



Royal Mail Group Ltd

Annual Report on Postal Heritage 2012/13

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



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House of Commons Post Office



RMG Courier – staff magazine cover wrapper

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For the purpose of brevity, in this report, the following acronyms may be applied:-

- Royal Mail Group Limited – RMG or Royal Mail
- Post Office Limited – POL
- British Postal Museum & Archive – BPMA
- Postal Services Act 2011 – PSA

MASTER OF POSTS ROYAL POST SERVICE

February 1512

The origins of the Royal Mail go back to the early years of the Tudor monarchy. As Chancellor to the young Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey appointed Brian Tuke as the first 'Master of the Posts' in 1512. He then went on to build up a network of postmasters.

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"Sir Brian Tuke & Death" by Hans Holcein the Younger

WOLSEY DISMISSED

Henry VIII dismissed Thomas Wolsey from public office and appointed the Boleyn family's chaplain, Thomas Cranmer as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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TUKE'S LETTER TO THOMAS CROMWELL

Commanded by King Henry VIII to set up posts in all places most expedient, Tuke explained to Cromwell that the King's Posts could never be delayed. This meant horses were crucial to the timely delivery of all the King's parcels, papers and letters.

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The Chairman's foreword



Donald Brydon CBE, Chairman of Royal Mail Group and Patron of the British Postal Museum and Archive



Artist's impression of the new BPMA

The new permanent home, which Britain's postal heritage needs, has come much closer in the past year. Following the grant of planning permission for a new home for the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) at Calthorpe House, London, in the summer of 2012, the Heritage Lottery Fund backed the project in October with a development grant of up to £250,000 together with a chance to bid for £4million capital funding to complete the project. Royal Mail Group (RMG) has supported the BPMA's fundraising campaign aimed at meeting the shortfall during the year, and as a patron of the BPMA I have attended and spoken at events and encouraged potential corporate and individual donors to consider sponsorship and charitable giving.

It was particularly good to see the 1948 London Olympic stamp design artwork, held by the BPMA, form part of the cultural Olympiad on exhibition at the British Library last summer. The wider continuing interest in postal heritage is pleasing to see and is manifested in the numbers who continue to use the Royal Mail Archives, managed by the BPMA, for research and those who attend events and use the BPMA website – which we were proud to see earmarked at Easter by the Sunday Times as one of the top 100 websites that will still be essential reading in 2113.

Together with our sister company Post Office Limited, Royal Mail has signed long-term funding agreements for the BPMA's work which will see Britain's postal heritage secured through the privatisation of the Royal Mail business and beyond. The continued focus in the coming year will be to complete the fundraising needed for a first-class new home for the collections, and I look forward to continuing my own, RMG's and POL's, support of this effort.

Donald Brydon CBE
Chairman, Royal Mail Group
July 2013

FIRST PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICES

When a public postal service was first opened to the public in 1635 by Charles I, letters were carried between 'posts' by mounted post-boys and delivered to the local postmaster. This was a slow process, but the system remained unchanged for almost 150 years.

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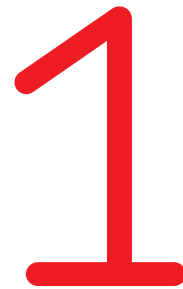
ROYAL MAIL'S FOUNDING DATE

31 July 1635

On 31st July 1635, by Royal Proclamation of Charles I, the letter office as well as the maintenance of six post roads were authorised. Later that same year, Thomas Witherings was appointed to establish a public postal system.

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Introduction



Mail workers at a main-line station

On 1 April 2012, following reforms contained in the Postal Service Act 2011, POL, the network of High Street and rural Post Offices, separated from RMG. This report describes the 12 month period from 1 April 2012 until 31 March 2013.

Section 12 of the Postal Services Act (PSA) provides that RMG has an obligation (in consultation with POL) to report to the Secretary of State on postal heritage. The Secretary of State will then lay the report before Parliament. This provision was included in the PSA to ensure transparency about RMG's and POL's postal heritage activities following the structural changes enabled by the PSA, such as the separation of RMG and POL and the privatisation of RMG.

This report provides information about the commitment of RMG and POL to the maintenance and preservation of the nation's postal heritage. At the forefront of that commitment is their support of the BPMA. The BPMA is an independent charity, run as a professional museum and custodian of the collections representing 400 years of both Britain, and the world's, postal and social history.

