Configuring Outlook Express to Access Birkbeck College Email

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CCS Helpdesk
Central Computing Services

Introduction

It is possible to set up virtually any up-to-date mail-reading program to access your Birkbeck email. This document will give you instructions on configuring Outlook Express, which is the mail reader installed on any machine which has Internet Explorer (all Windows machines), to access email at Birkbeck. It does not attempt to teach you how to use Outlook Express.

If you try following the instructions and you can't connect to your email, call the CCS Systems team, who will endeavour to help. We will be unable to help if it's a problem with your Internet Service Provider. You'll need to call the ISP's support line instead.

Please note that this document was first prepared in 2001. All references to acer.ccs.bbk.ac.uk should be replaced by imap2.bbk.ac.uk. Note also that the recommended email system for students is webmail (http://webmail.bbk.ac.uk), and for staff is Outlook 2003 against Exchange.

Contents

> **Note:**
> At Birkbeck, in order to download your mail, you need to connect with a protocol called IMAP. Often, when you receive information from your ISP, they talk about downloading mail with POP3. We use IMAP instead of POP3.

The differences between POP and IMAP:
With POP, all your messages are downloaded from the mail server onto your machine, and are deleted from the server. If you want to look at your mail from somewhere else (such as while you're in the College), you won't be able to see any messages you've previously downloaded with POP.

With IMAP, only *copies* of your messages are kept on your own machine; the actual messages themselves remain on the mail server until they are deleted. This means you can still see your messages whether you're inside or outside the College. The only possible exception is with Sent Mail, but more about that later.

Another useful feature is that IMAP will show all the folders you create on the server. With POP, you can only see and download from your Inbox. Having several folders to sort your messages into can make administration of your email a lot easier. When it comes to downloading your messages, having "high" and "low" priority mail folders can save you having to see everything you don't need at home.

## How to configure your email settings

1. Start
Run Outlook Express. If you are prompted to connect to the Internet, cancel the dialup program. You may get asked if you want to work Offline. Click "Yes" to do so.

2. Create new mail account
In the Menu, go to **Tools**, then **Accounts**. The window below will appear. If you have an existing account, it's likely that your ISP has set up a mail account for you already. Select the **Add** button and then **Mail**.
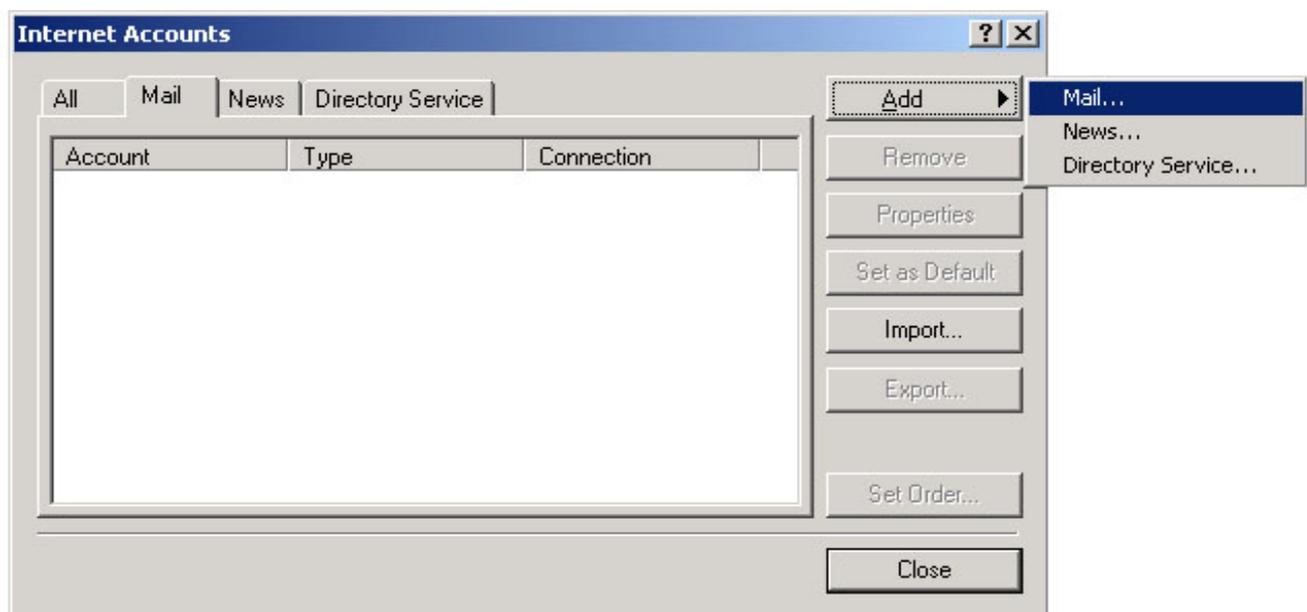
3. Enter name
In the resulting window, type in your name as you want others to see it (it doesn't matter what you put here, it's only used for display purposes) and press Next.
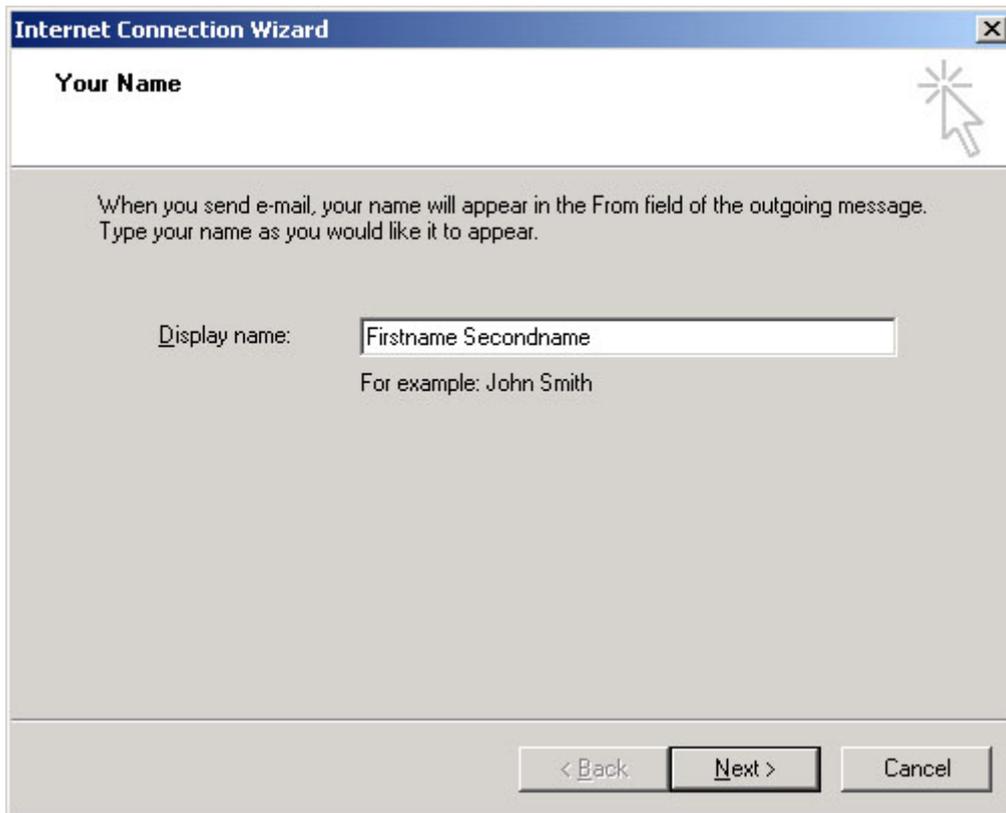
4. **Enter email address**

