

Royal Mail Group plc

Annual Report on Postal Heritage
2011-2012

Annual Report presented to Parliament in accordance
with Section 12 of the Postal Services Act 2011



Royal Mail Group Ltd

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Royal Mail

THE BRITISH POSTAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVE



Post Office Magazine 1947

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10. Who are we?

The following acronym will be referred to frequently in this report:

BPMA: British Postal Museum and Archive



Foreword by Donald Brydon CBE, Chairman of Royal Mail Group Ltd.



Artwork at the museum



Penny Black

This is the first report to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills on the Royal Mail Archive and British Postal Museum Collections. Together, they represent over 400 years of the postal and social history of Britain and the world. Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. have proudly supported the ongoing care and custodianship for both for many years. We welcome the opportunity to publish this report in fulfilment of Part 1 Section 12 of the Postal Services Act 2011, and has been produced after consultation with Post Office Ltd.

Heritage collections are held by the British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA), an independent charity run as a professional museum and archive service. Along with Post Office Ltd, Royal Mail is committed to supporting the BPMA financially in the long term. This report details how their support of the BPMA, Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. have ensured that Britain's postal heritage will continue to be well cared for and used.

In the past year, the BPMA and Royal Mail have established a project to create a new home for the BPMA in central London, with the support of Post Office Ltd. and the endorsement of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. We, Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. were proud to announce financial support, the donation of a building and land for the project, in March of 2012. Planning permission for the venture has now been granted, and we hope

that the new BPMA will open during 2014. One of the most important things we have taken into account in the way the project was set up is the BPMA's ongoing sustainability.

We have ensured that the BPMA has the ability to raise revenue commercially and from fundraising to add to the support provided by the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd.

With the new centre, the BPMA will have a state of the art postal museum fit for the future, that will showcase the Royal Mail Archive and the British Postal Museum Collection as they fully deserve.

Royal Mail will continue to report on this and its ongoing commitment to safeguarding the nation's postal heritage. The past year has seen much to build on, from the publication of 'Masters of the Post', an authoritative history of the Royal Mail from Tudor times to the present day, through to work at a local level preserving memorials of great importance to local communities.

I hope you enjoy reading about what has been done and will join us in supporting the care of Britain's postal heritage for generations to come.

Donald Brydon CBE
Chairman, Royal Mail Group
July 2012



Royal Mail

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Introduction



This report provides information about the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd's commitment to the maintenance and preservation of their heritage through the British Postal Museum and Archive, as required under section 12 of the Postal Services Act 2011.

Mail workers at a mainline station

On 1st of April 2012, following reforms contained in the Postal Services Act 2011, Post Office Ltd. the network of High Street and rural Post Offices, separated from the Royal Mail Group Ltd. This report describes the 12 month period leading up to that date.



Royal Mail

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About the British Postal Museum and Archive



Mail Coaches at Snaresbrook



Philatelic Collection



Early postman's uniform

'The origins of the Royal Mail go back to the early years of the Tudor monarchy: Brian Tuke, a former King's Bailiff in Sandwich, was acknowledged as the first 'Master of the Posts' by Cardinal Wolsey in 1512, and went on to build up a network of postmasters across England for Henry VIII.

Over the following 500 years, the posts expanded to a degree that would have then been unimaginable; transformed by coaches, trains, ocean steamships and then modern aviation to become the largest employer in the country and the face of the British state for many people in their ordinary lives.' ¹

Access to the Royal Mail Archive has been available to the public since the 19th century. Since then, the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. have supported the preservation of and access to the Archive, initially at St Martin's Le Grand, then at Freeling House Southwark and latterly since 1992 at the Mount Pleasant Mail Centre.

In 1966, the National Postal Museum (NPM) was founded. This provided a home for the Phillips Collection of Victorian philately which had been gifted to the nation. The museum was located at King Edward Building near St Paul's Cathedral in London. It was opened by Her Majesty, the Queen, on the 19th of February 1969. A substantial collection of postal equipment, uniforms, vehicles

and much more was developed over the years, more than could be displayed in a small museum.

In 1998, King Edward Building was sold and the NPM was closed, although the museum collections were retained. The museum staff joined the archives team and for the first time the management of both the museum and archive was brought together as the new Heritage Department of the Post Office.

At that time the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. were both under slightly different names in the organisation known as the Post Office. The Post Office was renamed Consignia Plc and thereafter became Royal Mail Group.