RMG and POL have proudly supported the on-going care and custodianship of both the museum and archive for many years. Each year RMG and POL provide a charitable donation to maintain and develop the museum. RMG and POL also engage the BPMA to provide archiving services for the archive, for which they pay a fee.

Royal Mail's timeline

Royal Mail holds a unique and important place in history with a rich heritage tracing back to the days of Henry VIII. Our interactive, digital timeline invites you to travel through time with Royal Mail, from 1500 through to the present day, highlighting events and achievements in the history of post and Royal Mail alongside key moments in history.

The timeline tells the story through text, images, facts, film, audio and animations. You can get a taster of the timeline through the extracts displayed at the bottom of each page of this report, or you can visit the timeline on the Royal Mail Group website, where it is open to all at www.royalmailheritage.com/main.php

FIXED RATES FOR SENDING LETTERS

In 1657 an Act of Parliament fixed rates for sending letters and established a system for the British Isles. The recipient had to pay a fee calculated on both the number of sheets sent and the distance.

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FIRST GENERAL POST OFFICE

Built on the distribution system for royal and government documents, the postal service was known as the Royal Mail. With a network of Post Offices, members of the public could easily send and receive letters and parcels.

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The inner courtyard of the General Post Office in what was once a grand villa in the City of London



Our aims – how are we doing?



Museum display



Artist impression of display cabinet for new museum

In our 2011/12 report RMG, which then included POL, set out six aims for heritage:

1. We, Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd, will work together with the aim of ensuring the long term sustainability and viability of the BPMA.

• RMG and POL remain committed to supporting the BPMA in the long term and in 2011 began a project to create a new home for the BPMA in central London. RMG and POL are proud that in 2012 they were able to complete long-term agreements for financial support to ensure the sustainability of the BPMA for the next 25 years.

2. We will work with the BPMA towards sustaining our postal heritage for the nation.

• In addition to financial support, in 2012, RMG made a generous grant of land and a building for the BPMA's new premises. The premises will enable BPMA to display to the public many more items from the museum as well as providing more space and improved conditions for the archive.

3. We will seek to ensure that our heritage is cared for and managed, for the nation, by qualified professionals.

• All professional staff at BPMA hold at least one recognised qualification in archives, museums or conservation and are experts in their respective fields.

4. We will work hard to meet the relevant standards and best practice.

• BPMA adheres to National Archive Standard PD5454: 2012 and ISO 15489-1. Section 7 of this report provides more information.

5. We will comply with our obligations under law.

• Our obligations under the Public Records Act are summarised in section 7 of this report. RMG, POL and BPMA work closely together, through agreed objectives and clearly defined roles as expressed in the service agreement (renewed in 2013) to comply with our legal obligations.

FIRST MAIL COACH JOURNEY

2 August 1784

In 1784 John Palmer - a theatre owner from Bath - organised a rapid carriage service to transport actors and props between theatres. He believed a similar scheme could improve the postal service.

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Portrait of John Palmer aged 75

EXTENSION OF MAIL COACH ROUTES

Following the success of the first experimental mail coach journey, other routes quickly followed. By spring 1785, mail coaches from London served Norwich, Liverpool and Leeds. The first postal employees to receive an official uniform were mail coach guards.

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Lamp boxes



Penny Black

6. We will strive to make our collections accessible to the widest possible audience using both physical and electronic means.

With split sites for the RMG and POL archive and museum collections, physical access is limited. Because of this, the current BPMA audience is primarily hobbyists (including philatelists, postal historians and family historians). Other audiences include independent adults, families, teachers and

students. In the absence of available space, outreach activity forms a key part of audience engagement and BPMA works hard to reach people digitally; through its website, blog and social media channels. The new museum will allow BPMA to reach a number of additional audiences, from local residents to tourists, through an improved offer and raised profile. Work to design and build the new Postal Museum & Archive premises has moved from a strategic plan to tactical planning.



STEAMBOATS FIRST USED FOR POST

In 1821 two steam-driven packet boats were placed on the Holyhead station. They were called Meteor and Lightning and marked a new era in the postal service. Soon more Post Office boats were introduced at Dover, Milford Haven, Portpatrick and Liverpool.

