

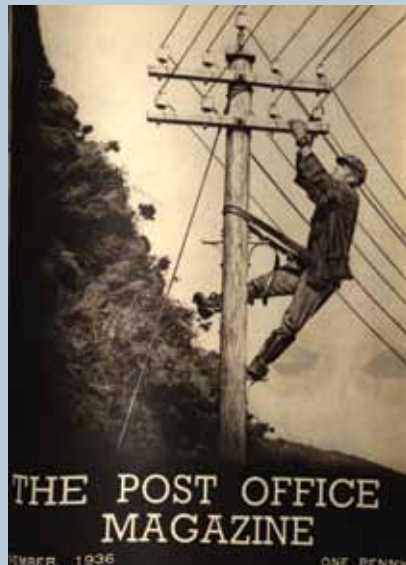
# Impact Report 2012



THE BRITISH  
POSTAL  
MUSEUM  
& ARCHIVE

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# Introduction



2012 proved to be an incredibly exciting year for both Britain and the BPMA. The Olympics and Diamond Jubilee may have stolen the headlines, but the BPMA played its own part in the national celebrations, exhibiting at the Olympic philatelic exhibition Olympex 2012 and opening a Diamond Jubilee exhibition in the Search Room. Whether your passions lie in athletics or history and culture, it was a summer none of us will forget in a hurry.

The BPMA team worked tirelessly throughout the year to continue increased access to our world-class archive and collection through tours, talks, cataloguing and online, and we also made significant progress in our bid to secure a new home in Central London. But gaining momentum in pursuit of the new museum didn't result in the loss of momentum elsewhere. Some 200,000 people engaged with our exhibitions or displays across the country, there were 12,000 downloads of our podcasts, 223,500 visits to our blog, 3,000 copies of our award-winning learning packs distributed and 2,737 subscribers to our eNewsletter.

Since its creation in 2004, the BPMA has endeavoured to provide the best possible access to its collections for the widest number of people. 2012 saw Government endorsement of our proposed move to Calthorpe House, and the launch of a major fundraising campaign to make the project a reality. By moving to new, larger premises we will be able to bring together the archive and museum collections, and allow everyone to enjoy Britain's communications, social and design history that are brought together by the post.

Our vision extends to the story of the old Post Office Underground Railway – 'Mail Rail'. As part of the plans, and with sufficient funding, we hope to be able to bring part of the network back to life.

To ensure such a vast project stays on track while continuing to offer our regular services, develop new exhibitions, provide outreach services and run a search room takes much time and resource, and just wouldn't be possible without the dedication of the BPMA staff. Nor would it be possible without the invaluable assistance of our Trustees, volunteers, sponsors and donors to our project. We will continue to rely on the passion of our supporters not just in 2013, but long after the new museum opens its doors in 2016.

With a significant amount of money still to be found if we are to make the museum and archive a reality, our fundraising campaign will continue throughout 2013. We hope to be able to rely on your support as we move ever closer to delivering our vision of opening up the stories of Britain's postal past to all.

[Dr Adrian Steel, Director](#)

# Chairman's Statement



I started my statement last year referring to it as a roller coaster; 2012 has, if anything, been even more of a headlong dash for the ultimate goal of opening the new museum and archive. Since the previous year the exciting possibility of being able to open the Mail Rail station beneath the Mount Pleasant sorting office as part of the museum has refocused plans and widened the scope of the original project. If we are fortunate enough to secure the funding necessary to make this vision a reality, it will involve a fundamental change in the way BPMA operates, moving from running a museum and archive of a traditional nature to managing a major visitor attraction in central London, at the centre of a new development on the Mount Pleasant site. This is a goal which staff, trustees and supporters of BPMA are working hard towards, with the welcome participation and goodwill of heritage railway enthusiasts who have seen Mail Rail in its current state. Widening the base of support is vital to ensure the sustainability and growing independence of BPMA in the future; Mail Rail represents a real opportunity to do just that.

