



Impact Report 2010

Our history through the post

THE BRITISH
POSTAL
MUSEUM
& ARCHIVE

Contents

Introduction	1
Chairman's Statement	2
Who We Are	4
Access	6
Sustainability	14
Organisational Capability	18
Preservation	22
Future Developments and Aims for 2011	26
Get Involved	28
Trustees, Staff and Supporters	29

Introduction

Dr Adrian Steel, Director

Over the next three years the BPMA will build on the firm foundations laid since our creation in 2004. Thanks to the strong support of the Royal Mail Group, the leadership of our first Chief Executive, Tony Conder, and the hard work of our team, we are now in a position where we have more of our collections catalogued and available to the public than ever before, more visitors to and users of the Royal Mail Archive than ever before, and are meeting more people than ever online, via the media, at events and in other ways. The *London 2010 Festival of Stamps* has been delivered and the Victorian Post Office/*Museum of the Post Office in the Community* at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, built with BPMA funding and where we own a display area, is now open. Our first grant-funded projects have been delivered in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and other funders, partners and heritage organisations. Thanks to the support of the HLF and Royal Mail Group, we are now making firm progress towards our relocation to a new site at Swindon, from which we will provide sustainable preservation of our collections, sustainable development of our organisation, and restored physical access to our museum collection.

As an educational charity 'learning' is at the core of all we do. The BPMA encourages individuals from all backgrounds to explore, enjoy and learn from our collections by creating high quality events and outreach programmes, by providing first class services, and by making our collections as accessible as possible whilst preserving them for future generations.

I hope that you will support the BPMA and our team as we work to advance access to Britain's postal heritage, spread the word about the magnificent social history that our collections and work represent, and devote full efforts to securing the new home upon which our future depends in the coming years.

Chairman's Statement

Professor Brian Goodey, Chair of Trustees

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is committed to a creative vision for the national, and internationally recognised, collections for which we are responsible. With the full support of Royal Mail, national bodies for Museums and Archives, individual users and the many established interest groups associated with aspects of the postal industry, we are advancing our intention for a national postal museum. Britain deserves such a facility as a base from which we can extend the access, learning and outreach work so evident in this report on our activities throughout 2009/10.

In addition to the activities reported here, let me share with you an event that took place on 13th November 2010, during the City of London's Lord Mayor's Show. As part of the procession passing thousands lining the City's streets, rolled the BPMA's fully restored 1930's Mobile Post Office, once a feature of many pre-war public events. It was supported by some thirty staff, Trustees and Friends of the BPMA. As we processed it was easy to discern the applause aimed at our presence with a focused cheer from Mansion House.

Although we are well aware of the enthusiasm for our exhibitions from experts and the engagement with our activities from schools able to access them, this was probably the first occasion when a truly immediate, direct public response was felt to our work as conservers of something that is very important to British society. We know that the letter box, the phone kiosk and the Machin stamp are national icons, but here was the community asserting their pleasure towards the wider traditions of our postal service.

Our future lies in asserting the importance of, and providing wide public access to, a national collection that testifies to the major contribution to modern communications, design and public service made by Britain's postal industry, and to provide a personal link for all those who have been employed by, or have used, the post at key points in their lives. We touch something very deep in British society.

From January 2011 I pass the organisation's Chairmanship to Dr Helen Forde. I will however remain as a Trustee and look forward to continuing to pursue the organisational vision that will bring the British Postal Museum and Archive to current and new generations alike.



Who We Are

Our Mission

British postal services helped to shape the modern world. The British Postal Museum & Archive works to make this human story of communication, industry, and innovation accessible to everyone.

Our Work

The British Postal Museum & Archive is the public identity of the Postal Heritage Trust. The Trust was established in 2004 to manage the public records of The Royal Mail Archive, and to develop access to the museum collections of the former National Postal Museum. We operate a public search room and archive service, in Central London, and have our museum store at Debden, Essex.

Our focus is to develop the role of the BPMA as an international hub for research, access to and interpretation of postal history. To achieve this, the BPMA employs 36 full-time paid staff and is supported by approximately 20 regular volunteers. We are also working to establish a new centre to display our archive and museum collections, with space for learning, events and activities.

Our principal funder is Royal Mail Group Ltd from which we receive an annual payment, for the management of The Royal Mail Archive, and a charitable donation to help develop our services to the public – from exhibitions to education packs and beyond.

Our Aims

Our strategic aims as set out in our 2006-2016 organisational strategy are to:

- Increase **access** to the BPMA collections for all possible groups and individuals, by directing all we do towards fulfilling this aim.
- **Sustain** our work to increase access by developing strong and lasting partnerships, and generating funding from all available sources.
- Ensure the **organisational capability** to increase and sustain access, by developing our staff to improve the organisation.
- **Preserve**, conserve, and manage our collections to support increasing access now, and to sustain this into the future

Our Achievements

We work to deliver our mission and achieve our aims through effective partnership working; by creating innovative learning opportunities; through the provision of resources which facilitate access to our collections, and by working to preserve the material we hold for the benefit of future generations.



Surname	Christian Name	Situation to which Nominated	Place
Alexander	Alexander M	Pman	Dundee
Appleby	Frank E	Pman	SWDO.
Allen	William G	Teck	Coventry TA
Ashley	George E	Pman	Brewer
Atkin	Christopher G	Pman	LPA EG.
Allen	Jeffrey J	Pman	Leamington
Allen	Peter W	P110	Llanelli
Ascle	John M P	Pman	Bham
Athey	Ellen M K	Spinst	LK
Alderson	Alie	Stg Test	AGL
Alderson	Mrs Florence A	Spinst	LK SW



Clockwise: GPO delivery van; Assistant Curator Julian Stray with oral history interviewee; Post Office appointment book; Cataloguer Stewart Aiken scanning artwork; Tricycle at Museum of the Post Office in the Community; Head of Access & Development, Deborah Turton and Archivist, Helen Dafter receiving Visit London award; Assistant Archivist Zoe van Well at *Who Do You Think You Are*

Access

During 2009/10:

- 400,000+ visits to our website
- 226,000+ visitors to exhibitions
- 72,566 visits to our blog
- 90,000+ catalogue records online
- 2,244 visitors to our Search Room
- 2,320 children and young people benefited from schools outreach
- 700+ followers on Twitter in just 10 months
- 368 visitors attended 3 Museum Store open weekends
- 1 Visit London Bronze Award for Accessible Tourism.