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LONGEST SERVING MAIL GUARD

Moses James Nobbs was the longest serving mail guard in the Post Office. He served from 1836 to 1891 - a total of 55 years.

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Progress on the new British Postal Museum & Archive



Calthorpe House today



Calthorpe House in the future - artist impression



Collection of vehicles at Debden museum

Founded in 2004, the BPMA is the leading resource for all aspects of Britain's postal heritage. The BPMA manage and maintain the Royal Mail Archive, which also includes the written records of the GPO and The Post Office, and its museum collections.

The BPMA is presently located in Freeling House, part of RMG's Mount Pleasant complex. Space limitations at Freeling House mean that much of the archive and museum collections are held in storage, in Debden in Essex, allowing limited access to the general public.

Under a scheme endorsed by the Government and backed by Britain's leading heritage organisations, RMG, POL and the BPMA are working together, to plan a new Postal Museum & Archive. This will provide a first-class home for the long-term safe and sustainable storage of their collections, significantly increasing public access and making the story of 400 years of communication, industry and innovation available to everyone.

The new centre will be located at Calthorpe House, in the London borough of Camden, adjoining the country's oldest and recently refurbished mail centre at Mount Pleasant.

As well as a purpose-built archive repository, the new Postal Museum & Archive will feature five exhibition zones showcasing the BPMA's collections, which range from postal vehicles to pillar boxes, staff records, posters, photographs, uniforms, weapons, and the world's greatest collection of British stamps.

RMG and POL are both funding this project and, as reported in section 6 have provided significant sums in grants and loans.

Despite generous donations from RMG, POL and a Heritage Lottery Fund development grant, there remains a significant funding shortfall. To bridge the gap, in 2013, the BPMA is undertaking a major fundraising campaign to make the project a reality.

The selected building, Calthorpe House, has now been provided to the BPMA by RMG and planning permission has been granted for the development. The next work stages will see further planning of the construction process and demolition of ancillary buildings on the site.

THE FIRST TRAVELLING POST OFFICE

20 January 1838

George Karstadt, a Post Office surveyor, was the first to suggest using a special railway carriage for the sorting of mail whilst en route. On 20th January 1838 the first Travelling Post Office was born - staff worked in a converted horsebox to sort mail.

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HENRY CORBOULD

In search of new ideas for the prepayment of penny postage, the Treasury held a competition. They received over 2,600 entries and the winning design was based on the city medal by William Wyon, showing the young head of Queen Victoria and a sketch by Henry Corbould.

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How stamps help protect and promote the nation's heritage



Zandra Rhodes



Royal Mail stamps help to promote and celebrate the best of British, whether historic anniversaries, achievements in arts and sciences or sporting success. For almost 50 years it has been issuing its Special Stamps in regular annual series, which showcase key aspects of the UK, its heritage and preoccupations. Two contrasting stamp issues from 2012, Great British Fashion Stamps and Olympic Gold Medal Stamps, showcase this aspect of Royal Mail, and the often surprising lengths that the stamps team go to create award-winning stamp designs.

Great British fashion stamps

Throughout the world the UK is regarded as an innovator in fashion, and the industry

is worth an estimated £20 billion a year to the economy. With a strong design heritage the subject was a natural for stamps. Working closely with experts at the Victoria & Albert Museum, key British designers of the last 60 years were identified along with signature design pieces.

The designers were contacted and all were enthusiastic to co-operate as the kudos of one's work appearing on stamps is renowned in the creative industries. Designers were chosen to represent the fashion eras on which they had put their stamp, from the elegance of the 1940s and Hardy Amies; to the swinging London of late 60s (Ossie Clark); seventies chic (Jean Muir); eighties theatricality (Zandra Rhodes); to nineties iconoclasm (Vivienne



Photo of Edward Henry Corbould London, June 1889

INTRODUCING UNIFORM POSTAGE

After years of following a complicated, confusing and expensive system, uniform postage rates were introduced on 5th December 1839. Rates were based on weight rather than distance and generally the sender paid, not the receiver.

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THE WORLD'S FIRST ADHESIVE STAMP

6 May 1840 - First Day of Issue for the Penny Black

At the suggestion of Rowland Hill, the world's first adhesive stamp, the Penny Black, was introduced on 6th May 1840. Over 68 million stamps were used in the first year.