As the landscape in which the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. were operating continued to change, the decision was taken to transfer the work of the Heritage Department to an independent charitable trust in order to safeguard the future of its past. This 'Postal Heritage Trust' came into being in April 2004, and is publicly known as The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA).

¹ Master of the Post - written Duncan Campbell-Smith



About the British Postal Museum and Archive



BPMA search room



Morris Minor van

The former National Postal Museum Collection was donated to the charitable trust by the Royal Mail Group. Mostly, the museum collection is housed at the BPMA's Museum Store in Essex. This is open to the public, by appointment, on selected days throughout the year.

The Royal Mail Group provided a charitable donation to support the management of the museum and help develop the BPMA's services to the public including exhibitions, education, outreach and preservation. The work of the museum is explained later in this report.

In addition to the charitable donation, the BPMA also receives an annual payment for its management of the Archive. Although the Archive is a significant part of the BPMA's collections, due to its status as public record, ultimate responsibility for it lies with the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. The records have been officially designated as being of Outstanding National Importance.

The BPMA makes the archive records available on request to members of the public at the Archive Search Room Freeling House, London.

The Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. work closely with the BPMA to ensure records of social or historic importance are identified and transferred to the Archive at the appropriate time.

Records that are created by the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. are routinely sent to an external secure storage facility. They will be held for the period designated by a retention schedule. At the designated time, those records identified as being of social or historical interest will, be transferred to the Royal Mail Archive.

The records selected for the Archive will be made available to the public under the Public Records Act 1958. Under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, historical records will be made available to the public after 20, rather than the current 30, years. This process begins in 2013.

Together the museum and Archive collections form a unique record of a national institution and offer a fascinating perspective on the history of British society, design and industry.



BPMA legal structure and key agreements

The following diagram illustrates the flow of records and museum artefacts into the BPMA and the key agreements between the Royal Mail, Post Office Ltd. and the BPMA that enable it to function.

1. Heritage Trust Transfer Deed 2004

Under the deed, historical artefacts are transferred to the museum collection and become the possession of the Postal Heritage Collection Trust, a registered charity.

Responsibility for the management of the records, preservation of the museum collection and promotion of postal heritage of the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. known as the undertaking, was transferred to the Postal Heritage Trust (a charity) and Postal Heritage Services Ltd. (a trading company). The BPMA processes the artefacts that are donated to go into the museum.

2. Charity Funding Agreement

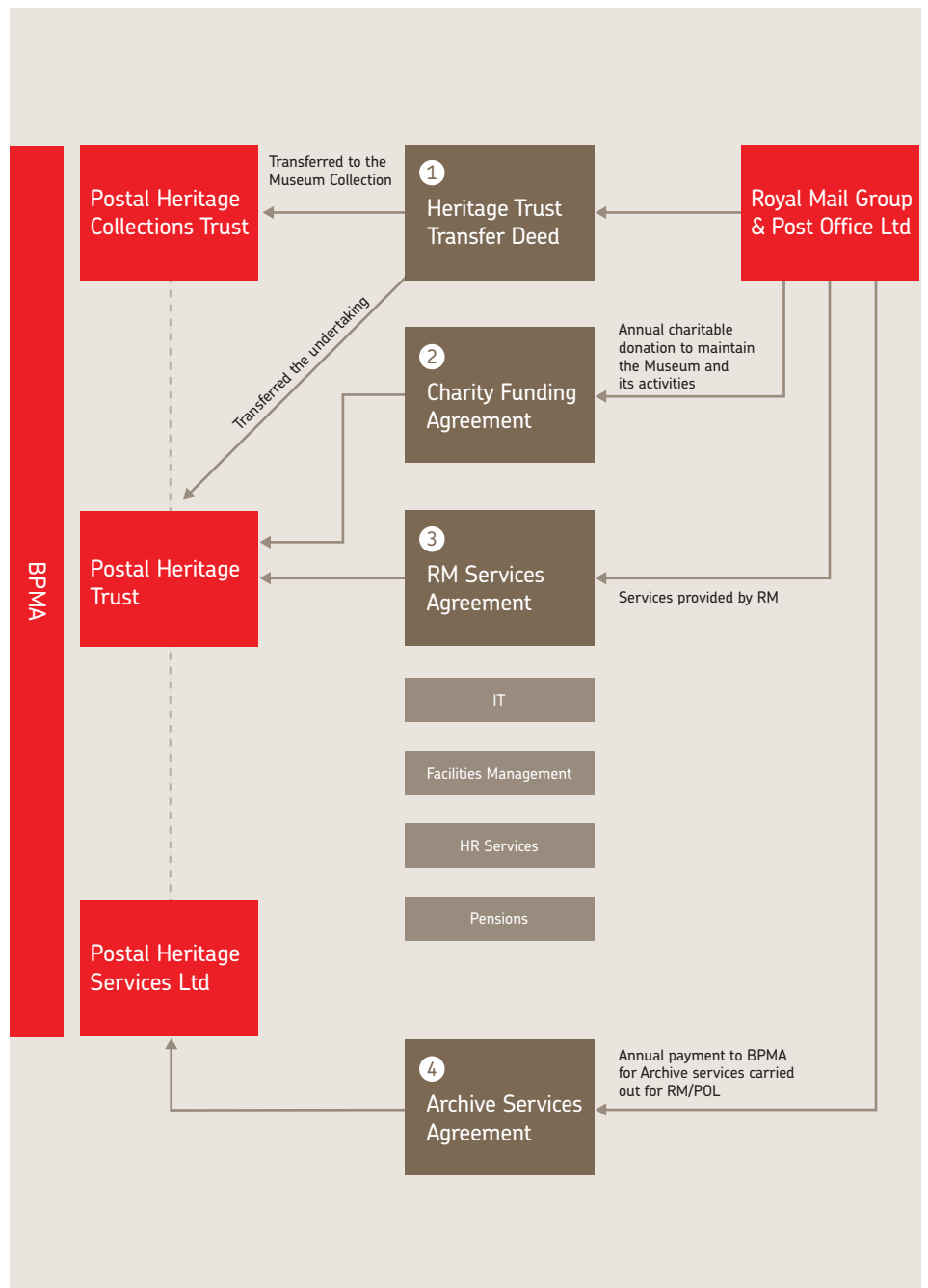
The agreement provides the funds needed to operate the museum.