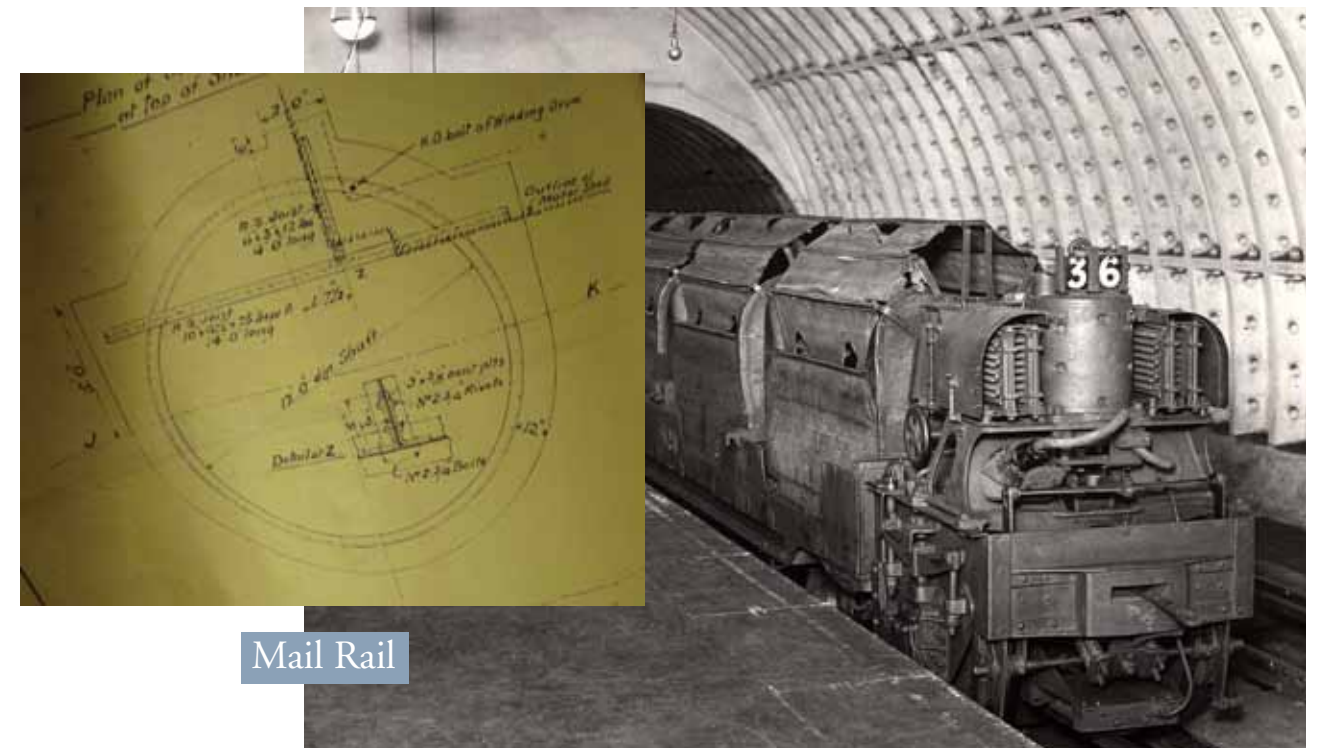
Confidence in BPMA's plans has also been boosted by the success of the application for development money from the Heritage Lottery Fund, together with the promise of additional funds if the application for Round Two funding is successful. This is an endorsement which goes far to give other funders confidence that the plans are robust and sustainable. Additionally, documents signed with Royal Mail and Post Office Limited at the end of March in 2013 guarantee the future of BPMA with a 25 year agreement for funding and the lease of Calthorpe House for 999 years. It is a tribute to both parties that they have so consistently supported BPMA to ensure that their heritage is safeguarded in the best possible way.

The addition of visionary plans for Mail Rail to the original project meant that the plans for opening had to be put back to late 2015 or early 2016, resulting in the need to keep business as usual in Freeling House going rather longer than had originally been anticipated. However, the staff have responded with imaginative programmes for talks and visits to both Debden and Mail Rail, ensuring that BPMA is not forgotten within the immediate community or amongst the regular visitors to events. And this is in the context of difficult working conditions for those still in Freeling House, due to the refurbishment of the Mount Pleasant sorting office and the move of other staff to the Royal Mail building in Almeida Street, much further away than their previous premises. I take my hat off to them all for achieving such remarkable results at such speed and in such difficult working conditions.

Dr Helen Forde, Chairman of Trustees



The proposed new Postal Museum & Archive at Calthorpe House



Mail Rail

# Who We Are

“I sincerely believe that the BPMA is of great value to all”

Visitor feedback, via email

## Our Mission

British postal services helped to shape the modern world. The British Postal Museum & Archive works to connect people through this human story of communication, industry and innovation by making it accessible to all.

## 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, a museum store in Debden, Essex and the Museum of the Post Office in the Community at Blists Hill, Ironbridge.

Our focus is to develop the role of the BPMA as an international hub for research, as well as provide access to, and interpretation of, postal heritage. To achieve this, the BPMA employs 43 full-time paid staff and is supported by approximately 30 volunteers. We are currently engaged in a major fundraising campaign to establish a new centre in which to display our archive and museum collections, with space for learning, events and activities. This will be located at Calthorpe House, opposite Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant site in Central London.

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 educational outreach and beyond. From 2012 this funding commitment has been met on a 50-50 basis by Royal Mail Group and Post Office Ltd.

