

## **The BSB on the internet**

**Speaker: Paul Morrow, David Saxby**

**42nd Autumn Conference - 27th/28th October 1997**

# **The BSB on the Internet**

*Paul Morrow*

Last year I gave a paper which set out the details of the web site which had been created by the American Society of Bakery Engineers (ABBE) and confirmed that the Executive of the BSB had agreed to invest in the funds in creating our own web site.

I am pleased to be able to report that we have now done so. The structure of the web site is complete and the task now moves to adding information and links to other relevant sites. I will come back to how we can plan to do this in a moment.

Let me first recap on why we believe having a web site, and in particular one which is linked to the ABBE, is so important to the future of the Society.

At its simplest we believe the exchange of information, in particular technical papers, could become the main reason for joining the BSB. Members will recall that in our Summer Bulletin we informed them that the papers which had been presented at the ASBE conference in Chicago in January were now available to them, on an exclusive basis, via the Internet. Compare this with the cost of going to Chicago, or even the cost of membership of the ASBE to receive your own printed copy. You will see here a list of the papers presented at that conference.

The access to this information is password controlled and the password is your current BSB membership number. We are maintaining this as a live file, deleting numbers of people who do not pay their subscriptions!

The BSB web site has been modelled on that set up by the ASBE. I will show you a slide, downloaded from the web site, to show the main sections.

The first part of the web site is open to anyone and here are details about the Society and in particular the Virtual Showcase.

The second part of the site is the section which is for members only and again this is accessed using your membership number. Here we will build up our own library of papers and have already loaded those from the past three years.

The Virtual Showcase is a means for companies to advertise their services on an industry specific site which greatly increases the chance of potential customers finding you. This can be done either by creating a page on the BSB web site or by putting a link between the BSB and your own web site if you have one.

A number of companies have expressed interest in advertising in the Virtual Showcase but to date only two companies have done so. If you will allow me to set aside our non-commercial rule for a moment, I will show you very briefly the work that they have done.

We hope that in the near future other companies will take advantage of this opportunity, as the more companies who advertise the more attractive the site will be to visitors and also the greater will be the benefit to the Society

As I mentioned earlier the next stage of development of the web site is to increase the amount of information it is carrying and also to develop links with kindred associations.

To do this requires time and someone who knows the industry well. I am very pleased therefore that David Saxby, who will be well known to many of you, has agreed to take up this challenge. David has just retired having spent 44 years in technical positions within the industry. I would therefore like to hand over to David who will go into more detail about the site and explain to you how he sees the site developing.

*David Saxby*

I'm probably newer to some of these aspects than many of you, but we want to make sure we do the right thing in the future, and it's really a question of what you want as members.

I'll give you an idea of what the Americans are doing, and what you may want to do in future. A lot of it is password protected, but you're all allowed in.

Paul has already mentioned the library. Going through some of the other areas:

- Network Services gives information about travel arrangements for members and so on
- The Market Place is where you can sell old equipment
- The Career Centre is a fairly new site and is not really going yet but could perhaps advertise jobs for youngsters maybe.
- There are industry sites where you can get into all sorts of databases, even financial and stock market information.
- In the Consultants' Corner, people talk to each other and leave messages. Consultants may be able to pick up a problem a baker's been having and expand on it and reply through the site -or perhaps even pick up some work.
- On the resources side and not password protected is the Virtual Showcase where ASBE has about 160 people at the moment. There is new product information, an interactive forum, a calendar of events, details of anything new and important which has come up in the industry press, affiliations, information about ASBE where they can tell people what it's all about and a membership application form

When we look at the BSB services at the moment, we've got the library, where we've got the last three years' papers ASBE have got many more than that and. I've looked at it and felt

guilty that I haven't used it more. There's so much on there - and that on its own is worth the price of your membership. We have only two people in our Virtual Showcase compared with 160 in America. About eight times as many people belong to ABBE, but that would indicate that we should be able to get 20 or 30 people on our Showcase quickly.

We can show what's new, and affiliations including trade associations. We want to build a bigger site for ourselves, one that people really want to come to. But we're in a chicken and egg situation -we either get this site going so that it's worthwhile people going to it, or it will die.

If anyone has already got a site and they want links established either now or in the future, or if they have any other ideas, will they please let me know so that we can get the whole thing on the road.

The BSB's web site **is at**

**<http://www.bsb.org.uk>**