“A fantastic workshop delivered. The children learned so much and the delivery was so inspiring. Thank you so much!”

“use of artefacts, DVD and sources made it a great experience for the children... a service that should definitely be repeated”

“full of information...lots of different artefacts and ways to interest the children”

Teacher feedback from BPMA's Last Post education sessions at Birkbeck Primary, Fleetdown Junior, and West Hill Primary schools, London, Autumn term 2009.

During 2009/10 the BPMA worked hard to ensure more and more people accessed our collections and benefited from associated opportunities for learning, skills development and pure enjoyment. We achieved this by ongoing improvements to the services we provide and by delivering our two most ambitious public access initiatives to date:

- **Opening a replica Victorian post office and upstairs *Museum of the Post Office in the Community* at Blists Hill Victorian Village, Ironbridge**
- **A year-long public engagement campaign, *London 2010 Festival of Stamps***

These initiatives achieved substantial public awareness raising and regional outreach for the BPMA and together with ongoing activities and programmes, contributed to a sizable growth in visitor numbers and participants.

What we achieved this year:

Reaching & informing New Audiences

London 2010 Festival of Stamps

From January 2010, the BPMA led delivery of its first major public engagement project, *London 2010 Festival of Stamps*, to coincide with the London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition. The year-long programme of exhibitions, events and activities celebrated and sought to raise public awareness of stamps, stamp design and postal heritage, by reaching an extensive number and variety of new audiences, while working with

philatelic audiences in new ways. The campaign centred around a diverse partnership involving over 10 partner venues from London to Aberdeen, including The British Museum, Museum of London Docklands, the Royal Philatelic Society, Bath Postal Museum, and the British Library amongst others, coupled with year-long educational, media and online activity.

Festival exhibitions included the BPMA's major exhibition of the year, *Empire Mail: George V and the GPO* which attracted over 7,000 visitors to London's Guildhall Art Gallery in less than three months. To date, the Festival's events and exhibitions have attracted significant visitor numbers in excess of 226,000 across the multiple partners with media coverage across national print, web and broadcast media. Activity continues until February 2011.

Replica post office & exhibition, Ironbridge

The BPMA's partnership with the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust came to fruition in mid-2009 with the opening of our replica Victorian Post Office and upstairs *Museum of the Post Office in the Community* at their Blists Hill site. This site attracts over 200,000 visitors each year, so this outpost has substantially increased the BPMA's capacity to take the story of the Post Office to substantial numbers of people, enabling them to learn about Britain's postal heritage and the contribution made by the Post Office to British social and industrial progress in the modern world.



Young visitor at Museum Store open day ▶

Our partnership with Ironbridge will continue to develop through participation in annual activities, including Ironbridge's Victorian Christmas programme. This will ensure as many people as possible benefit from the BPMA's investment in this facility, enabling visitors to expand their understanding of Britain's postal heritage and its contribution to the development of modern global communications.

Facilitating physical access to collections

User access

User numbers for the archive service have continued to increase with 2244 researchers visiting the Search Room during 2009/10. High levels of customer satisfaction with the service have also been recorded in the regular national Public Services Quality Group survey.

Catalogue access

Access via the online catalogue continues to be a major factor in increasing public benefit by extending online and distance use and giving everyone a clearer insight into the richness of the BPMA's holdings. We have continued to address our cataloguing backlog and to date there are now over 90,000 catalogue records online from our archive and museum collections. This represents 78% of the Archive and 38% of the Museum Collection catalogued to date.

Enhancing online access & interaction

Website

We have continued to expand our main website and this remains our primary means for providing access to our collections to large numbers of people. During 2009/10 the site received over 400,000 visits, an increase of 32% on 2008/09.

Social media

Throughout 2009/10 the BPMA instigated and built a significant social media presence. This increased online visitor numbers substantially, connecting more people to our collections and enabling them to feedback comments to us. Our blog, established in March 2009, received 72,566 visits during the 2009/10 year. Other new initiatives included Flickr (from March 2009; achieving an average of 4000 views per month by May 2010) and Twitter (from Jan 2010; with over 700 followers by October).

The BPMA's Flickr profile and images have proved popular with new and existing audiences, with a number of images 'favourited' or commented upon.

The BPMA blog has presented staff across the organisation with the opportunity to write for general audiences on a wide range of postal heritage themes, enabling us to showcase our collections; all staff teams are contributing ongoing. A piece on the Great Train Robbery was referenced on the *New York Times* website resulting in a large increase in blog hits.

The BPMA podcast enables audiences to download recordings of our talks to their computer or mp3 player. Beginning in July 2009 with a talk by Tony Benn, over 800 downloads were recorded by the end of the year.

Supporting learning, skills development & enjoyment

National initiatives

Learning activity this year included participation in national initiatives: *Campaign! Make an Impact, Learning Links*, the *MLA Teacher Placement Programme* and *MLA's October Festival of Learning*; cumulatively involving over 250 participants. As a lead partner in the 2009 *October Festival of Learning*, the BPMA led a partnership comprising The Guardian Education Centre, The British Museum, The Bank of England Museum, London Metropolitan Archives and Lloyds TSB Archives in addition to delivering our own event. We also took part in regional initiatives, hosting an open day for the *Cultural Olympiad* campaign, *The Story of London*.

Schools

Outreach sessions with 719 pupils were delivered to 17 London primary and secondary schools to accompany the BPMA's touring exhibition *Last Post*. Education sessions were also run in partnership with London Metropolitan Archives as part of *London 2010 Festival of Stamps*. Our continued support for *Stamps in Schools*, a nationwide project using volunteers to interest children at school in stamps and collecting as a hobby, ensured a further 1421 pupils learned about stamps and postal heritage. During Summer-Autumn



2009 we also completed a pilot project: 'Stamps in London Schools' to develop links with the national curriculum and to create associated materials to improve learning outcomes for students and to provide support for teachers wanting to set up stamp clubs.