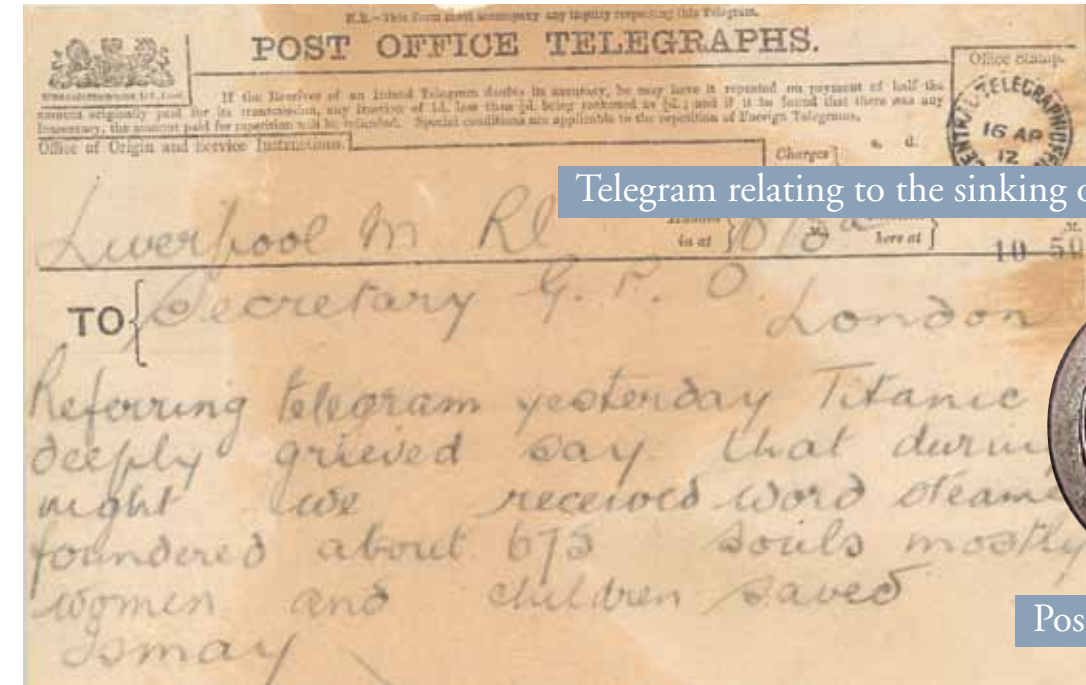
## Our Aims

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, and by working to preserve the material we hold for the benefit of future generations.



Telegram relating to the sinking of the Titanic



Post mark stamp



Museum of the Post Office in the Community

The Museum Store

# Access

## During 2012:

Around 200,000 people across the country visited a BPMA exhibition or display during 2012

Around 7,000 people met us through our public programme of talks, walks, tours, open days, family days, and other outreach activities, including at major events such as the Bloomsbury Festival, Stampex and Who Do You Think You Are? Live!

## Of those surveyed at events:

- Around 94% rated them as 'good' or 'very good'
- 98% said they would recommend them to a friend
- 96% said they learned something new

Nearly 2,000 teachers and students took part in school workshops, including the BPMA-sponsored Stamps in Schools programme

Over 3,000 copies of our award-winning learning packs were distributed to teachers in hard-copy and online

“The British Postal Museum is a great museum!”

Coalition for the National Museum of the American People, via Facebook

**The BPMA works hard to ensure more and more people can access our collections and benefit from associated opportunities for learning, skills development and pure enjoyment.**

**During 2012, we continued to develop a number of initiatives, raising public awareness and providing access to the collections.**

## What we achieved this year:

### The Post Office in Pictures

*The Post Office in Pictures* was produced following preservation and access work carried out during the 2010-11 project Picture Post – funded through the Museums Libraries and Archive Council's (MLA) Development Designation Fund (DDF) scheme. Featuring inspiring images selected from the Archive, the exhibition received more than 14,000 visitors during its run at the Lumen URC in Bloomsbury, London between mid-May and the end of August 2012.

Over 250 people attended the public launch (advertised under the banner of Museums at Night), and the exhibition was featured in the Camden New Journal, the Times Literary Supplement and BBC History Magazine, as well as featuring as top story on the London section of the Telegraph website.

The events programme supporting the exhibition included an evening talk from the BPMA's Martin Devereux, a performance from a choir set up by former postmen, and family activity afternoons run during the summer holiday.

Around 40% of visitors surveyed at the exhibition were new to the BPMA, with 91% rating the exhibition as good or

very good and 96% stating that they would recommend the exhibition to a friend.

### Diamond Jubilee exhibition in the BPMA Search Room

In May 2012, a brand new exhibition opened in the BPMA's Search Room exhibition space. The Diamond Jubilee exhibition illustrated the origins and content of the Royal Mail stamp issues marking the Jubilee, through fantastic imagery and selected iconic objects.

### Olympex 2012: Collecting the Olympic Games at the British Library

The Summer Olympex exhibition at the British Library ended its month and a half long run on 4 September 2012. The display contained scans of the BPMA's material related to the 1948 Olympic Games stamp issues and was enjoyed by around 30,000 visitors.

### Public Programme of Events and Activities

The BPMA continued to work with informal learning providers to develop key audiences and build links with the local community in Clerkenwell and Holborn. Our partnership with the Camden Adult and Community Learning Team and City Lit allowed us to engage with and pilot activities for families with school-age children – including participation in a 'Majestic Magic' themed fun day in Coram's Field, a local children's park, in September 2012.

### Adult Informal Learning Programme

The BPMA's adult informal learning programme involved collaborative work with a diverse range of partners, including artists and creative cultural



Diamond Jubilee Exhibition



Post Office in Pictures



### Website stats:

195,421 visits (Google Analytics)  
28.2% of visits were from the UK  
71.2% of visitors to our website were new

### Social Media stats

Blog 223,5000 visits during 2012 (36% growth on 2011)

Podcast Over 12,000 downloads

Flickr 170,510 image views during 2012 (33% growth on 2011)

Facebook 1800 fans by the end of 2012

Twitter 3,500 followers by the end of 2012

Google+ 10,000 circles by the end of 2012

“Thank you for a wonderful, informative, happy 2 hour tour at Debden (and for the tea & biscuits!!)”

Sharon Neblett, via Facebook

organisations such as the Museum of the Order of St. John, the Story Museum, the Foundling Museum and the Windmill Theatre Company.

