/CAM vinyls from Mactac.

Amari Plastics is based at Weybridge in Surrey, but serves its customers from a total of 14 distribution centres located throughout the UK, from Glasgow to Plympton in Devon.

Revolution Signs

Revolution Signs specialises in router services, flatbed printing, digital printing and has its own in-house graphic design team.

The company's production facility, covering 6000 sq. ft., is equipped with the latest flatbed and wide format printers, laminators and finishing equipment, and their capabilities range from vinyl wall graphics, through full vehicle wrapping to shop fascias.

On the installation side, the company has a wide remit and handles all types of indoor and outdoor programmes whether it is local or nationwide.

Revolution Signs are based at Braintree, Essex.

Behind the scenes activities

Planning Monitoring

The BSGA monitors development plans throughout the country to ensure the emerging Local Plan Policies do not inappropriately apply more onerous considerations on advertisements and signs than already apply within PPG19, Circular 03/2007 and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Without a strong Association there would be no representation and without representation your business

could be adversely affected. BSGA members are kept up to date with notifications as and when they arise.

Recent activities have covered Camden LBC, Redcar & Cleveland BC, Dover Council, Glasgow Council, East Dunbarton Council, Westminster CC, Merton LBC, Oldham MBC, Stafford BC, Newport CC and Waveney DC. In the majority of these cases, the BSGA has had to object against proposals that would have been a detriment to the sign industry as well as creating inappropriate regulations that would affect the sign industry's customers.

Congratulations Sue

Congratulations to Sue Hewick and her husband Paul on the birth of their daughter, Charlie Ann.

Sue, long time secretary to the BSGA, became a mum on Monday, April 24th. Charlie Ann arrived three weeks early, weighing in at 5lb 10oz. Mum and baby are both doing well.

The BSGA Shield Returns

Some time ago, we were able to provide members with the BSGA shield in the form of a plaque. However, because we had to order supplies in bulk, the original plaques were abandoned once supplies had run out.

Now we have sourced a new supplier who will 'make to order' so they are available again. The aluminium plaque, printed in the Association's colours, is mounted on a foiled MDF backing board. The plaque measures 20cm x 15cm and carries the

Association's logo and name with sufficient space underneath for your full company name, membership category and year you joined the BSGA. If you'd like to order a plaque for your reception area, please call us on 01733 230033.