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Portrait of social reformer Rowland Hill as a young man



Tommy Nutter's suit for Ringo Starr



Vivienne Westwood fashion shoot



Sir Paul Smith fashion shoot

Westwood). Post 1970s menswear was to be featured too, and Sir Paul Smith was a fit because of his Savile Row pedigree and international reputation.

Many of the designers had the original garments in their collections for photography. Some other dresses were sourced from specialist vintage collections. A classic 1970 suit created by Tommy Nutter specifically for Ringo Starr was identified as a must have for the stamps collection, but the suit no longer existed and no patterns could be located. When David Mason of Tommy Nutter asked his cutting room staff if they felt they could recreate the garment from an original publicity poster one of the senior staff casually remarked he could do it easily – he had made the original one almost 40 years before!

The leading graphic design agency Johnson Banks was commissioned to explore and propose visual solutions, and under the guidance of Royal Mail's expert design managers, a unique approach evolved. It was decided to use live models, rather than fashion mannequins, recruited specifically to embody the ideal silhouettes of the many different fashion eras to

be celebrated. The leading fashion photographer Solve Sundsbo was enlisted and the models were assembled over a two day photo shoot at his London studio. Many of the iconic garments were brought in especially by the fashion houses and designer Zandra Rhodes arrived in person to supervise the styling of her model. Each model had rehearsed the characteristic poses for the different eras.

Following the photo shoot, the features of each model were digitally removed from the images so that the final design focuses on the intricacies of each garment without any distraction.

The stamps were awarded a prestigious UK design accolade when they won the Design Week award in the hotly-contested print communication category. The award sits alongside the collection of virtually every major design awards Royal Mail special stamps have been honoured with over the years.

1850

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PILLAR BOX

In 1852 the first pillar box was introduced. This meant people no longer had to travel for miles to send a letter. Over the years it had undergone many changes and significant developments in design, technology and awareness of customer needs. Today, the pillar box is part of our landscape.

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Heritage – stamps and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games



Olympic stamp print test



Olympic stamp print run



Olympic stamps being delivered to Post Office branches

Olympic Gold Medal stamps

2012 will be remembered as the year London hosted one of the most successful Olympic and Paralympic Games ever. The city and the country were transformed from July to September as Games fever grew. Royal Mail's key contribution to the Games was the awarding of 'next day' stamps to every GB Gold Medal winner.

While a regular Special Stamp issue takes up to two years from brief to printed paper, the process for creating 'next day' stamps required the rewriting of virtually every rule about stamp design, print and distribution. Royal Mail's stamps team had developed and tested a radical procedure for several months before the Games commenced.

In preparation for the Games, hundreds of thousands of self-adhesive stamp sheets were prepared, and pre-printed in gold with details like the Queen's head, the 2012 Games logo, and the stamp value – all in readiness for the final images to be overprinted millions of times.

With the sheets at a network of printers at secret locations around the UK, the stamps team awaited the first GB Gold Medal. And they waited... then on the

fifth day of the competition a gold rush started with rowers Heather Stanning and Helen Glover. The practiced mechanism to create a celebratory stamp began virtually immediately. At their HQ the stamps team waited for Getty, the official photographic agency for the Olympics, to upload images of the gold medal winning couple in action. From these, Royal Mail designers had minutes to select and test the best images, crop as necessary into the template for a stamp, and adjust sharpness of the image as required. The names of the winning athletes, and the event, were also added and triple checked to create an artwork file which the Games organisers would check and approve.

These files were then digitally transferred to the six printers based in secret locations around the UK, who then overprinted the image of the athletes and the text on the stamp sheets they already had, and 'finished' the sheets by guillotining them further into sheets of A4 – each bearing four 'miniature sheets'.

HENRY FAWCETT

1880-1884

Henry Fawcett was the Postmaster General from 1880 to 1884. His labour reforms and support for women in the workplace characterised a progressive era that many at the time saw as a golden age.

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THE OLD FOR THE FINE

A newspaper cartoon with the caption "Henry Fawcett. The man for the post"

INTRODUCING POSTAL ORDERS

Postal orders were originally designed to provide the poor with the means of transmitting small amounts of money banks would not deal with. After much investigation and opposition, a law was passed in July 1880 to enable 'Post Office notes.'