### Bloomsbury Festival

In October 2012, the BPMA took part in the annual Bloomsbury Festival for the second time. A partnership with the October Gallery resulted in Write Away, an activity that saw 200 people design and post their own retro postcards; whilst in Russell Square the ‘Poetry Postie’ and ‘Pedal Powered Postman from the Past’ entertained visitors with poems, quizzes, handling objects and craft activities.

### Evening Talks

The BPMA’s evening talks were attended by an average of just over 30 people per event during 2012, peaking at more than 60 for a talk on ‘The History of the Christmas Card’ by BPMA Archivist Anna Flood in December.

### The Museum Store

2012 was a record year in terms of visitors to the Museum Store – over 1,200 people took part in tours and open days, including a Mail Rail themed event in April and a rally by the Post Office Vehicle Club in September, marking the 50th anniversary of the organisation.

### Blists Hill

Further afield, during the February half-term Blists Hill Victorian Town in Ironbridge played host to a week of BPMA-led activities for the first time ever. The Access & Learning and Curatorial teams collaborated to deliver Victorian Valentines – with around 850 children and adults taking part in card-making workshops and an estimated

4,000 people visiting a temporary display of early Valentines cards from the BPMA collections.

### University of the Third Age (U3A)

2012 saw the BPMA host another U3A Shared Learning Project (SLP), with seven students researching topics linked to Sports and Participation in the Post Office, whilst another two students summarised oral history recordings from Bringsty Common in Herefordshire. The groups shared their findings in an Archive Open Day in April, as well as articles written for the BPMA Blog and Newsletter.

### Schools Activities

The BPMA continued to support the invaluable work of ex-teacher and volunteer Erene Grieve, whose Stamps in Schools outreach programme reached just under 700 teachers and students in schools across the country. BPMA Learning staff delivered sessions for an additional 400 school users, as well as carrying out extensive consultation with local teachers to help shape the development of the New Centre schools offer.

More BPMA Learning Packs were distributed in 2012 than ever before, with over 2,600 downloads from the Times Educational Supplement (TES) website during 2012. Popular packs included: The Penny Black Changed the World (1,083 downloads); Last Post – Primary (434 downloads); Last Post – Secondary (371 downloads) and First Class (350 downloads). In addition, high numbers of downloads were received via the BPMA website, and well over 200 hard-copies of the packs were distributed to teachers across the country.



Bloomsbury Festival



University of the Third Age



Schools Learning Pack

“A really interesting visit. Staff so helpful. Very useful if you had ancestors working in any section of the Post Office.”

Bridie Murphy, via Facebook

### Higher Education

The BPMA has continued to provide support for the Higher Education sector. From March to April 2012, the Access & Learning team collaborated with digital media and web colleagues to host a placement for four students from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) – a private university based in Massachusetts, USA. The students worked to deliver an Interactive Qualifying Report, based on a project that relates technology and science to society or human needs.

In the course of their work, the WPI group carried out detailed evaluations of e-learning resources at other museums, and developed plans for a digital interactive game called Mail Tails. Aiming to introduce children aged 7-11 years old, in school and family groups, to a range of objects and stories from across postal history, the game features fun, educational activities that result in collectible rewards.

### Stamps in Schools

Erene Grieve, the Stamps in Schools Co-ordinator has been running the Stamps in Schools project as a volunteer with the Learning and Access team at the BPMA for the past seven years. She provides ‘stamp days’ in Primary schools throughout the UK.

Stamps in Schools workshops introduce pupils to the history of stamps, and the idea of starting their own stamp collection.

In 2012 Erere ran 26 workshops in schools in Derbyshire, South Yorkshire, Sussex, Merseyside and Wales to name a few locations, and reached 1,500 pupils.

### Digital engagement

During 2012 a Digital Media Strategy for the organisation was finalised. The Strategy builds on the BPMA’s past work and achievements with the web and social media, and will enable the BPMA to deliver digital experiences for audiences both in the New Centre gallery and via mobile devices. The first output of this will be the re-development of BPMA’s online catalogue and collections display. The new catalogue will be unveiled in 2014.

The BPMA podcast has continued to perform well; in the past four years the BPMA has produced 25 podcasts, which have been downloaded more than 12,000 times. In 2012 the BPMA also launched on the social networking sites Pinterest and History Pin.



### CASE STUDY

#### Erere Grieve, Stamps in Schools Coordinator

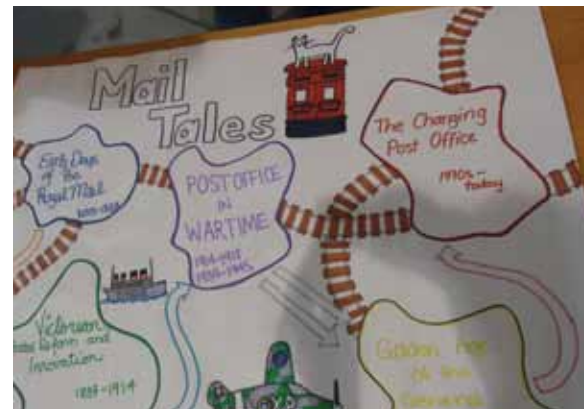
“I have always enjoyed being in the school environment - working with children and their teachers. The Stamps in Schools project gives me the chance to continue doing this in my retirement. I love it when a child is touched by the magic of stamps and says something like “this has been the best day of my life” or “I thought stamps would be boring but they’re not”. I receive some lovely letters from teachers and their pupils which makes me feel that what I am doing is worthwhile. It all helps to keep me young.”