Collaborative doctoral research

Two of the three students taking part in our collaborative doctoral scheme with the Institute for Historical Research, Helen Glew and Mark Crowley, this year completed their studies; achieving PhDs researched using the BPMA's collections. We are delighted to have played a part in helping them achieve academic success in addition to providing opportunities for them to apply their research through delivery of talks, articles and exhibition research.

Life-long learning & enjoyment

The BPMA continues to run lectures, talks and walking tours as part of its commitment to supporting lifelong learning. Two examples were 'Stephen Tallents and the GPO' and 'Stamps in the 21st Century'. Three Open Weekends at our Museum Store attracted 368 visitors, with monthly tours attracting a further 107. These included involvement alongside other national and regional museums in the UK's first 'Britain Loves Wikipedia' event. Planning was also undertaken to develop a new partnership with the University of the Third Age – the first project from which will be delivered from September 2010.

Engaging & involving Royal Mail staff

During 2009 MLA funding enabled the BPMA to diversify its contemporary collections by working with current

Royal Mail staff at Mount Pleasant Mail Centre to collect material reflecting the diversity of today's workforce. As a result, BPMA's holdings now better represent the diversity of the workforce and the different religious groups that exist within it. For this project, the BPMA worked with Royal Mail staff that had migrated to London, in particular with members of the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim Associations in Mount Pleasant.

Communicating the story of British postal communications

In addition to our major exhibition for 2010, *Empire Mail: George V and the GPO*, we also took the story of British postal communications to new audiences through exhibitions showcasing rarely seen post office design material.

Designs on Delivery: GPO Posters from 1930 to 1960 at the London College of Communication

Our first ever exhibition of iconic posters from the Royal Mail archive took place in October-November 2009, attracting over 3,000 visitors. Inclusion in the *Guardian Online* 'story in pictures' pages ensured that even more people could enjoy these rarely seen classic designs.

Gentleman on Stamps: An Exhibition of David Gentleman's Artwork

Throughout 2009, the BPMA celebrated artist David Gentleman's long association with the Post Office and Royal Mail with an exhibition in our Search Room of the artwork behind some of Gentleman's most well-known stamps as well as un-adopted designs and issues previously unseen by the public. Artwork studies belonging

to David Gentleman were included alongside items held by the BPMA.

Treasures of the Archive exhibition

Throughout 2010 an exhibition of unique treasures from the BPMA was on display in our Search Room exhibition space giving visitors the chance to see items of unparalleled significance in UK postal history including a sheet of penny black stamps and their original printing die.

Touring exhibitions

To reach regional audiences, we have a programme of touring exhibitions available for loan at other venues for free. This year our exhibition *Moving the Mail: Horses to Horsepower* attracted over 30,000 visitors during its seven month stay at Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton. Another version of *Moving the Mail* closed at Grampian Transport Museum in Aberdeenshire following an extended three-year run. This was replaced at the beginning of 2010 by a new exhibition on the Coaching Era supported by objects from the BPMA collections, thus continuing one of the BPMA's longest partnerships to date. *Last Post: Remembering the First World War* has been touring venues across the UK since February 2009 including the RAF Museum in Cosford; Aldershot Military Museum; the Royal Logistic Corps Museum, Reading and Firepower – Royal Artillery Museum, Woolwich.

Awarding BPMA achievements

In November 2009 the BPMA won Visit London's Bronze award for 'accessible tourism', marking our ongoing efforts to provide access to all via archive, museum and online user provision.



Visitors at *Empire Mail: George V & the GPO* exhibition ▶

“Having a fascinating tour round the @PostalHeritage museum store in Debden’

Postalheritage Twitter follower, June 2010

“fabulous resource on our doorstep”

“Inspirational – always something new to learn – again I have!”

Evening talk attendees’ feedback 2009

“Wonderful insight into British Post and stamp making”

Empire Mail: George V and the GPO exhibition visitor feedback, Guildhall Art Gallery, June 2010.

Case Study: Pete Sutton



“I am now in my third year of doctoral research at the University of London. My thesis makes use

of the BPMA’s considerable documentary holdings on the mechanisation of the mail in the 1960s and 1970s. The search room facilities have been a great help in this work, providing expert archival advice, an unrivalled specialist library of books and articles, and a friendly, pleasant working environment. I was drawn to the BPMA thanks to its connections with exciting academic opportunities and

its outstanding documentary collection. I couldn’t have asked for better access to its holdings and expertise, or for more support during the difficult times. It’s been a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside such genuine, friendly and knowledgeable people. The personal and professional support has been unfailing. The skills and experience I have gained – from research to communication to project work – are now invaluable and will continue to be.”

Pete Sutton is in the third year of doctoral research supported by an Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Award hosted by the British Postal Museum & Archive and the University of London.

Case Study: Mark Crowley



“Being involved with the BPMA has helped me immensely. Not only have I managed to gain a