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David Weir



Ellie Simmonds



Andy Murray



Mo Farah



If necessary, the printers worked overnight, and all stamps were packaged ready for a fleet of nearly 100 vans to collect in the early hours of the morning for distribution to the network of 517 'next day' Post Office branches all over the UK. This included flying them to Belfast for distribution to the Post Office branches in Northern Ireland. Some 4,700 more Post Office branches received the stamps within a week.

The well-tested system for 'next day' stamps worked perfectly, even coping with multiple wins. When Mo Farah won his gold for the 10,000m late on Saturday night, and in the same hour Jessica Ennis and Greg Rutherford won their Gold Medals, the challenge was to deliver all these stamps the next day. The team and the system worked like clockwork, and all three stamps, plus another three of Gold Medal victories

earlier on 'Super Saturday', were on sale the very next day. Most of these Post Office branches were open on Sunday for the very first time too to meet demand and contribute to what Lord Coe said of that Saturday - "it was the greatest day of sport I have ever witnessed".

While tens of thousands of Olympic fans rushed to Post Office branches, thousands more phoned Royal Mail direct to place orders, and purchased stamps and special First Day Covers online, in a pattern repeated throughout the Games.

Following the Olympic Games, with a total of 29 Gold Medals won by Team GB, and 29 'next day' stamps successfully delivered, the challenge was to repeat the same success for the Paralympics. By the end of the Paralympics a phenomenal 34 Gold Medals had been won by the GB team, and each celebrated with their own stamp.

PARCEL POST SERVICE STARTS

In 1883 the parcel post service started for the first time. Before this, the railways were used to transport parcels, but not Royal Mail. Letter carriers were renamed as postmen and started carrying parcels as well as letters.

share





Gold post box Dunblane



Restronguet gold post box



Painting the post box at Belton

Cheltenham gold post box

The stamps became one of the most talked about elements of the Games, being featured on the nightly BBC round up of the day's events. Blow-ups were presented to the winning athletes, with huge coverage in national and international media, tweeted and re-tweeted thousands of times. One of the iconic moments of the entire Games was when rower Katherine Copeland won gold. Her immediate reaction was: "We're going to be on a stamp tomorrow". By the end of the Games, stamps had undergone a renaissance in the mind of the public and were coveted souvenirs, and markers of the time and place of some of our greatest sporting memories.

Royal Mail was the first postal administration to produce stamps for every gold medallist in both Games.

Permanent gold post boxes

During the testing process for the Gold Medal stamps, in the spring of 2012, Royal Mail took the decision to further celebrate the achievements of our Gold Medal winning Olympians with a series of gold post boxes. Teams contracted by Royal Mail with special equipment and paint were put on call throughout the country.

In July 2012 Royal Mail announced that the post boxes it painted over

the summer to celebrate the Gold Medals of Team GB and Paralympics GB will remain gold on a permanent basis. This is a historic moment as it is the first time Royal Mail has painted its iconic post boxes a different colour permanently to mark an historic achievement.

In total, 110 post boxes were painted gold across the UK. The locations of the gold boxes can be seen at www.goldpostboxes.com. The most northerly is in Lossiemouth, Scotland, painted to celebrate Heather Stanning's rowing victory with partner Helen Glover. Helen's post box, in Penzance, is actually the most southerly location. The two boxes were the first painted by Royal Mail after Heather and Helen became the first gold medallists of the summer.

Each post box will have a plaque which names the athlete and marks their Gold Medal achievement, or marks the location's connection with London 2012.

The gold post boxes gave communities even more opportunity to mark the successes of Team GB and Paralympics GB and have now become cherished local landmarks, with many members of the public visiting them, having their photograph taken beside them and circulating pictures of them on social media channels.



FIRST WOMEN ONLY ASSOCIATION

The Post Office played a big part in women's rights. In 1901 the Association of Post Office Women Clerks was founded and represented female clerical workers - fighting for their employment rights and ultimately for equality with men.

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6

RMG and POL financial support for the BPMA and the nation's postal heritage



BPMA educational work



BPMA educational work

6.1 In 2012, RMG and POL each made the following payments to the BPMA as part of the on-going arrangements:

- £640,000 charitable donation for the running and maintenance of the museum.
- £398,987.30 (plus vat) fee for archive services provided by the BPMA to ensure that RMG and POL meet their obligations under the Public Records Act and in doing so ensure that records of social and historic importance are preserved permanently and made public after 20 years.