In the next window, you need to enter the details of your Birkbeck email address. Select the **I already have an email address….** option, put in your mail address and click Next. If you're a staff member, it ought to be of the form *x.lastname@bbk.ac.uk.*. If you're a student, it ought to be something like *vxwyz01@students.bbk.ac.uk.*

You ought to have received this information when you joined the College. If you don't know what your email address is, you need to call the CCS Helpdesk.
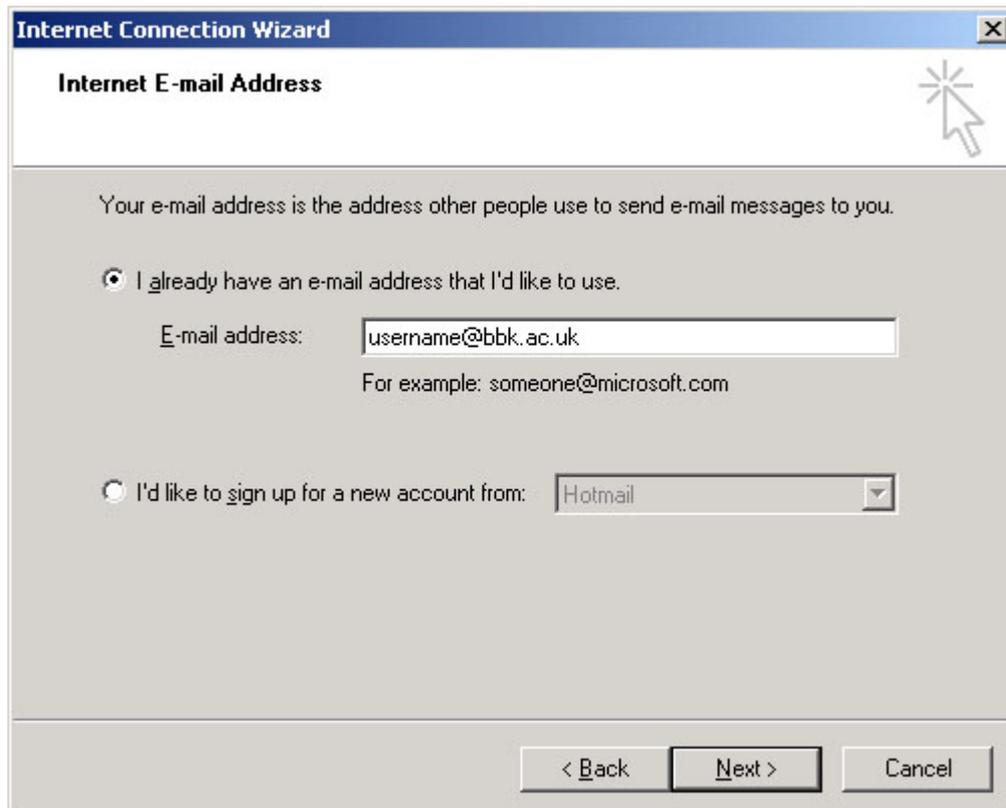
5.   **Specify mail servers**

In the mail servers window, it's important to specify that the server is an **IMAP** server, rather than POP3. In the Incoming Mail box, put in the mail server address **imap2.bbk.ac.uk**, exactly as shown below. In the box beneath that, you need to put the address of the SMTP (Sending Mail) server for the ISP that you use to connect to the Internet. If you are unsure what it ought to be, generally the information will be listed on their website, or you can call the support line for the ISP. There is a short list given below of the more common ISPs.
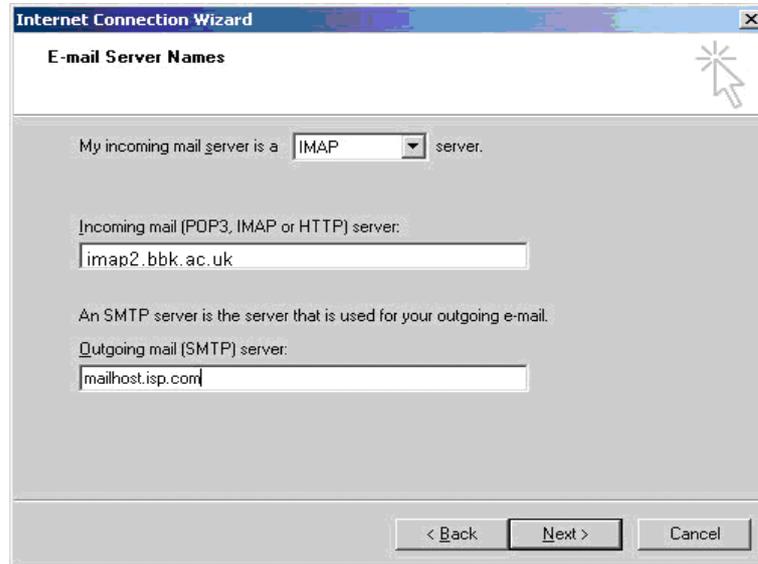
Internet Service Providor	SMTP Server Name
Beeb.net	smtp.beeb.net
Netscape Online	mailhost.netscapeonline.co.uk
BT Internet	mail.btinternet.com
Britishlibrary.net	smtp.britishlibrary.net
NTLWorld	smtp.ntlworld.com
Demon Net	post.demon.co.uk
Virgin.net	smtp.virgin.net
Pipex Dial	smtp.dial.pipex.com
Freeserve (not recommended due to problems viewing Library webpages)	smtp.freeserve.net
Birkbeck VPN	mail1.ccs.bbk.ac.uk

6.   **Enter account details**

You then need to enter your CCS username and password in the following window (not the details for your Internet Service Provider). If you don't know what your CCS username and password are, again, call the CCS Helpdesk for information. Remember that your CCS username isn't the same as the mail address (there ought to be no more than one word and no "@" symbols).