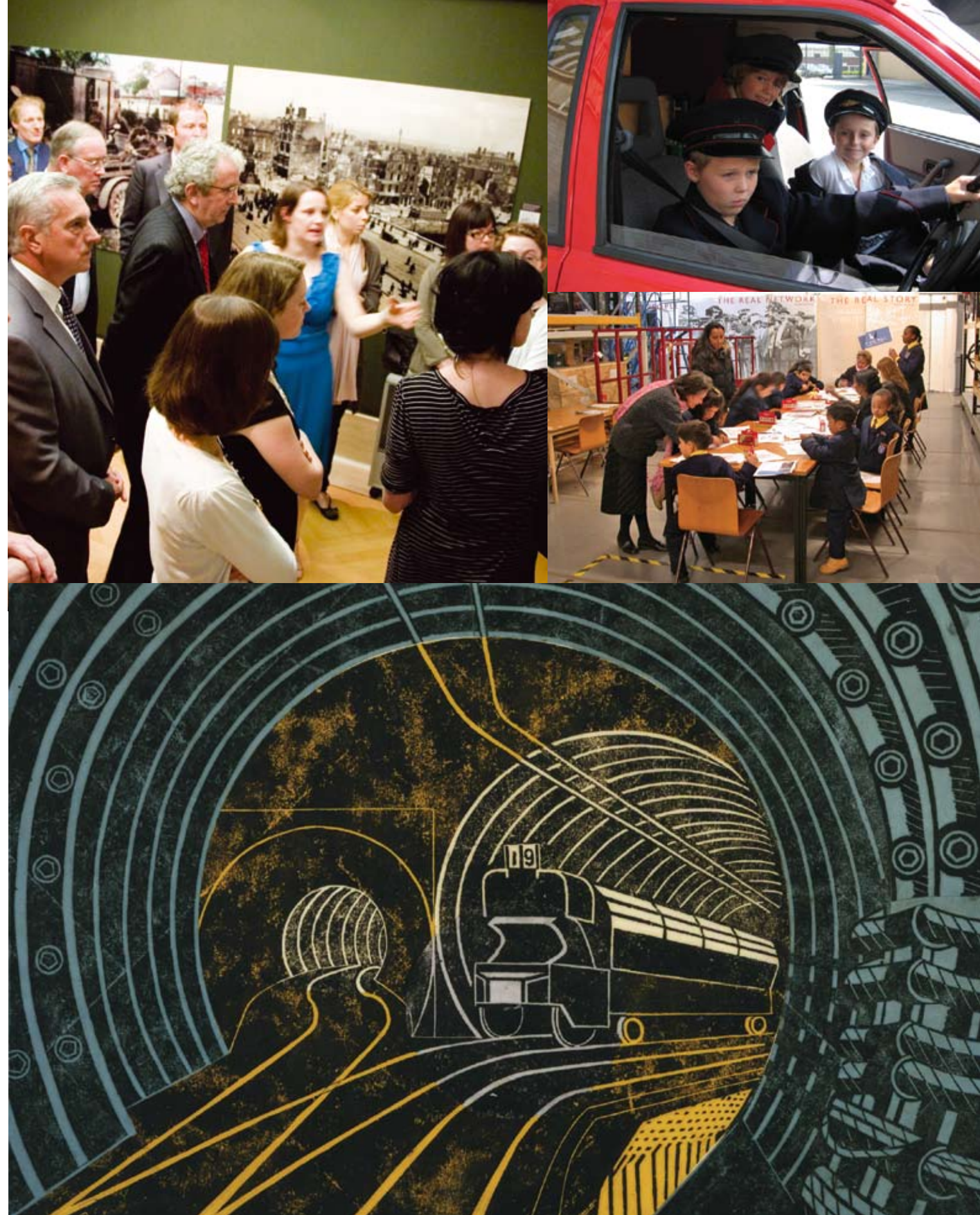
PhD qualification, I have also learned many other research and archive management skills during my time working on several outreach projects. It has been immensely rewarding.”

Council Collaborative Doctoral Award in British Postal History during 2006-10.

Alongside his research, Mark contributed to a number of BPMA educational outreach activities. These ranged from developing Key Stage 1-2 education packs and researching material for the BPMA’s *Museum of the Post Office in the Community* exhibition at Blists Hill Victorian Village, Ironbridge, to translating parts of our website into Welsh!

Dr. Mark Crowley undertook archival research for his PhD at the British Postal Museum & Archive as part of an Arts and Humanities Research

Mark is now Lecturer in Modern British History at Hubei University of Education, China.



Clockwise: Guided tour at BPMA exhibition; visitors at Museum Store family day; school visit to Museum Store; unpublished Edward Bawden artwork for GPO poster

Sustainability

During 2009/10:

60% growth in press AVE plus substantial increase in feature items

8 new licensing deals, including Uniqlo, Hornby and Gift Republic

7 grants supporting access and learning activity

4 publications, including a new partnership with Shire Publications

1 of just 4 archives awarded MLA Designation Development Funding

1 HLF round one pass for Swindon relocation and option purchased

“The British Postal Museum & Archive has a fascinating and varied collection and archive. The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to have pledged our initial support to this project that will unite the collections and open them up for everyone to enjoy.”

Nerys Watts, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund, South West

Sustaining our work to ensure ongoing access to our nationally recognised collections is a key strategic aim. BPMA is committed to ensuring the best possible future for our collections in an environment where we can provide ongoing access for all. Towards this goal in 2009/10 we took steps to establish new income streams and developed more mutually beneficial partnerships than ever before.

What we achieved this year:

Ensuring the best future location for our collections

New Postal Museum & Archive

2010 witnessed significant progress towards the realisation of BPMA's ambitious £17 million project to build a state-of-the-art new home for our iconic, inspirational and fascinating collections. Our new home will, by exhibiting the museum and archive collections together for the first time, enable us to celebrate and provide extensive access to some of the most compelling stories from modern British history: illustrating how British postal communications helped to shape the modern world.

The project will restore and regenerate one of the remaining undeveloped buildings in Swindon's Churchward Conservation Area – the Grade II* listed Chain Test House. This is currently on the English Heritage 'At Risk' register and the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments of England has described the Conservation Area as 'one of Britain's finest monuments to the early days of the railway age'.

In June we were delighted to announce that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed a first-round

pass for a grant of £2,617,800, including development funding of £117,800 for the project.

Recent appointments to our design team include the internationally renowned management consultancy, Gardiner and Theobald, as Project Managers and industry leaders in creative re-use and sustainability, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios LLP, as Project Architects.

During 2011 we will complete detailed design work and submit for planning permission. We will work towards our Round Two application to the HLF; develop our capital fundraising campaign and deliver activities engaging and cultivating links with the Swindon community and beyond.