WPI students at the Museum Store



Museum Store Fun Day



Museum Store Mail Rail Day



# Sustainability

## During 2012:

2,488 newsletter readers

2,737 e-newsletter subscribers

293 media enquiries

Excited about the plans for a new home for @postalheritage!

'bloomsburyfest, via Twitter'

**Sustaining our work to ensure ongoing and improved access to, and enjoyment of, our nationally recognised collections is a key strategic aim. The BPMA is committed to ensuring the best possible future for our collections in an environment where we can provide access for all.**

## Developments this year:

### New Postal Museum & Archive

In March 2012, the BPMA was delighted to be able to announce its plans for a new home.

The new postal museum and archive will provide access to the BPMA's unique collections of 400 years of postal, social and design history, including photographs, posters, vehicles, pillar boxes, employment records of millions of people and a world-class stamp collection. It will reveal and share the cultural richness of our many treasures to a much wider and untapped audience alongside our traditional users, and demonstrate the impact that postal services have had on shaping the past and informing the indispensable, modern and evolving world of communications.

The team has worked hard to develop our proposals throughout 2012. Due to open in 2016, the new postal museum and archive will enable us to provide full access to our collections for the first time in the BPMA's history.

The building will provide for 500m<sup>2</sup> gallery space, a modern Archive repository and full visitor facilities as well as a new home for BPMA staff. Not only providing a fantastic visitor experience, we will use the space to host education sessions and as a base for local community groups.

## Licensing

The BPMA renewed a number of licensing contracts in 2012 including D&P (model vehicles) and Gilbow (model pillar boxes). We also collaborated with long-term licensing partner Gift Republic on a brand new homeware range featuring images from the BPMA's iconic poster collection. The BPMA also continues to work with leading producers Hornby and Bachmann on model vehicles.

## BFI Clips

The BPMA continued its partnership work with the BFI in 2012, including digitisation of a number of GPO films and an agency agreement allowing for further distribution of films and clips.

## Retail

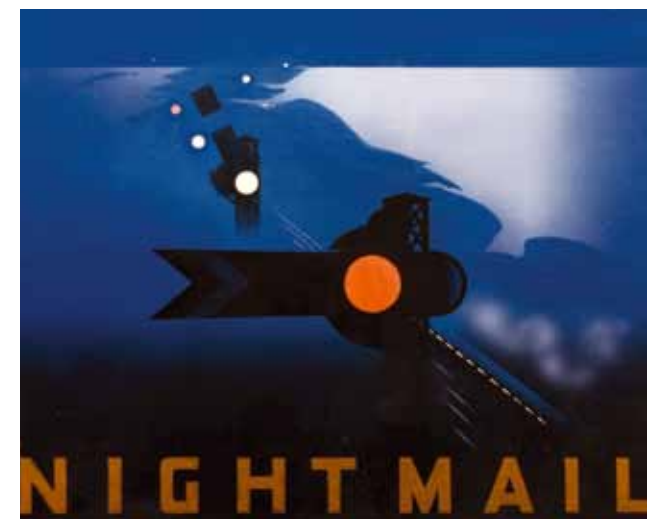
2012 saw the installation of the BPMA's new e-commerce facility, increasing accessibility and usability for our customers. This resulted in a 30% increase in sales. Online ticketing for events was launched in April 2012, and by the end of the year 41% of tickets were sold through the website.

2012 also saw the addition of a Post and Go machine to the BPMA's search room. This has led to the development of new philatelic products, and we cemented a number of new partnerships including Culture Label, a website dedicated to heritage retailing, giving our retail presence – and our museum profile – a wider audience.

A new Postal Museum & Archive



BFI Clips



Licensing

## “An interesting story, who needs Midsomer Murders for intrigue?”

Strawbale Spain on BPMA research into the crimes of Donald Neilson, via Facebook

### Publishing

The BPMA disseminates staff knowledge, research and expertise through publishing activity. 2012 saw the publication of ‘Mail Trains’ by BPMA curator Julian Stray, detailing the fascinating history of transporting the post by rail. Julian also wrote the introduction to Old House Books’ reprint of MacDonald Gill’s ‘Mail Steamship Routes’.

The BPMA also assisted with a number of publications in 2012, including ‘First Class: A History of Britain in 36 Postage Stamps’ by Chris West.

### Working with British First Day Covers

2012 saw the BPMA continue to work with Adrian Bradbury of British First Day Covers on an ongoing series of limited edition collectible stamp sheets designed by Adrian in association with the BPMA. For each sheet issued Adrian gives a percentage of sales proceeds to support our educational work.

### Fundraising

The capital appeal to raise funds for the new museum got off to a flying start when the Government publicly endorsed the BPMA’s plans in the spring of 2012. This was spearheaded by Royal Mail Group granting a lease of 999 years for Calthorpe House, a 1920s art deco building next to Mount Pleasant, site of the country’s oldest mail centre. Agreements were also signed with both Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd for a £6m long-term, low interest loan and other support including a £500,000 grant.

To help raise the remaining funds, the BPMA appointed a campaign director to develop a fundraising strategy and work with a steering group, comprising Trustees, senior staff and project team members. It was agreed that efforts should focus on statutory funding, trusts and foundations, corporates and high net worth individuals.