3. The Services Agreement

The agreement describes services such as IT and payroll services that are provided to BPMA by the Royal Mail.

4. The Archive Services Agreement

The agreement provides the funds for the resources, including the professional archivists, required to manage the Archive.





Our aims



Post Office underground railway

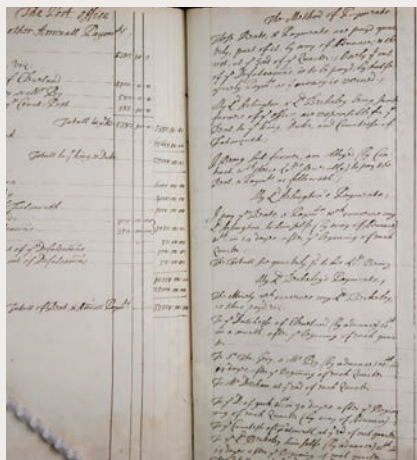


Service at Canal Street

- We, the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd., will work together with the aim of ensuring the long term sustainability and viability of the BPMA
- We will work with the BPMA towards sustaining our postal heritage for the nation
- We will seek to ensure that our heritage is cared for and managed, for the nation, by qualified professionals
- We will work hard to meet the relevant standards and best practice
- We will comply with our obligations under law
- We will strive to make our collections accessible to the widest possible audience using both physical and electronic means.



The collections



Ledger



BSA Bantam



Lamp Boxes

5.1 The Archive Collection

The Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. Archive contain records from the 17th century to the present day. The Archive was designated as being of Outstanding National Importance by the Museums, Libraries and Archive scheme in 2005, which is now overseen by the Arts Council, and is public record (equivalent in status to the material held in The National Archives, Kew). It fills over 2.5 miles of shelving and is currently housed at Freeling House, Mount Pleasant Mail Centre.

The Archive is one of the oldest business archives in the world. The records of the Royal Mail and the Post Office Ltd. through the years deal with aspects of every day life beyond the delivery of mail. The Archive illuminates the running of the postal system throughout history, but also most key aspects of the life and experiences of the nation. Records held in the archive include:

- Stamps and philatelic material, including every British stamp from 1840 to the present day
- Stamp artwork, postal stationery and postmarks
- Photographs, posters and paintings
- Records relating to postal operations and Post Office Counters
- Material relating to war and emergencies
- Maps, records of staff, finance and buildings.

5.2 The Museum Collection

The Museum Collection includes some of Britain's most iconic objects and spans over 400 years of postal history, innovation and service. The collection includes objects of all sizes; from hand stamps to vehicles. Alongside items of historical note are everyday things such as:

- Vehicles
- Letter boxes in different formats as well as wall boxes and lamp boxes
- Different types of mail as delivered through history
- Examples of changing technologies to sort and deliver mail
- Material which highlights the development and growth of postal service.