If you're a staff member, your username will be of the form "ubxxxxx"; if you're a student, it'll be something like "ablogg01".
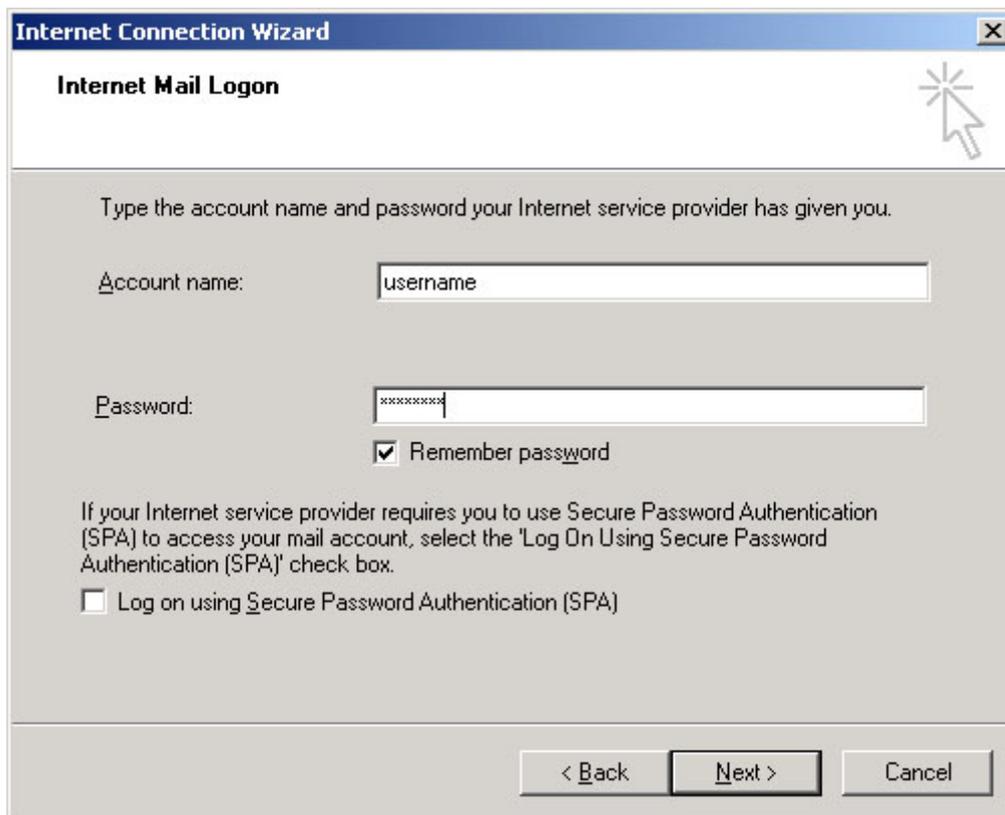
7. Finish entering details

Click "Finish" and then "Close" on the next windows that appear. Outlook may then say: **Would you like to download folders from the mail server you added?** At present, you need to click **No**, as there is another step that needs to happen first.

8. Check port setting

When accessing your mail using Outlook Express, you generally need to change the "port" (area of the mail server) to which the program tries to connect. Go into the mail account Properties by going to **Tools | Accounts** in the menu. In the box below, highlight **imap2.bbk.ac.uk** and click on the **Properties** button.
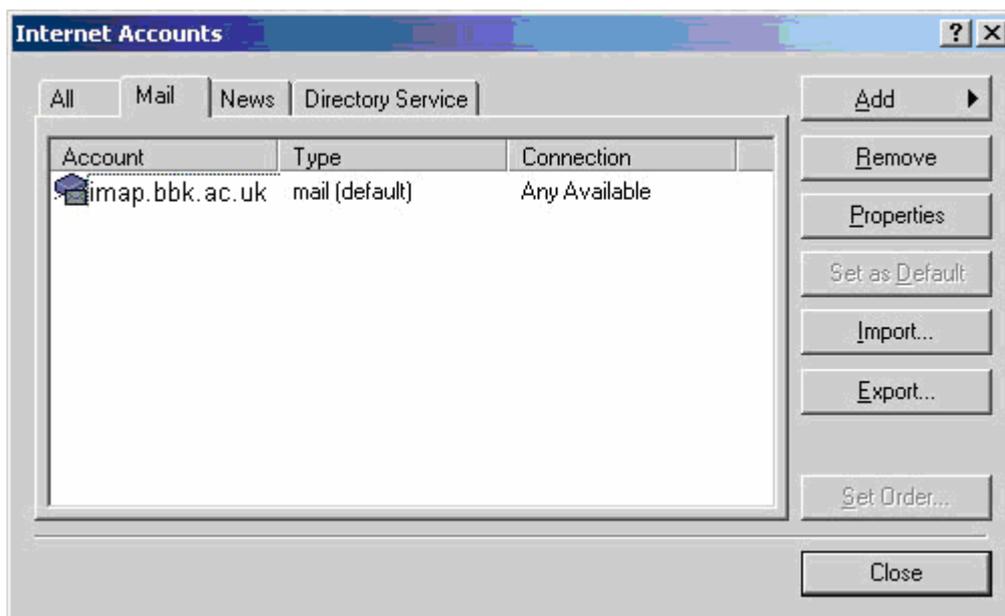
Click on the **Advanced** tab. In the box next to Incoming mail (IMAP), check the figure reads **143**.
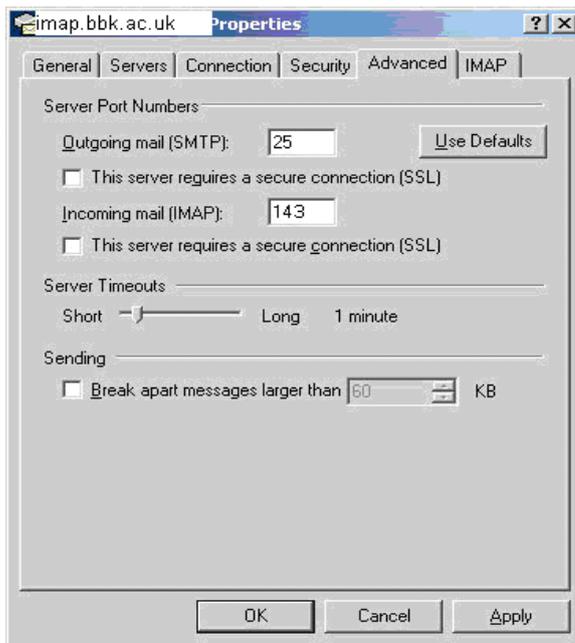
Click on **OK** and **Close**. A message ought to pop up like the one below. Click on the **Yes** button to download your mail folders.