In autumn 2012, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a first-round development grant of £250,000 to the BPMA, allowing us to leverage their widespread reputation to help make applications to other funders. Under current plans BPMA will submit a final round two bid to the HLF in summer 2013.

The BPMA also received endorsement from Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, for the project. He commented: *“The British Postal Museum & Archive is a national treasure of global importance. London plays a central role in its rich history so it is entirely fitting that this city would house a suitable showcase for the collection, creating a fantastic new visitor attraction to boot. I am thrilled that money from the Heritage Lottery Fund has been awarded to enable this exciting project to progress to the next important stage.”*

We were also fortunate to receive a six-figure legacy from Rosemary Green which we were able to allocate to our target and this was supplemented with £447,000 from the BPMA’s own reserves.

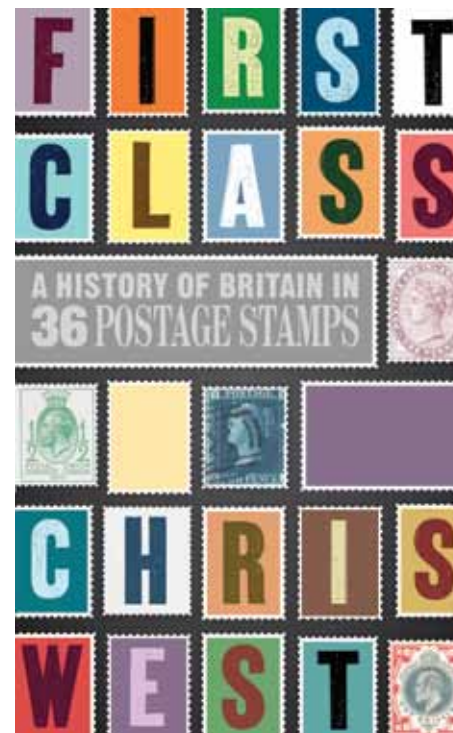


## MAIL TRAINS

JULIAN STRAY

SHIRE LIBRARY

### Publishing



# Organisational Capability

“What more could you ask for ABSOLUTELY NOTHING fantastic service”

Researcher feedback, via email

**The BPMA continues to develop its capability as an accessible and sustainable organisation meeting not just its audience needs but exceeding audience expectation. We are constantly building on our working environment to ensure it is well managed, safe and offers the best possible development for all staff, Trustees and volunteers.**

## Volunteering

Volunteers have provided vital support to the BPMA since its foundation and 2012 was no exception. Over the course of the year, the BPMA welcomed the assistance of more than 30 volunteers. They worked across the organisation on a variety of projects that included summarising oral histories, conservation work on our Travelling Post Office at Bressingham Steam Museum, advertising our collection of vehicles and cataloguing colour transparencies.

Over the year, we took on our first conservation volunteers, a total of three by the end of 2012. The task of re-housing rolled plans into safer materials immeasurably assisted the BPMA in our Move preparations, whilst developing new skills for our conservation volunteers. The project was completed thanks to their efforts.

Nine volunteers were involved with assisting the New Centre Project in 2012, undertaking tasks such as phase boxing volumes, rehousing slogan dies, and rehousing rolled plans. Many other volunteers were involved across the organisation on other activities, particularly in the philatelic area, curatorial (including the Mail Rail conservation project) and assisting with the Family History Research Service.

The BPMA is committed to the development of its volunteers and believes that volunteering should be rewarding for all those involved. In 2012, it arranged a number of opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills including arranging ‘hands-on’ training at the Museum of London and sessions with professional conservators.

## New Trustee Recruitment

In 2012, the BPMA undertook a major Trustee recruitment drive as a direct result of the major project to deliver a new museum and the need it created for a wider range of skills on the board.

Three new Postal Heritage Trust (PHT) Trustees and two new Postal Heritage Services Ltd directors were appointed. The appointments were approved by the PHT Board in October 2012.

A list of current Trustees can be found on the inside back cover of this report.



Volunteering for the BPMA

“Great Display there, saw for myself over Christmas New Year.”

Family Heritage Search on the Museum of the Post Office in the Community, via Facebook

### Collaborative PhD Students

The BPMA takes part in the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded collaborative PhD awards, providing excellent ways in which we as an institution can support students in delivering better research, allowing them to further awareness of our collections and their contents by opening up new angles of research, or exploring virgin territory in the archives. The BPMA has successfully collaborated with three students who have now received their PhDs, and we are working with three further students, Vicky Davis and Kathleen McIlvenna (with the Institute of Historical Research, University of London) and Helen Kearney (Royal College of Art). In addition we support other research students who approach us wherever we can, and in 2012 Oliver Carter Wakefield completed an MA working with us.

### Staff Development

The BPMA has a strong track record of encouraging staff to further their skills and knowledge, to deliver the best possible service for our users.

Of the many things we provide, one of the key elements is supporting staff in obtaining professional qualifications. During 2012 staff achieved Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA status), and studied for Registered Membership of the Archives and Records Association (RMARA), the postgraduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management, management and marketing qualifications, among others. Staff and their line managers have ring fenced budgets for individual skills and training and in the coming year we plan a major programme to increase our skills ready for both the move to and opening of our New Centre.