Building a sustainable future

Licensing

BPMA secured a number of licensing deals this year, these included deals with leading producers Hornby (for model vans and travelling post offices), Uniqlo (a range of GPO slogan T-shirts and sweatshirts sold throughout the Asian market), and Gift Republic (the 'Stamp Collection' gift and stationary range comprising mugs, notebooks and greetings cards, currently selling through leading multiple and independent retailers throughout the UK). The 'Stamp Collection', was shortlisted for two industry plaudits, including 'Best licensed brand range' at the Licensing Awards 2010.

Fundraising

A number of grant awards this year enabled BPMA to deliver an increased number of educational outreach programmes with schools and older learners. At the start of the 2010/11



POST OFFICES

JULIAN STRAY

SHIRE  LIBRARY

year we were delighted to be one of just four organisations awarded £40,000 from MLA's Designation Development Fund – this will enhance capacity to deliver two of our major aims for 2011: improved image management and delivery of a major exhibition on GPO photographs.

Individual giving

During 2009/10 BPMA took its first steps towards establishing a new individual giving programme to better engage current supporters in our work. It will take time to establish regular giving but investment in this area now and ongoing steps will ensure we build strong, sustainable relationships with our audiences.

Profile-raising

Building wide public awareness enhances BPMA's capacity to generate income and attract new audiences. Over the past three years we have achieved strong year-on-year growth of our media presence. While maintaining and extending coverage in all the leading philatelic publications, we are also now reaching more mainstream and national print media. In 2009/10 we achieved a sizeable 60% growth in AVE coupled with growth in more in-depth coverage via feature articles, including general interest titles.

BPMA's delivery of the *London 2010 Festival of Stamps* enabled significant press coverage to be achieved, including a cover story in the *Independent on Sunday Magazine*. Improved integration of press work with promotions for products, events and our website also helped drive both income generation and new audience development.

Developing partnerships to increase access & sustainability

Publishing

The BPMA disseminates staff knowledge, research and expertise through ongoing publishing activity. During 2009/10 we published three books: *George V and the GPO: Stamps, Conflict and Creativity* by Philatelic Curator Douglas Muir, *Post Offices* by Assistant Curator Julian Stray (through a new commercial agreement with Shire Publications), and *Built for Service: Post Office Architecture* by externally commissioned author Julian Osley. We also produced what has rapidly become one of our most popular publications, our *Guide to the Museum Collection*, showcasing our museum collection in print for the first time.

Working with British First Day Covers

In 2009 we began working with Adrian Bradbury of British First Day Covers. The result is an ongoing series of limited edition collectable stamp sheets designed by Adrian in association with BPMA. For each sheet issued Adrian gives a percentage of sales proceeds totalling £2,000 to support our educational work.

Collaborative working on HLF project *Pistols, Packets & Postmen*

2009/10 saw the culmination of a Heritage Lottery Funded project to widen access to and develop educational resources for the Morten Postal History Collection, based at London's Bruce Castle Museum, the former home of postal reformer Sir Rowland Hill. The BPMA, the London Borough of Haringey (which manages Bruce Castle Museum) and the Communication Workers Union

(the Collection owner) worked together, employing a Project Officer for eighteen months from November 2008 to catalogue, digitise and promote this nationally important Collection. The project culminated in a display at Bruce Castle.

Agreement with Ancestry.co.uk

In 2009, the BPMA partnered with Ancestry.co.uk™, the leading social and family history website, to make Post Office appointment books from 1831 to 1960 fully searchable and available online for anyone interested in researching their family history. The next stage is to scan our microfilm and then create a linked index on Ancestry.co.uk, making these fascinating records fully name-searchable for the first time.

Partnership project with Royal Mail

2009 also saw further work as part of the BPMA's partnership project with Royal Mail to document and preserve Post Office war memorials across the UK. The Post Office owns the second largest number of war memorials in the UK after the Church; testimony to the number of postal workers who served during two World Wars. The BPMA has documented each one and in 2008/9 made the resulting catalogue available through the BPMA website. During 2009/10 further work was undertaken to improve information available to researchers.



Clockwise: Licensed 'Stamp Collection' range from Gift Republic; unissued stamp artwork; Architects' impression of new Postal Museum & Archive, Swindon; vans at Museum Store; Postmaster at replica Victorian post office, Ironbridge

Organisational Capability

During 2009/10:

20 volunteers involved and rewarded

6 staff achieving professional qualifications this year

5 New Trustees

Improved HR systems

Participation in MLA Knowledge Transfer Programme

Accredited Museum status achieved for *Museum of the Post Office in the Community*

“Knowledgeable, organised and flexible, and extremely committed to open and engaged collaborative working... The BPMA team were proactive and timely in all their activities, creative and forward thinking in their approach”

John McPherson, Marketing & PR Manager, Churchill Museum & Cabinet War Rooms, Partner for *Last Post* exhibition 2008/9

BPMA aims to build the organisational capacity required to create an accessible and sustainable organisation that not only meets audience needs but exceeds their expectations. We strive to provide a well managed and safe working environment and to be a training-led organisation offering ongoing development for staff, Trustees, and volunteers.

What we achieved this year:

Organised & well managed

Accreditation

In 2010 the BPMA was awarded Accreditation for our public space, the *Museum of the Post Office in the Community*, located at Blists Hill Victorian Village at Ironbridge Gorge. This formal recognition demonstrates the BPMA's commitment to managing its collections effectively for the enjoyment of all. Run by the MLA, the Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK.

Upgraded HR systems & processes

At the start of the year, BPMA hosted an HR interim to undertake a review of internal HR policies and processes. As a result, we have refreshed internal documentation and rolled out a new appraisal and ongoing performance improvement system to better support staff management and development ongoing.

New Trustee recruitment

During 2010 BPMA recruited five new Trustees with the aim of strengthening our Board to support ongoing development to realise our ambition to open a new combined museum and archive in Swindon. Our new Trustees are Julian Barker, Director of

Strategy for Rank Group; Jonathan Evans, former Company Secretary for Royal Mail; Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the National Museum of the Royal Navy; Phil Wood, HR Director for Zurich Assurance Ltd; and Martin Rush, Head of Information Compliance for Royal Mail.