9.   Download folders
When the folder list is downloaded, you ought to see a window like the one below. If you have other mail folders on the server other than Inbox, and you'd like to see them in Outlook Express, highlight the folder name and click on the **Show** button.
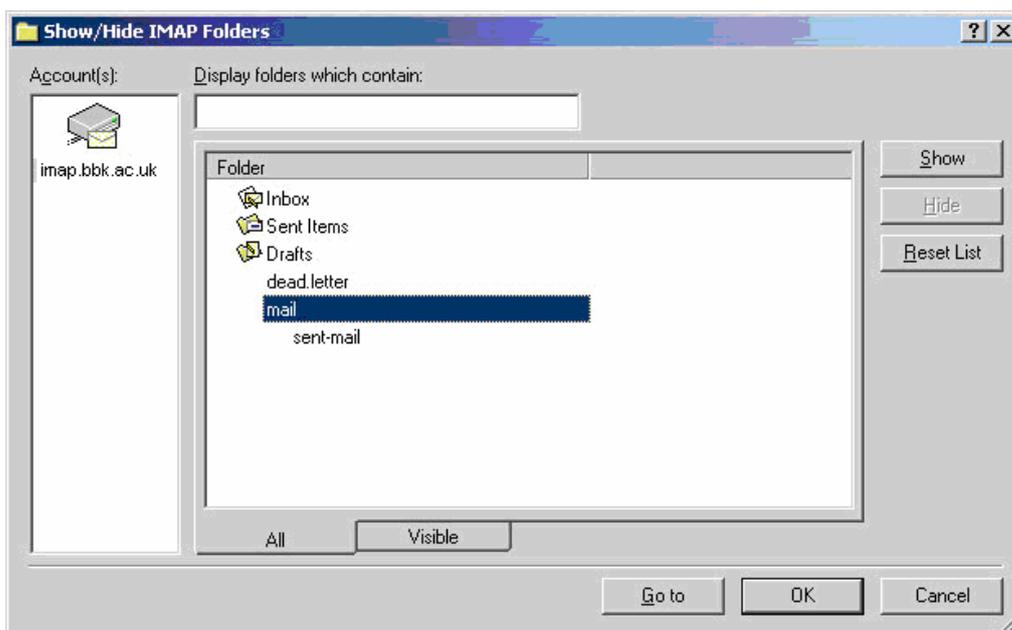
You can check the results by clicking on the **Visible** tab under the list of mail folders:
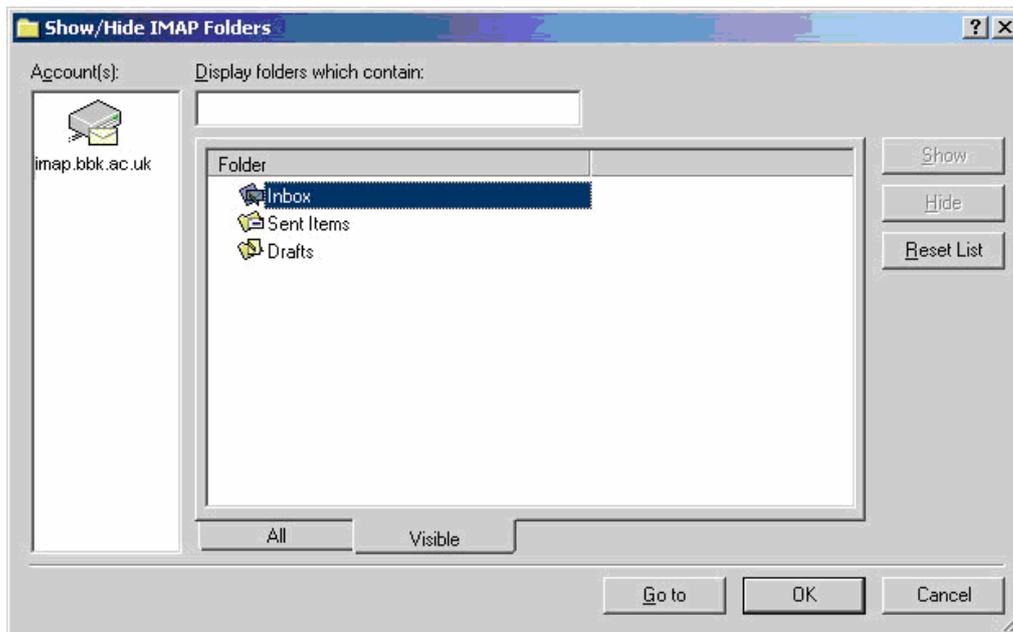
Finally, click on **OK** and the list of mail folders will be downloaded to your PC.

10. **Check folder listing**

You ought to end up with a window something like the one below. You'll notice that you have 2 sets of "folder trees". One is called "**Local Folders**" and contains an Inbox. This Inbox isn't used unless you have set up a POP account. However, the Sent Items is used by Outlook to keep a copy of all the messages you send.