DIAMOND JUBILEE



Working at the BPMA





**CASE STUDY**

**Hayley Clayton, BPMA Volunteer**

"I found the BPMA when I was looking for small and quirky collections to visit in London and saw that they were looking for volunteers. I work front of house in a London Museum and saw this as a great opportunity to learn more about the collection care and management in the museums and archives service. Volunteering with a smaller team was particularly beneficial as it gave me the chance to interact with and learn from professionals in varied roles. During my role at the BPMA I learnt the basic policies and ethics of archiving as well as conservation, and thoroughly enjoyed gaining these new skills."

**CASE STUDY**

**Ben Taylor, BPMA New Centre Project Volunteer**

"I decided to retrain as an archivist in autumn 2012, following careers in media and consultancy. I answered BPMA's advertisement for volunteers hoping to gain experience and develop the necessary sector-specific skills to apply for a paid traineeship.

Since October 2012 I have been assisting the BPMA's archivists and conservators in preparing their more fragile holdings for an upcoming site move. This has included making phase boxes to protect old or damaged volumes, and cleaning and rehousing a series of uncatalogued 19th Century legal records. I have also been assigning listing this material to allow greater control when moving it.

The BPMA has a friendly and supportive working environment; staff have been happy to show or explain to me any aspects of archival work which I've been interested in or confused by. I definitely feel that my work is of value, and I get a lot of satisfaction from that. I am pleased with the skills and experience which I have accumulated, and happy to have met so many great people while doing so."



**CASE STUDY**

**Nick Booker, BPMA Trustee & Chairman Postal Heritage Services Ltd**

I decided I wanted to become a trustee for a number of reasons. A good friend and colleague of mine actually stumbled across the BPMA advertisement and brought it to my attention. I was immediately interested, and with some 16 years' experience as a marketing and business consultant across a number of areas including visitor attractions felt I could bring some useful knowledge to the role. It also helped that I have had a lifelong interest in communications, as well as family connections to the post office, the mail and telecommunications.

The BPMA is an exciting place. It is constantly growing, learning and evolving at an ever increasing pace as we move towards developing what will potentially be one of the most exciting new museums and attractions to appear in recent years. If I can contribute something to make that happen it will be well worth the time and effort that all trustees have to spend attending meetings, reading and contributing to processes and discussions.

The BPMA has given me the opportunity to be part of, and contribute to, an organisation during a rapid period of change, and provides a fascinating insight into how organisations work and grow. I am lucky to have had the opportunity to work with a very talented team of the full time BPMA staff and my fellow BPMA trustees and the directors in Postal Heritage Services Ltd. I have met many new and interesting people and taken part in a wide variety of events and occasions.

As the BPMA moves towards making its exciting project a reality, I only hope that I can continue to contribute and learn.



# Preservation

## During 2012:

6.744 Records added to BPMA's online catalogue

122 new acquisitions accepted

500 YouTube views of Mail Rail conservation film

@UKCougar it's the @postalheritage store in Debden, Essex. It's on the central line and absolutely fabulous

LouiseBrown, via Twitter

## New Acquisitions

In 2012, the BPMA added a number of interesting items to its collection including:

**Certifying Seal used by Sir Francis Freeling**

Containing the Royal coat of arms with a crown at the top and three scrolls across the bottom of the coat of arms inscribed 'GENL. POST OFFICE' this seal was used during Sir Francis Freeling tenure as Secretary of the General Post Office. It was donated to BPMA from John Talbot, a descendant of Sir Francis.

## Material from Royal Mail Security

Royal Mail Security transferred a number of items to BPMA in 2012 relating to the present day Post Office Investigations Department. Of particular interest is a ultra-violet marking kit used to covertly mark postal packets and their contents and protective body armour issued to an Investigation Officer in 1994 as part of the 'Apostle' Squad focussed on the investigation of external street crime (attacks on postmen).

## 'Punch or the London Charivari' Cartoon

Dated 1914 and entitled 'Our Village Information Bureau' this 1914 cartoon was purchased at auction for BPMA's collection in 2012. The cartoon shows a woman handing in a telegram to the clerk at a post office counter. The caption below reads: Postmaster (to lady who has handed in a telegram in French to a friend in Switzerland) 'We ain't allowed to accept foreign telegrams, miss, There's a war on - on the continent'

## Conservation Projects

### Mail Rail

During 2012 the BPMA was engaged on a project to conserve the rail cars in its collection acquired from the Post Office underground railway, Mail Rail.

In April 2012 the BPMA held an open day at the Museum Store which gave visitors the opportunity to come and see the work being done and meet the conservator working on the project as well as BPMA curators.

Throughout the main part of the project the BPMA commissioned a production company to document the process and create a short film that helps explain the work done. This film is now available via the BPMA's YouTube channel.

The conservation work on two of the trains is now complete but there remains more to do and the final phase of the project is to conserve the 1927 car held by the BPMA, the only surviving example in this form of the original cars used when the network opened in 1927. Rather than attempt to return it to its appearance during operational life, it is intended to conserve this car as it is today.

The project to conserve the trains was funded by grants from the Arts Council England PRISM Fund, the Association of Independent Museums/Pilgrims Trust Conservation Scheme and donations from the Friends of the BPMA. The film was made for the BPMA by Voytek Ltd, a London based production company.

Mail Rail



Post Office Vehicle Club Rally

“Congratulations on a great web site. Colourful and user-friendly.”