6.2 In 2012, RMG also made the following one-off grants:

- A 999 year lease of Calthorpe House, the new museum and archive premises, at a nominal rent.
- Further donations of £350,000 in relation to preparation work for the new museum.

POST OFFICE PAID FIRST PENSIONS

In 1909 roughly half a million people went to collect their pension from their local Post Offices. Pension payments were issued in bound books - each contained 25 pension orders. These were payable at all Post Offices in the UK.

share



NINETEEN TEN



How the BPMA supports RMG and POL with Legal Compliance and Corporate Social Responsibility



Current BPMA at Freeling House



Search room at Freeling House

RMG's and POL's obligations for records under the Public Records Act (PRA):

- i. RMG and POL are bound by the PRA to retain and manage their records in a particular way because some of them will be made public after 20 years.
- ii. The BPMA co-ordinates the initial receipt of records to be considered for permanent preservation and carries out a series of reviews, to the standard defined by The National Archive (TNA) to identify those that will be selected for permanent preservation after 20 years.
- iii. The material that is selected is used by the BPMA in exhibitions, is available on the internet, and can be viewed by members of the public at Freeling House.
- iv. The PRA will continue to apply to RMG after privatisation but only to RMG records generated prior to privatisation. POL (while still owned by government) will still be bound by the PRA.

RMG and POL have outsourced the processes for the review and selection of records for permanent preservation to the BPMA. The processes that are carried out

are statutory obligations that cannot be transferred to a third party, so while the operation of the process has moved to the BPMA, the statutory obligation to fulfil that function continues to sit with RMG and POL.

The Royal Mail Archive

The Royal Mail Archive is located at Freeling House, adjacent to Mount Pleasant, and is managed by the BPMA on RMG's behalf through the delivery of the renewed archive service agreement. Quarterly review meetings are held to agree annual objectives and monitor progress.

In November 2012 The National Archives (TNA) came to Freeling House to undertake a review of the BPMA's appointment as a place of deposit under s.4(1) of the Public Records Act. This followed a limited continuation of the appointment that was made in 2011. TNA were happy that there was no significant deterioration in the fabric of the strong room and that environmental conditions remained satisfactory, and with plans for a new museum and archive progressing well, were happy to extend the





Children visit Debden museum



BPMA educational work



BPMA education and out-reach is available for all age groups

place of deposit appointment of the BPMA until the completion of the new archive, provided that the structure does not deteriorate substantially. TNA stated in the appointment letter:

"It is...very pleasing to note the excellent progress made towards developing the new museum and archive on the Calthorpe House site: the proposals for the new accommodation are impressive. In addition, the steps taken to secure funding for the new centre and establish a long-term partnership with Royal Mail and POL are a major achievement. All the parties concerned are to be warmly congratulated on their creation of a sustainable future for the collections and their management by BPMA."

January saw the first release of files from 1982 and 1983, complying with the change to the 20 year rule release of public records. 500 files were made available relating to a number of areas including material on mail to the Falkland Islands in the run up to, during and following the Falklands War, the end of the telegram service and a report looking into the possibility of extending the Post Office underground railway to other main London railway stations.

Public access to the archive

The BPMA manages public access to the Archive on RMG's and POL's behalf through the provision of a search room and by answering enquiries from the public. In April 2012 the BPMA participated in a national survey of distance users of British Archives. From a 31% response rate, the BPMA was rated very good or good by most respondents across all areas.

War memorials

In November 2007, RMG commissioned the BPMA to create a database listing the location of all war memorials on RMG premises around the country. The purpose of the War Memorial Project is to improve the quality of the data held on the c.340 war memorials held at RMG sites across the UK. Specifically:

- Capturing the results from site surveys.
- Obtaining good quality, high resolution images of the memorial, its setting and the site it is located in.
- Transcribing the named individuals listed on the memorials.

ACQUIRING THE NATIONAL PHONE SERVICE

In 1912 the Post Office took over the national telephone service at a cost of £12,515,264. For the first time a unified telephone system was available throughout most of Britain. The Post Office remained in control until 1981 when the service was split into telephone and telegram services.

share



RMS TITANIC SINKS

The RMS Titanic sinks after hitting an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean. RMS stands for Royal Mail Ship - indicating that it had a contract to carry mail. There was also a post office and sorting office on board. Amongst the dead were the five postal workers.

share



ree telegraphs
Imrie & Co., ow
to the titanic disaster.