Below Local Folders, you can see the listing of the folders you specified for download earlier. It contains the Inbox that you'll actually be using to check your mail.
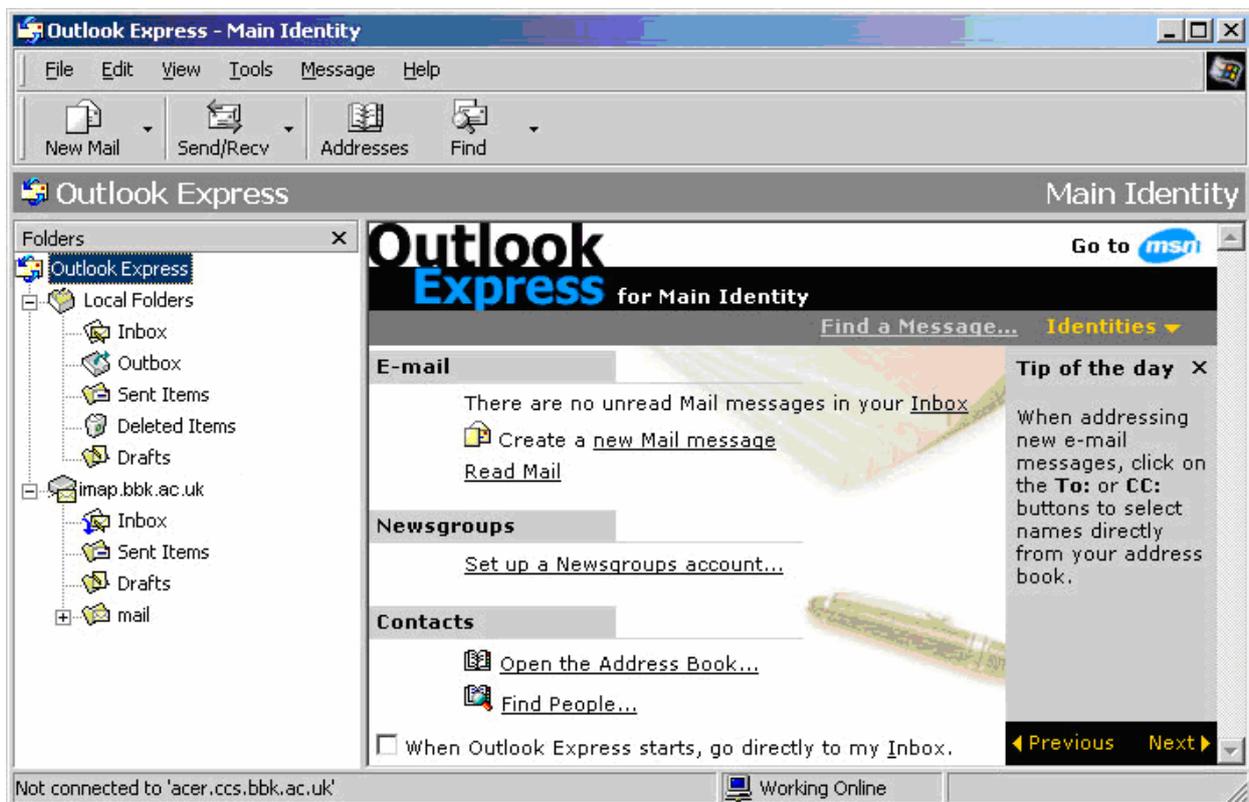
11. **Synchronise mail**

Highlight the name of the mail server (imap2.bbk.ac.uk) on the left, and the Synchronisation window will appear on the right. Synchronisation is the process where copies of the messages are saved onto your machine, allowing you to read your mail if you're not connected to the Internet. There are 2 main methods you can use, depending on whether you pay by the minute for your Internet connection, or whether you have a flat rate. What follows is only a suggestion; you can use whatever choice best suits your circumstances.

Tip:
If you use your mail heavily at the College, it's generally a good idea to do some extensive "housekeeping" before trying to set up at home. Delete any messages you no longer need and empty your Deleted Items folder or Trash. Remove any attachments and save them either on your PC, or on your network drive at Birkbeck. If you have messages that you'd like to keep, but don't need to look at very often, it's a good idea to put them all into a separate folder, and leave it out of the list of folders you want to show at home.

If you pay by the minute:
Click on the Settings button, and make sure All Messages is selected. Click inside all the boxes opposite each folder you want to see to apply the settings to them. Then click on Synchronize Account.
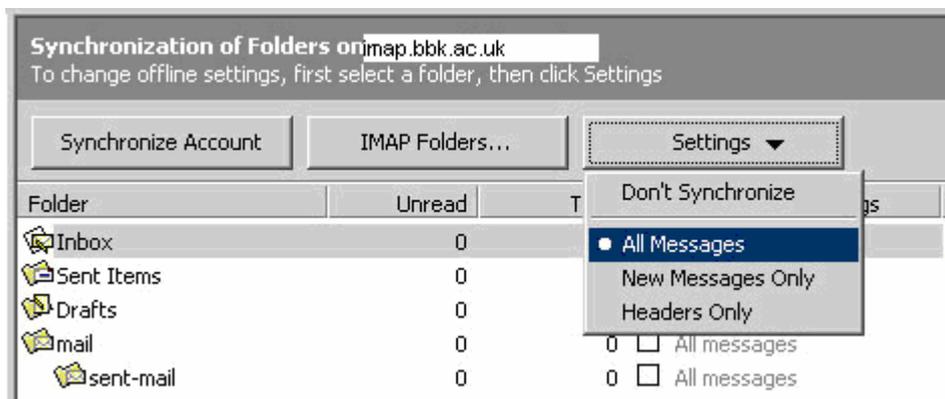
A box should pop up, saying that it's downloading the messages in all your mailboxes. It can take quite some time to download the messages, especially if you have a lot of mail in your folders. Don't interrupt this process – the downloading window will disappear once it's completed.
You can then go to the **File** menu and select **Work Offline.** Disconnect from the Internet, and you should be able to read your mail messages. You can also compose mail messages, which will be kept in your Outbox in Local Folders, until you press the **Send and Receive** button in the main window. You'll be asked if you want to go online. Say Yes and Outlook will connect to the Internet, send the mail and synchronise any changes to your mail folders (such as downloading new mail messages you may have received and removing messages you've deleted from the server). Remember to select **Work Offline** and disconnect from the Internet again when you've finished.