Customer feedback, via email

#### British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age

Running alongside the 2012 Olympics, the V&A held ‘British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age’, a 300 object exhibition telling the story of British fashion, furniture, fine art, graphic design. The BPMA was invited to exhibit several items including a Machin plaster cast, 1/3d 1953 Coronation Duplicate Registration Sheet and issued stamps from stock (Enid Marx design Low Value Wilding), the latter being gifted to the V&A.

This work gave our Conservator & Preservation Manager the opportunity to work with V&A paper and sculpture conservators, as well as the exhibition curators. This included preparing the items for display, having the plaster cast cleaned with a broken corner fragment being reattached, as well as taking part in the installation and de-installation of our exhibits

#### Valentines Cards

To make the Victorian Valentines display at Blists Hill Victorian Town possible, it was necessary to undertake preventative and remedial conservation work. This involved assessing and treating a large selection and variety of valentine cards, advising on their display and creating bespoke mounts for each item.

#### Reboxing of Objects

In 2012, the Curatorial team started work on auditing and repacking the museum collection in preparation for the move to Calthorpe House. So far, several groups of material have been re-packed by the team, with the help of volunteers. These range from glass lantern slides through to metal slogan dies, uniform and part of BPMA’s large card collection, all of which have very different packing requirements.

Some other objects that have also been packed include a truncheon issued to the Post Office ahead of the Chartist riots in 1848; an ABC telegraph transmitter and some rather decorative telephones; a bronze monument celebrating the Universal Postal Union; a pneumatic tube used to carry telegrams at Cardiff Head Post Office; and scrapbooks concerning the work of Frederick Gurr who was a member of the Post Office Salvage Squad in WW2. To date over 2,000 items have been audited and re-packed.



#### Reboxing of Objects



# Future Developments & Aims

“Last night’s talk was great!”

Duncan Sutherland, via Facebook

The BPMA will continue to build on its achievements in 2012 and press forward with the fundraising campaign to deliver our new museum. This new centre is the platform for all that we want to be and do as an organisation into the future. 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 on-going aim to generate public value and benefit for all.

Our strategic aims for access, sustainability, organisational capability and preservation will continue to provide the focus for our work, with key objectives for 2013 including:

## Access aims:

- To secure the remaining capital funding needed to create our new museum and archive near Mount Pleasant, Central London, to improve access to our collections for all
- To implement our vision of connecting people through the evolving story of communications past and present, based on our collections and services, through pioneering and genuine new audience engagement throughout the organisation.
- To continue to develop exhibitions, events and educational initiatives for the benefit of our audiences, and to grow our audiences for these, primarily focused on preparations for our new home

## Sustainability Aims:

- To continue our work to develop robust business plans to support all areas of commercial activity at the new Museum and ensure they provide for a sustainable future for our organisation and the services we provide.
- To grow profile and presence in the media, with new and with influential audiences in a targeted and co-ordinated effort to support our fundraising.
- To grow commercial awareness, income and attitude in a tangible move towards the business model we will need to run the BPMA in our new home, and to scope and grow new sources of income and business in readiness for our new business model.

## Organisational Capability Aims:

- Continue to build on our digital offer to ensure that online access to our collections and learning is widely and popularly available
- To maintain and grow core customer relationships with Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd, especially post-privatisation, and to maintain and grow key political links and external champions for BPMA.

## Preservation Aims:

- To secure Britain’s postal heritage by continuing to preserve our collections for present and future generations to use and enjoy
- To move our collections from Freeling House to better long term conditions for preservation at Calthorpe House



A new Postal Museum & Archive

# Get Involved

“This is a great site full of interesting information.”

Cathy Whalen, Texas via Facebook

BPMA relies on support to help us continue to develop new exhibition, educational, and archive projects as well as on-going conservation and preservation work. Many of the initiatives outlined in this report examples of projects that would not have been possible without the generosity of our funders, staff, volunteers, Friends and more. We offer our sincere thanks to you all.

Everything we do aims to give more and more people the opportunity to enjoy Britain's postal heritage. You can help us continue this work, protect this heritage for generations to come, and open up the richness of BPMA's collections to schools, families, collectors and the wider public throughout the UK by getting involved in a number of ways:

## Become a Corporate Partner

Corporate partnership can help us continue to run our award-winning education projects, stage new and innovative one-off and touring exhibitions and support the sustainability of our new museum and archive.

## Become a Friend

Friends work as ambassadors for the BPMA, helping to raise awareness of our work and services and volunteer to work on projects.

## Become a Volunteer

Volunteers offer invaluable support on projects including research, documentation, cataloguing and repackaging.

## Make a Donation

Donations provide us with invaluable support right across the collections – allowing us to target resources wherever need is greatest.

## Remember BPMA in Your Will

Gifts in memoriam can play a direct and vital part in helping us to preserve and enable wider public enjoyment of Britain's postal heritage for generations to come.

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.

BPMA thanks you for any help you can give to help preserve Britain's postal past for the future. To find out more please visit [postalheritage.org.uk/support](http://postalheritage.org.uk/support) or contact our Campaign Director on 020 7354 7270.



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## Donations to BPMA in 2012

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### Individual Supporters

Rosemary Green  
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And all those donors who have supported the BPMA this year and wish to remain anonymous



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THE BRITISH  
POSTAL  
MUSEUM  
& ARCHIVE