Training-led

Staff Development

The BPMA supports and encourages staff to further their skills and knowledge to enable them to provide excellent support for our users. This includes support for professional qualifications. Staff qualifications achieved during 2009/10 include Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR) through ICON the Institute of Conservation, MAs in Archives and Records Management, and the Certificate in Fundraising Management enabling Full MInst(cert) status membership of the Institute of Fundraising.

Currently seven staff are working towards Associate of the Museum Association (AMA) status, a professional development award helping staff take responsibility for their development, develop job skills relevant to their role at the BPMA, and achieve the core competences needed for a successful career in museums.

Volunteering

To support the BPMA's 36 full-time staff and to provide placement opportunities where possible, during 2009/10 the BPMA involved over 20 volunteers. Volunteers undertook a range of tasks from project based work including research, scanning and archiving of material, to welcoming



visitors to our regular Museum Store open days. Volunteer involvement included short, temporary work-experience placements and ongoing commitment from supporters who have been involved with the BPMA since it, and its predecessor the National Postal Museum, began. This year, to celebrate our volunteers' commitment we also hosted an evening reception to say thank you to each one and to acknowledge their contribution to our achievements.

Building an organisation that exceeds targets by understanding needs

Knowledge Transfer

In autumn 2009 BPMA was delighted to be one of only twelve organisations that secured a place on the MLA London Exchange Programme aimed at exploring and promoting knowledge transfer between museums, archives and commercial business. The six month programme provided shared learning and benchmarking opportunities enabling BPMA staff to enhance their understanding of how heritage collections can support business innovation. This experience has enhanced our ability to consider commercial perspectives in relation to developing our commercial licensing programme, delivering contract work for Royal Mail, in addition to initiating ideas for working with other businesses which we aim to progress over the next few years.

Case study: Ron Clark



"It's about helping people and seeing them get enjoyment."

'I previously worked for Royal Mail, starting out as a postman and progressing to working at the London training school. I got involved with the National Postal Museum as a volunteer and have carried on ever since. I really enjoy the chance to meet new people and feeling that I'm helping them - I remember one couple who came

along to the Museum Store and I spoke to them, talking to them about some of the objects, and a little while afterwards a letter came addressed to me, thanking me for the help I'd given them, that was very rewarding."

Ron Clark has been involved as a volunteer with the BPMA and its former incarnation, the National Postal Museum, for over twenty-five years. He is currently a regular volunteer at our popular Museum Store open days, helping to usher and guide visitors and running the on-site shop.

Case Study: Mike Bament



"Volunteering at the BPMA has given me the perfect opportunity to learn a lot more about my hobby and I've

worked where my real interest has been with the postal history material, [it has] given me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction. I've met and worked with a great number of people that are

considered giants in the field of philately and have learned much, but more importantly have made some wonderful friends"

Mike Bament began volunteering at the National Postal Museum in 1989 and subsequently continued volunteering with the BPMA until his 'second' retirement, Christmas 2009.



Clockwise: Friends Chairman Cyril Macey donating to BPMA; archive photograph of postal training school; Learning Officer Laura Dixon with Royal Mail staff at outreach event; volunteer Don Staddon receiving thanks from Director, Adrian Steel and Trustee, Julian Barker; letter boxes at Museum Store

Preservation

During 2009/10:

800 pieces of Stamp artwork scanned and online

259 New acquisitions – collecting for the future

224 records digitised to date through the new agreement with ancestry.co.uk

1 Air Mail pillar box repaired, restored and exhibited

Heritage consultancy services for Royal Mail including support for corporate headquarters foyer heritage display, design and fit-out

Re-housing and cataloguing of original artwork for telegrams, posters and marketing material

“I had the pleasure of visiting the Archive today... my visit proved very successful and I managed to find all the information that I was searching for and in turn this enables me to build up a picture of my ancestors who were employed by the post office”

Search Room and enquiry service thank you email

We aim to preserve, conserve, and manage our collections to support increasing access now, and to sustain this into the future. We are committed to pursuing an active contemporary collecting programme to capture the changing UK postal communications story and to ensure that information in and about our collections is preserved and made accessible to everyone.

What we achieved this year:

Preserving, restoring, & managing objects

Air Mail Pillar box

Our professional conservation team and curators work to safeguard the objects in our care to the highest standards. This year, one of BPMA's key artefacts, a blue 1934 Air Mail Letter Box, was conserved and fully restored prior to its public exhibition as part of our *Empire Mail: George V & the GPO* exhibition at Guildhall Art Gallery, London from May to July 2010.

Travelling Post Office

In November 2009 we moved our restored Travelling Post Office (TPO) train carriage, built in 1908 at Wolverton Works, from Crewe to a new, temporary home at Bressingham Steam Museum in Norfolk. Having been restored and subsequently displayed at Crewe's *The Railway Age* since April 2007, the TPO will now be available for a new audience to enjoy at Bressingham until November 2012.

New acquisitions

This year we acquired 259 additions for our collection, enhancing our ability to fully represent the story of the Britain's postal heritage.

These included:

- A 1933 BSA B33 motorcycle and a 1941 BSA C10 motorcycle, both purchased with the assistance of PRISM funding; the 1933 motorcycle was subsequently displayed at our Guildhall Exhibition.
- A fascinating Second World War Diary from the Post Office Home Guard, 16th West Riding GPO battalion. Now on display in our Search Room.
- The return of a historic loan from the Museum of London, which includes a unique 'time plate', the only remaining part from the London Pillar Boxes, 1855.
- A metal faced posting box from Euston Railway Station.
- Photographs and shrapnel from the First World War Battle of Wurst Farm Ridge; the Victoria Cross in our collection was won by Sergeant Knight for his role in this battle.
- A Royal Mail electric scooter, part of a trial of electric delivery methods.