Tip:
If you're likely to be working on your PC for a long length of time, you can set up Outlook so that it automatically connects to the Internet at any interval to check if you have new mail (and send any you may have composed in the interim). Go to **Tools | Options** in the main menu. In the General Tab in the Options window, you have some choices about how often you want your mail
Click the box saying **Check for new messages every…** and input an appropriate interval. Usually 60 minutes is a reasonable time. In the box below, select **Connect even when working offline**. This ensures that the computer will connect to the Internet when you're in Offline mode

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If you have an unmetered Internet connection:

The simplest thing is to remove all the synchronisation settings and ensure that you're working online when using Outlook Express. In the Synchronisation window, simply untick any folders that may be selected.
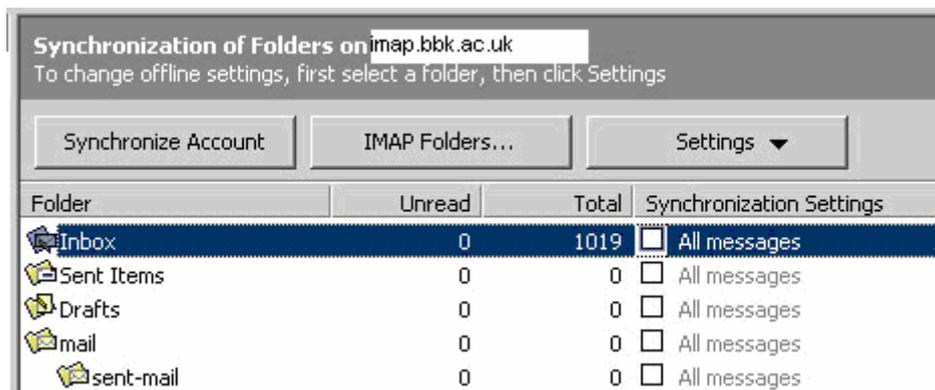
If you click on **Inbox** under **imap2.bbk.ac.uk** in the left-hand window, you should find that a list of all the messages in the Inbox is downloaded from the server. These are the headings only. The actual message isn't downloaded until you click on the message header.

Remember: the messages won't be visible unless you are connected to the Internet. If you want to see messages when you aren't connected, you'll need to set up synchronisation settings as shown in the section above.

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12. Finish

You ought to now have a list of messages in your Inbox, and be able to read them. Finally, it's worth trying to send yourself an email at Birkbeck, to ensure you can send messages and download new ones.

Notes Regarding "Local Folders"

Outlook Express automatically sets up **Local Folders** whenever you create an account. It has an Inbox folder (only used if you set up a POP account), Drafts (used for saving copies of unsent messages), Outbox (used for saving messages that have been "sent", but before connecting to the Internet, if you're working offline), and Sent Items (copies of messages that have actually been sent).

Generally, it's easier to leave the Sent Items in Local Folders, as there is less to worry about copying to the server (and less time needed to allow synchronisation to take place). However, there will of course be occasions where you'd like to see your Sent Mail no matter where you are. There are two methods you can use to save copies of your messages:

- If you only need to keep the occasional copy of messages you send, it is suggested that you remove the option about saving a copy to Sent Items and simply **CC** each message you want to keep to your own mail address.
- If you'd like to keep a copy of most things you send, and see it no matter where you are, it is possible to keep the Sent Mail folder on the mail server in Outlook Express. You then ought to be able to see it using your mail reader in the College as well, although it can be a little tricky to get right.

Note: Whatever method you use to keep copies of messages on the mail server, rather than your local PC, remember that you only have a limited amount of space available to you (5 MB by default). Only retain the messages that are vital for you to keep a record of (and regularly clear out those you no longer need). Also remember not to keep attachments that you might send via your mail – you already have the original copy!

To stop messages being saved to Sent Items:

Go to **Tools | Options**. In the box that appears, go to the **Send** tab. Simply clear the checkbox by **Save copy of sent messages…** and click OK.

If you want to send a copy of a particular message to yourself, simply enter your Birkbeck email address into the CC box. If you've added your address to your **Contacts**, it's even easier to do.
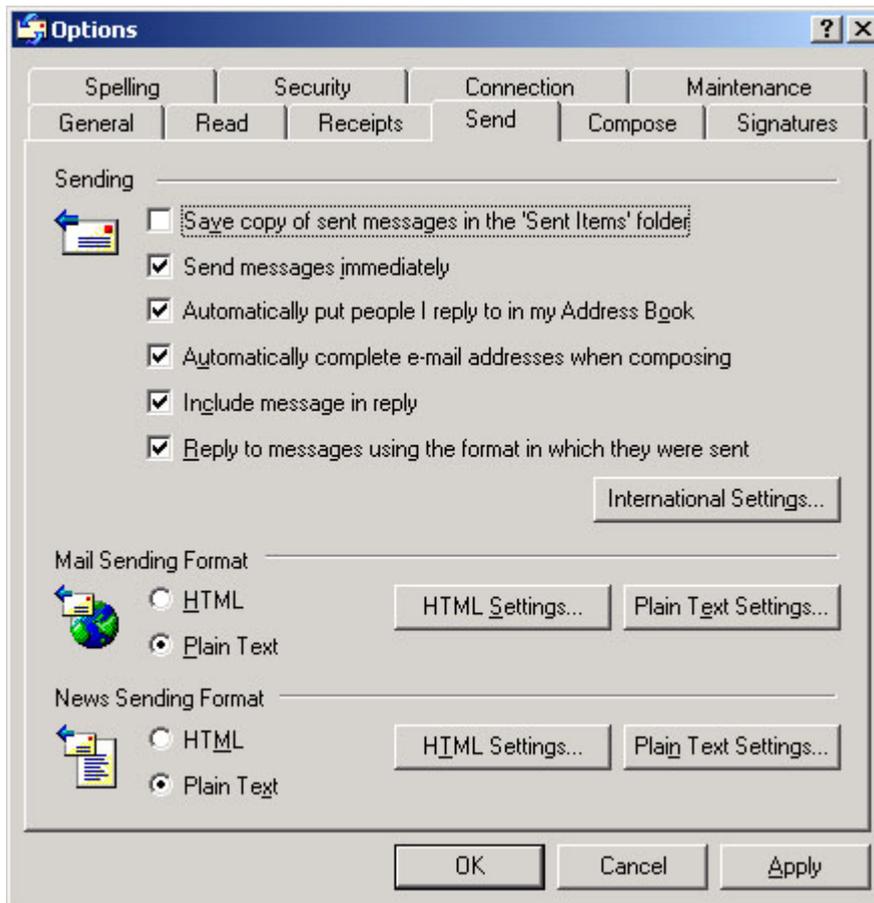
To keep your Sent Items on the mail server:

If you use Netscape in the College, you'll need to check where your mail folders are kept on the mail server. If you haven't used Netscape, you can skip this step. In Netscape, go to **Edit** and **Preferences**. On the left-hand window, look for **Mail and Newsgroups**. Under that, you should find **Mail Servers**. On the right-hand side, make sure the imap2.bbk.a.cuk server is selected, and click on the **Edit** button. Click on the **Advanced** tab. The first box should say **IMAP server directory** next to it. The box will either be empty or have **~\sim4** in it – make a note of which it is.