5.3 Use of the collections:-

BPMA reports that use of collections in the year ending April 2012 has been as follows:

- 3,201 visits to the archive search room
- 3,606 telephone enquiries answered from the archive search room
- 2,004 written enquiries answered from the archive search room
- 249 visits to the museum store

Visits to the website:

- 176,001 Google Analytics*
- 431,561 AW stats*
- 366,827 contacts via social media

* Figures are approximate due to changes following the launch of a new website in May 2011



Where to find the nation's Postal Heritage



Freeling House



The new BPMA (artist's impression)



Blists Hill Post Office Museum

6.1 BPMA's current home

The BPMA is located in Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. It is part of Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant Mail Centre complex.

Freeling House is provided by Royal Mail, free of charge, as part of the donation agreement. It houses the search room where members of the public can come and view a large part of the collections, most of the archive and philatelic collection and some of the smaller objects in the museum collection, as well as a conservation studio and offices for the BPMA staff.

The BPMA provides free access to the Archive for members of the public at Freeling House five days a week, with extended opening hours on Thursdays and one Saturday a month.

6.2 BPMA's new home

Planning is at an advanced stage to relocate the museum and Archive to an adjacent property in Calthorpe House – also part of the Mount Pleasant complex.

The new site will provide many improvements, including:

- Better environmental conditions for the Archive and other heritage material
- Improved public research facilities
- Physical access to the museum collection, restored for the first time since 1998
- More artefacts on display
- Improved digitisation facilities

- Educational facilities for visiting schools.

6.3 BPMA Museum Store Debden

The BPMA museum store is situated in Debden, Essex and is where the BPMA houses some of its larger exhibits. Like almost all museums, the BPMA keeps much of its object collection in a carefully managed store until they are needed for exhibitions and display. As the BPMA currently has limited display space, the museum store is also an important way for visitors to see the collection. The museum store is open by pre-arrangement on selected days throughout the year. The store is also open for special events each year and, from time to time, for groups on private tours by arrangement with the BPMA.

6.4 Museum of the Post Office in the Community, Ironbridge

Located above the recreated Victorian Post Office at Blists Hill Victorian town, this museum explores the vital role played by the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. in the lives of generations of Britons, illustrating how it opened up long distance communications for the masses and provided essential services in the most remote communities in Britain.

Museum highlights include a bright red BSA Bantam – the most well known make of motorcycle used by the Royal Mail – and a range of letter boxes, home safes, Post Office saving bank books and an early example of a telegram.



Our commitment to the nation's Postal Heritage



Delivery to St Michael's Mount, Cornwall



Delivery to hop fields Kent

In 2004, and in light of its new plc status, the Royal Mail Group decided to set up an independent charity to take their museum collection and Archive and to seek funding for the same.

A series of agreements were entered into by the Royal Mail Group (including Post Office Ltd.) to create the BPMA and to ensure its long term sustainability. The key agreements that provide the funding for BPMA are described below.

7.1 The Heritage Trust Deed

This was the one-off agreement by which both the museum collection and the undertaking that was Royal Mail Heritage Services were transferred to BPMA in 2004. The undertaking describes the responsibility for the management of the records, the preservation of the museum collection and promotion of the postal heritage.

7.2 The Funding Agreement 2004

This agreement covered the charitable funding payments made to the BPMA.

In the year ending March 2012, the Royal Mail Group made a donation to the BPMA of £1,280,000 in two half year instalments. The same sum will be donated in the year 2012/13. The donation provides the finances needed to maintain the museum and support activities such as 'education' to improve public awareness of the BPMA and what it offers.

7.3 The Archive Services Agreement 2004

This covers the delivery of archive services for the Royal Mail Group. Archive Services are specialist activities that support the ability of the Royal Mail Group in meeting its obligations under the Public Records Act 1958. It also includes related records management services, plus the BPMA's right to occupy Freeling House premises under licence.

When records are transferred to the BPMA qualified archivists review them to identify those that will be preserved. In line with the standards set out in the Public Records Act, the qualifying records are published at the appropriate time.

For the year ending March 2012, Royal Mail Group paid the BPMA, a total of £758,531 in two half year instalments. The retail price index and other factors will see this sum increase to £797,974 in 2012/13.