Review, cataloguing & photography of postal uniforms

During 2010 we began a project to review, catalogue and photograph our uniform collection. This includes about 1000 items ranging from ties, protective clothing, waistcoats, jackets, skirts and trousers to hats and helmets. The review stage is facilitating decisions about what is permanently accessioned (the formal, legal process of accepting an object into a museum collection) and once accessioned, new records are being added to our online catalogue. The project has unearthed intriguing items



including a Tangier postman's uniform dated 1905-1914, early experiments in acid resistant material and one of the earliest garments in the collection, an 1860's frock coat. Photographs of the collection have also been created to accompany catalogue records, making the collection more accessible to the public.

Re-housing original artwork

During 2009/10 substantial preservation and cataloguing work was done for original artwork and printed GPO publicity material. This involved the re-housing, cataloguing and scanning of over 2,000 items. As a result, information and images for original artwork for posters, leaflets and telegrams are now available online.

Capturing a changing story through contemporary collecting

Oral history collection

BPMA has continued to expand its collection of oral history. Together with volunteer oral historian Barry Tennant, BPMA staff have recorded activities at a number of locations across the country. These include two follow-on visits to areas previously documented.

The Postbus story previously recorded at Sittingbourne, Kent in 2006 took an unexpected turn when it was announced that it would cease running in November 2009. To mark the event BPMA captured interviews with passengers and driver on its last ever run. Objects also collected included Postbus signage and a ticket machine used on the route. A return was also made to Bringsty Common, Herefordshire. The post office on the lonely common was first visited by BPMA in February 2007. The office subsequently closed in 2008 following

the sub-postmistress' retirement. A series of interviews made in 2010 captured local opinion from residents who now have to travel to the next largest town in order to access counter services.

Other interviews with current postal workers have covered subjects as diverse as: Red Star parcels, trials of new equipment, Post & Go machines, the set-up of Railnet in the 1990s and current work at Royal Mail's Princess Royal Distribution Centre in North London.

Heritage consultancy for Royal Mail

As part of Royal Mail's refurbishment of a number of headquarters in London, BPMA was commissioned to provide design consultancy, install loaned museum items, and to source archival imagery to inform front-of-house and foyer design. The image wall and display at Royal Mail's Rathbone Place building is just one of a number of BPMA supported projects now helping to inform today's employees and visitors about the business's long history.

Preserving information in & about our collections

Postal History Collection online

To enhance our research provision for philatelists, over 3,800 comprehensive listings from the Postal History Collection have been made available online and as pdf download enabling further access to the BPMA's collections. This collection consists of more than 200 albums of postal markings dating from before and after the introduction of the first adhesive postage stamp in 1840.

Stamp artwork online

BPMA's Stamp Artwork Project, supported by the Mercers Company, the Leche Trust, the Idlewild Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation, concluded in May 2010. The project has enabled wider access to a range of stamp artwork encompassing stamp issues from the reigns of George V, Edward VIII, George VI and Elizabeth II, covering the entire process of each issue from submitted artwork, through essays, to the issued stamps. As a result, over 800 records are now viewable online for the first time.

Image management audit

This year we undertook an audit of our management of digital imagery. This includes digitised versions of our poster, photograph and stamp artwork which are vital to our ability to showcase the collection in the media, exhibitions and educational materials, and to commercially exploit our holdings to generate income. The result of this exercise led to the creation of a new image management strategy, laying the foundation for our successful Designation Development Funding bid at the end of the year.

Photographing painting collection

Towards the end of the year we began working with the Public Catalogue Foundation to photograph and record our oil and acrylic paintings, ready for publication in a forthcoming printed and online catalogue. The benefits include improved publicity for this collection, high quality digital images of each painting for future BPMA use, and improved catalogue records for users.



Clockwise: Chain testing works awaiting restoration at BPMA's new Swindon site; photo wall in Royal Mail foyer; telegram artwork; preserved post office uniform; poster artwork; stamp sheet

Future Developments and Aims for 2011

"A most interesting and informative visit & tour. Excellent presentation which also involved all tour members. A worthwhile and enjoyable experience."

A visitor to BPMA's Museum Store, March 2010

The BPMA will continue to build on our achievements of 2009/10. Partnership working, providing creative learning opportunities, offering user-centred resources, and delivering innovative preservation and exhibition initiatives will remain central to our way of working and to our ongoing aim to generate public value and benefit for all.

Our strategic aims for access, sustainability, organisational capability and preservation will continue to provide focus for our work, with key objectives for 2011 including:

Access aims:

- Staging an exhibition showcasing our iconic GPO Photography collection in autumn 2011
- Delivering outreach sessions in Swindon and London, developing new community partnerships
- Building on our relationship with U3A to enhance our life-long learning offer
- Increasing Saturday openings for our Search Room visitors
- Extending our educational programme by developing a tailored package for schools

Sustainability aims:

- Progressing Swindon relocation to RIBA stages C&D
- Initiating a capital fundraising campaign
- Implementing a new revenue fundraising plan
- Growing commercial partnerships and licensees