Back in Outlook Express, go into the mail properties as shown in Step 8 above. Click on the **IMAP** tab. In the **Root folder path** box, you need to enter what you found in Netscape's advanced settings (if it was empty, leave the box empty). If you previously used Simeon email, you'll need to enter **~\sim4** into this box as well.

Underneath Special Folders, tick the box that says **Store special folders on IMAP server**, make sure you have Sent Items and Drafts as listed below and click **OK** and **Close** in the window below. You should find that you now see Sent Items and Drafts appear under imap2.bbk.ac.uk in your list of folders, as well as under Local Folders. All the messages you send will now also be copied to the new Sent Items folder on imap2.bbk.ac.uk.
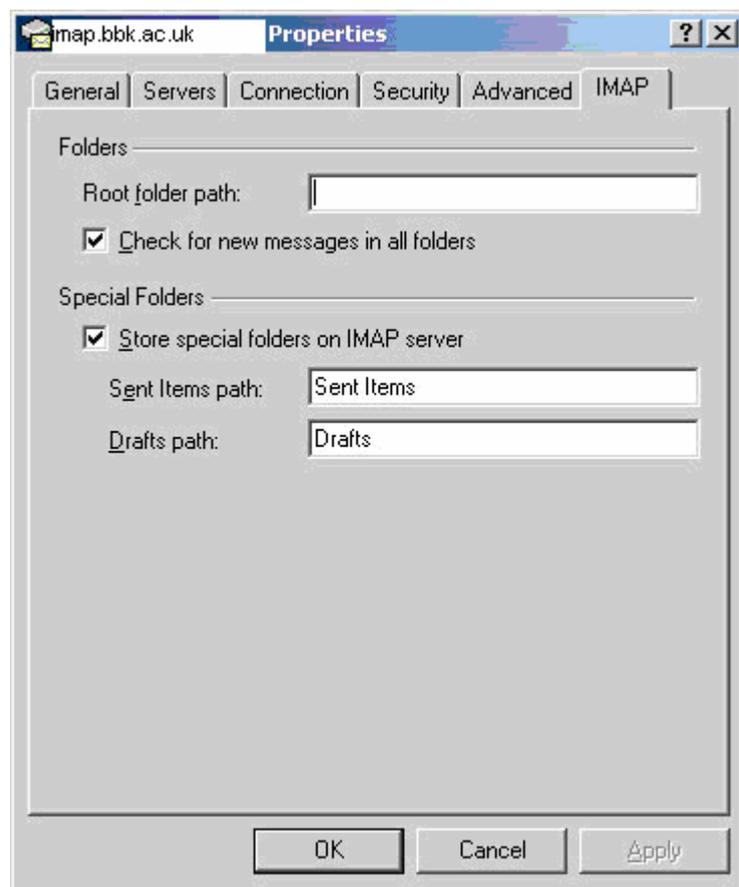
Deleting Messages

As IMAP keeps all the messages on the server, pressing **Delete** doesn't automatically get rid of a message. It is *marked for deletion* – in Outlook, this is symbolised by a line drawn through the message header. If you mark a message for deletion by mistake, simply right-click on the message header and select **Undelete** from the pop-up menu.

To completely get rid of any messages, they must be *purged* from the mail folder. If you're working Offline, you need to go online so that any changes made are saved onto the mail server. Once you're online, simply choose the **Purge** button from the main toolbar, or in the **Edit** menu, select **Purge Deleted Messages**.

> **Caution:** Once you've *purged* your messages, they have been completely deleted from the server. If you decide you didn't want to delete the messages after all, they will only be recoverable from the server backup (and messages received that day aren't recoverable).

Troubleshooting

Generally, the first step is to ensure you have all the information about the mail servers set up correctly, as given above. To check the settings, open up the mail server properties as shown in Step 8 above.

In the window that appears, click on the **Servers** tab. Check that all the details are correct: ensure the mail is set to **IMAP**, the IMAP and SMTP server names are correct and you have your CCS username in the Account name box (try typing your CCS password again just in case). If you make any changes, make sure you click on **OK** before trying again. Details should be similar to those shown below.
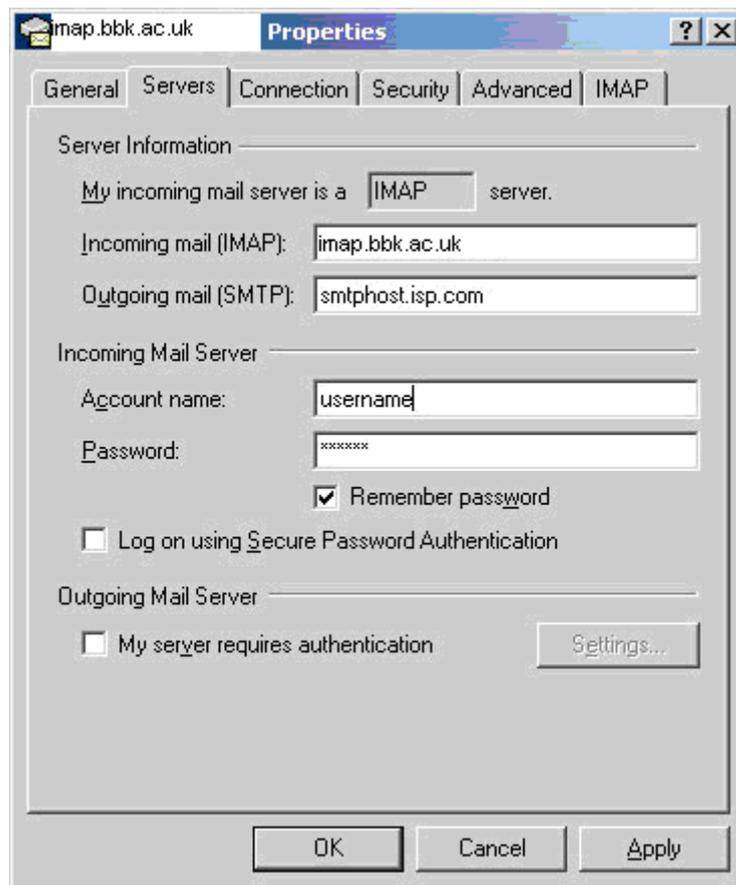
Sometimes, if you haven't purged your mail folders for a while, you run out of space on the mail server and it won't allow you to connect. If you think that this might be the case (you have 100s of messages or big attachments you need to get rid of), you can generally ask the Systems team to allow you some extra space temporarily. Once you're back into your mail, you can delete whatever is unwanted and **purge** the deleted messages from the mail folder. It is important to purge your messages regularly in order to not run out of space (especially if you send or receive a lot of messages).