Memorial stained glass window



War memorial

Since work on the memorials project re-commenced in 2013, over 200 memorials are now classified as fully catalogued, over 30 transcriptions of named individuals have been added to memorial records and around 70 memorials have had improved or additional images added to their records.

The end products of the project will be:

- An improved public catalogue (hosted by the BPMA), with updated content and images.
- A new website to be developed with RMG and Blonde Digital, intended to map the memorials and allow users to search both by memorials and named individuals.
- A lasting memory to those Post Office employees who lost their lives during the First World War and a reminder to present and future generations of the sacrifices made.

Heritage consultancy work

RMG uses the BPMA as its historical advisor and draws on the organisation's experience and expertise to provide advice on matters of heritage management. Specifically, the BPMA has recently supported the development of the heritage

strand of RMG's sustainability strategy and helped develop a position on management of historic post boxes, war memorials and buildings.

The BPMA is also supporting a review of the joint policy statement developed by RMG and English Heritage on the care of post boxes. Under a policy developed in 2002, red Royal Mail post boxes are protected as an iconic part of the British landscape.

Outreach

As well as public access to the archive, the BPMA conducts much of its work through outreach, both physically and digitally. In 2012/13 this included a number of outreach projects, from delivery of 'Stamps in Schools', a workshop for primary school students, to travelling exhibitions including Last Post, which explores the Post Office in the First World War.

EMPLOYING WOMEN DURING THE GREAT WAR

With many staff members going to war, the Post Office employed more than 20,000 women - becoming one of the biggest employers of women in history.

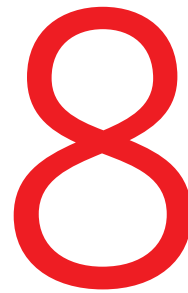
share



MOUNTAINS OF CHRISTMAS POST

The Christmas post of 1916 threatened to overwhelm the central sorting depot for the armed forces. The post was specially assembled in Regent's Park a year earlier.

share



2013/2014 – watch this space!



Implications of the Royal Mail and Post Office separation on records

Despite the move to and growth of digital records, it is inevitable that an organisation as large and complex as RMG will create records, in other formats. At the start of the reported period, RMG and POL combined had more than 80,000 boxes of paper records held in external storage along with more than 170,000 files. The need to separate the records between the parties was further complicated by the retendering of the external storage contract to a new supplier. With a critical completion date of 31 March 2014, the work to separate and relocate the records is on target.

Mail Rail

The BPMA has been exploring the viability of creating a visitor experience in the disused Mail Rail depot, under Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant site. The project would showcase an important aspect of Britain's industrial heritage and allow public access into this forgotten space for the first time. Work to date has proved the proposal would be technically viable and market research strongly suggests the attraction would be well visited.

Fundraising for the new museum and archive

Fundraising for the new museum continues to gather pace. The BPMA is working closely with its stakeholders to deliver funding from a range of sources from individuals to corporate sponsors, the Heritage Lottery Fund and charitable trusts and foundations. This work is expected to continue into 2014, with the BPMA aiming to secure the funding to realise the full project scope.

2013/14 stamp issues

The September stamp issue of the Merchant Navy will include a special commemoration of the contribution made in the Atlantic and Arctic convoys of the Second World War.

The Christmas stamps in November 2013 will include designs which are the result of a phenomenally successful children's design competition run this year. Around 240,000 entries were made to design a stamp that conveys what the Christmas season means to the children.

WORK CONTINUED – NO MATTER WHAT

1939 - 1945

Postal and railway workers carried on with their duties in spite of barrage, blitzkrieg and black outs. Many of them had to, as night fell, make their way to inner London to carry on sorting letters in glass-roofed sorting offices - often in the centre of danger areas.

share



Work continued - no matter what

POST OFFICE'S ROLE IN D-DAY

1939 - 1945

General Eisenhower's D-Day invasion force relied on communications laid by GPO (General Post Office) engineers. The telegraph network was three times as extensive as the whole pre-war civil telegraph network. Nearly 60,000 telephone circuits had been provided for the use of the Forces.

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