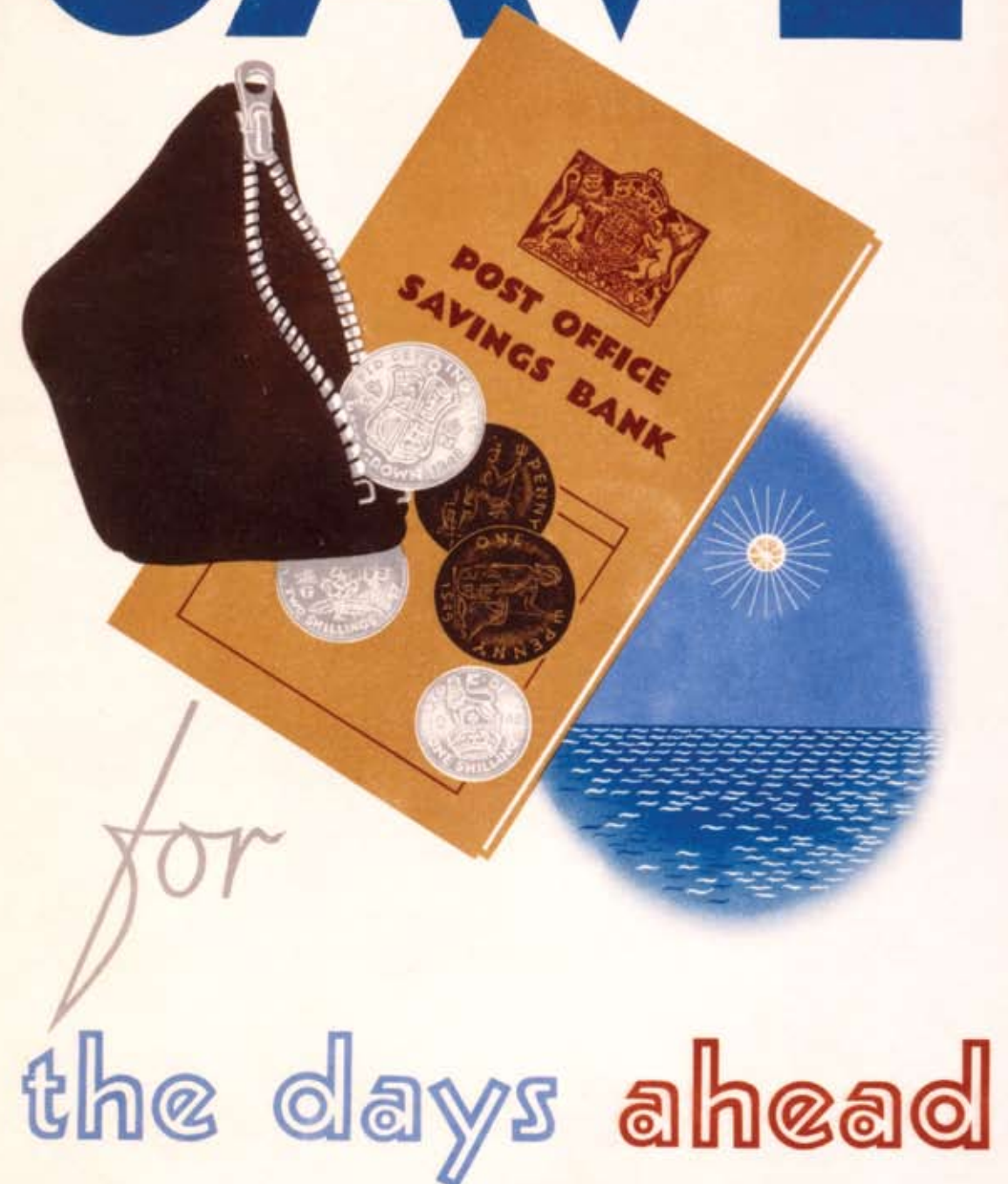
Organisational capability aims:

- Launching a new refreshed website in spring 2011 to enhance online interaction for users
- Implementing a new image management system to improve internal efficiency in accessing images for commercial and research use
- Further improving engagement with volunteers to support projects

Preservation aims:

- Completing delivery of our MLA Designation Development project to make our photographic collection more accessible and to improve its conservation
- Undertaking an audit of all loans to other organisations
- Improving documentation, policies and procedures for collections management
- Progressing work to make parts of the oral history collection accessible
- Reviewing storage management and access procedures to continue to offer the best care for the collection and to ensure objects are in the best condition for removal to Swindon.

SAVE



Get Involved

Everything the BPMA does aims to give more and more people the opportunity to understand and enjoy Britain's postal heritage. Help us to continue this work for current and future audiences by choosing to support us or by getting involved in one or more ways:

- Making a donation
- Supporting our vision for a new Postal Museum & Archive, Swindon
- Remembering the BPMA in your will
- Giving a gift in memoriam
- Sponsoring our exhibitions and programmes
- Working with us on licensing or other development opportunities
- Contributing to our collections
- Volunteering
- Signing up for our regular e-Newsletter

The range of external support we receive enables us to continue to develop new and innovative archive, exhibition and educational outreach projects. Many of these would not otherwise be possible. It also enhances our ongoing cataloguing and preservation work. Many of the initiatives outlined in this report are examples of such projects.

As an independent charity we very much value the support of individuals, businesses and funders interested in supporting our work and helping us to preserve the collections we hold. The BPMA would like to thank all our current funders, staff, volunteers, Friends group and others for their support.

If you would like to find out more about the BPMA's work and ways you could become a part of it, please visit www.postalheritage.org.uk/support or contact our Head of Access & Development on 020 7239 2570.



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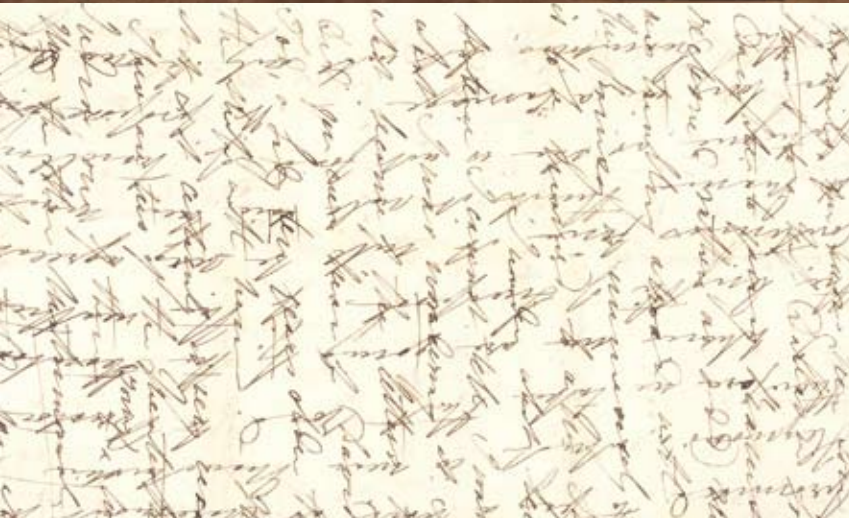
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THE BRITISH
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