7.4 Refreshing the agreements

After the separation of Post Office Ltd from the Royal Mail Group in April of 2012, and to demonstrate the long term commitment of the parties, the agreements are being re-written between the parties to ensure the long term sustainability of the BPMA and access to our national Postal Heritage.



The Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd's ongoing financial commitment



A museum showcase



Recovering train from underground

8.1 Press release

On 2nd October 2011, Jon Millidge, Company Secretary of the Royal Mail Group, and Adrian Steel, Director of the British Postal Museum and Archive, issued a joint statement to the press. The statement assured readers that the UK's unique postal heritage and the historically important records at the British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA) are secure.

The information contained in this report demonstrates the commitment of the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. to the protection of their past into the future, and the steps they have taken to achieve this goal.

8.2 25 year loan

The Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. have further demonstrated their commitment to the BPMA through a 25 year loan of £6 million, to be shared equally between the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. to enable the planning and construction of the new museum.

8.3 Land for the new museum

As stated in the Chairman's introduction, the Royal Mail Group has contributed land, adjacent to the Mount Pleasant site, and property on that land which, after building and renovation work, will house a new, modern and larger museum and archive.

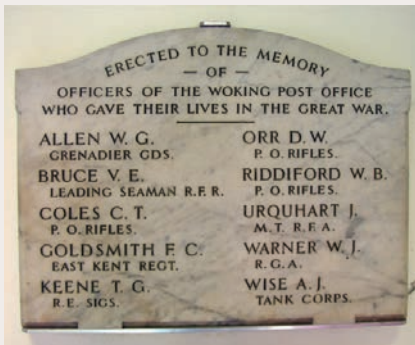
8.4 One-off payments

Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. contributed (on a 50/50 basis) the following additional payments to the BPMA

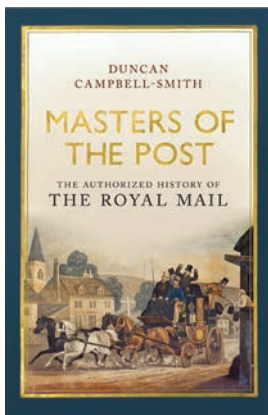
- An additional contribution of 600k for the development costs for the museum
- A short term loan of £500k to employ fund raising specialists and design fees for the museum.



Other ways in which the Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. support BPMA



War memorial



Masters of the Post



Children visit Debden

9.1 War memorials

In 2009, Royal Mail and BPMA entered into a partnership project to document and preserve Post Office war memorials across the UK.

The Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. own the largest number of war memorials in the UK after the church; testimony to the number of postal workers who served during the two wars. The preservation work continues and will be strengthened ahead of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014.

9.2 Mail Rail

The underground railway, later known as 'Mail Rail', opened in 1927 to move mail between central London sorting offices and two mainline railway stations at Liverpool Street and Paddington. The line finally ceased operation in 2003 when the levels of use had declined. Mail Rail featured in the BBC 1 series 'Great British Railway Journeys'.

9.3 Intellectual property

When the trust was created, the Royal Mail granted BPMA a non-exclusive licence to the Intellectual Property in the majority of the heritage collection (not including postage stamps and other key images). The Royal Mail, Post Office Ltd. and BPMA have worked together with a licensing agent to generate the intellectual property within the collections, splitting the income.

9.4 'Masters of the Post'

In November 2011, 'Masters of the Post' was published in hardback by Penguin Books. The book chronicles the history of the Post Office and Royal Mail from their humble beginnings 500 years ago in 1512 until the present day. Initial sales have been encouraging and a paperback version is planned for later in 2012. The author, Duncan Campbell-Smith, began his research in 2009. The work was commissioned and paid for by Royal Mail. BPMA supported the research work, providing facilities for the research, and support in searching the archives.

9.5 Education and exhibitions

The Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. are proud that their donations support activities beyond the day to day running of the museum. Activities in BPMA's outreach programme include, for example:

- Educational visits to the Archive and the BPMA's Debden museum store
- 'Stamps in Schools' programme and BPMA education packs which are widely downloaded from the BPMA website.

9.6 BBC Radio 4 'The People's Post'

In December 2011 BBC, Radio 4 presented a 15 part series on the history of the Post Office.



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Contact us:

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Who are we?



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Moya Greene
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Chairman of the BPMA
Board of Trustees



Jon Millidge
Company Secretary,
Royal Mail Group



Dr Adrian Steel
BPMA Director and
Member of the BPMA
Board of Trustees

Report by Jon Millidge -
Royal Mail Group
Company Secretary