If you can't download email messages:

Firstly, check the settings as above, particularly ensuring that your password is correct. If you are getting error messages similar to the one below (particularly the part that refers to **Protocol:NNTP**), you'll need to change the mail server "port" referred to in Step 8 above to the correct setting (port **142**). Make sure you say **OK** to all the boxes after making any changes.

If you have already changed the port number from 143 to 142, try changing it back to 143 and retrying.
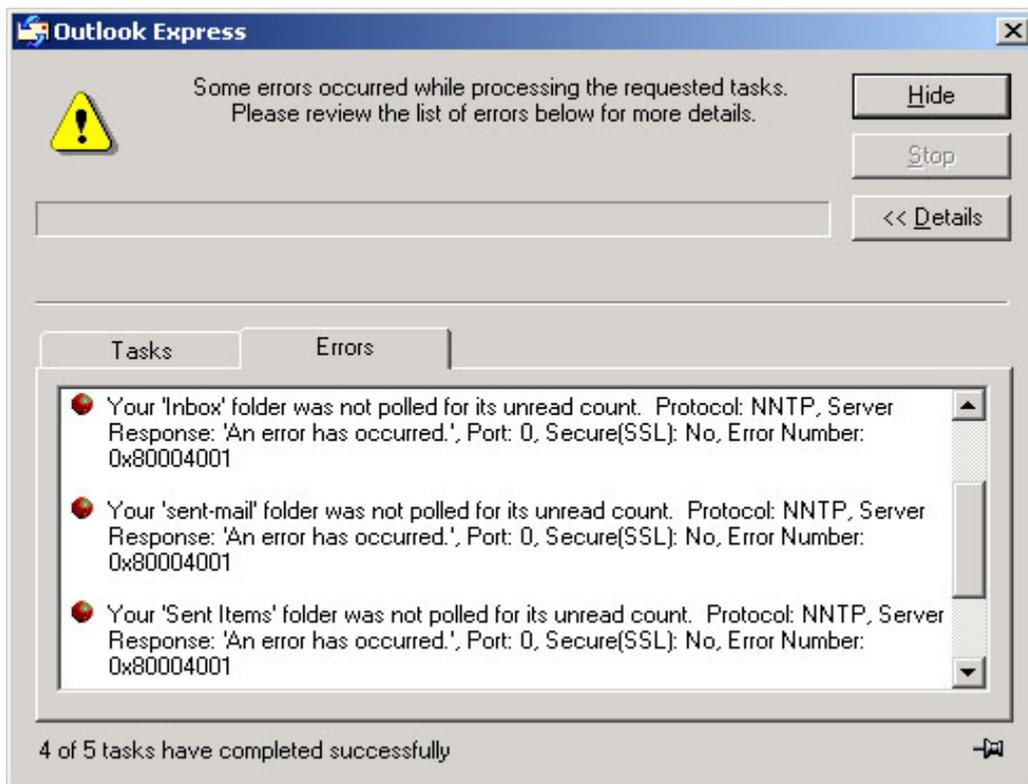
If you are unable to send mail:

Go into the mail account **Properties** as shown in Step 8 above and click on the **Servers** tab. Ensure you have the correct SMTP server name for your Internet Service Provider in the SMTP server box.
For **beeb.net** and possibly others, you may need to put in your beeb.net username and password. In the Servers window, click on **My server requires authentication** and then the **Settings** button.
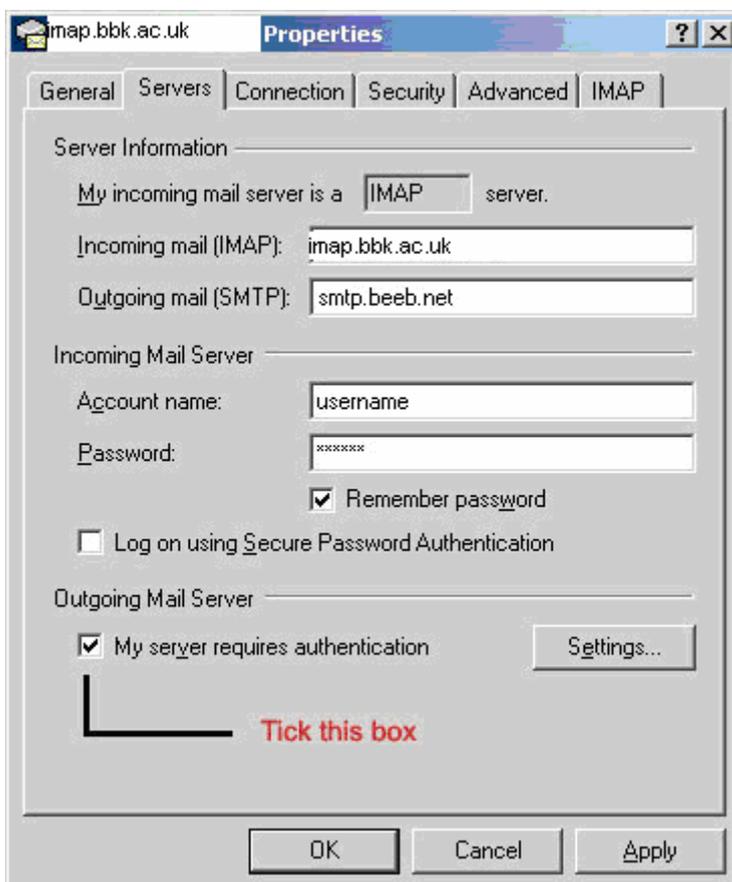
In the window that appears, click in **Log on using**, and type in your beeb.net username and password (not the CCS ones).

Say **OK** to both boxes and try sending mail again.