

# THE BRITISH POSTAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

*...delivering* The **Postal** Museum



IMPACT REPORT **2013**

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“The British postal service is one of the wonders of the world. It is one of the parents of the Information Revolution that we are living through today. It is vital that we celebrate this heritage and preserve the stories and infrastructure for future generations. The project being undertaken by the British Postal Museum & Archive to deliver a new, national museum is essential in helping us tell the history of our country courtesy of one of our finest innovations.”

**Dan Snow**

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# INTRODUCTION



2013 was another busy year for staff and supporters of the BPMA. The transition from an Archive and Museum Store with 3,000 visitors a year to a national museum and attraction with an expected 180,000 visitors a year is no easy feat, involving much planning and work before we even begin to develop the physical site. A number of archive and curatorial staff prepared for the move by undertaking dry runs aimed at highlighting potential problems and giving an idea of timescales. The number of objects boxed and ready to make the journey to their new home also continued to rise substantially. Our project team furthered plans for both The Postal Museum at Calthorpe House and Mail Rail, with a planning application for the latter being submitted to the London Borough of Islington in October. Across the BPMA staff from all teams and at all levels saw activity around the new museum project increase dramatically. It is now truly a part of who we are and how we conduct our day-to-day activity – we are The BPMA ...delivering The **Postal** Museum.

Fundraising activity was at the forefront of the BPMA's work throughout 2013. With a second round submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund due to take place early in 2014, staff worked tirelessly to close the gap on necessary match funding. A number of tours of the Mail Rail site and the Archive were undertaken with potential project sponsors and exhibitions and events were tailored to reflect our move towards a new home. I am pleased to say that 2013 saw overwhelming support for our plans, not just from political figures, celebrities and the general public but also from charitable Trusts & Foundations, individuals and Royal Mail Group and Post Office Limited who have made significant financial contributions to ensuring that we are successful and deliver a sustainable national museum to be enjoyed for generations to come. We will continue to work towards closing our funding gap in 2014.

As we await a new home, we are all too aware of the importance of making our collections available digitally, enabling those who cannot visit us physically to engage with our offer. In 2013, as part of substantial improvements to our online catalogue 2450 Queen Elizabeth II pre-decimal stamp artwork items, complete with images, and 248 pre-decimal GB commemorative stamp registration sheets were made available to distance users. The BPMA's online offer now provides full catalogue descriptions and digitised images for all registration sheets from the Penny Black to these most recent additions. There's plenty more to come, including exciting projects aimed at being able to show off our objects digitally as never before.

Away from the new museum, the BPMA enjoyed success on a number of occasions. Douglas Muir, Senior Curator of Philately was one of just five philatelists from across the globe to be added to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (RDP), the world's pre-eminent philatelic honour. Meanwhile Erene Grieve, a BPMA volunteer who delivers our highly successful primary school workshop Stamps in Schools, received an equally impressive accolade, being awarded the British Museum and Marsh Christian Trust's national volunteer award for museum learning at a ceremony in July. It is fantastic to see our staff and volunteers' passion and dedication rewarded in this manner.

We also continued to seek new partnerships in 2013 to help raise our profile and to maximise the reach of our current offer. To this end we worked with Google Cultural Institute (GCI) to take two of our travelling exhibitions online. Our Great Train Robbery and Christmas through the Post exhibitions can now be viewed through the GCI's website.

These achievements and more are brought to you in this Impact Report, which highlights just how much goes on behind the doors of our Archive and Museum Store, and the effect our work has both locally and nationally. We are moving ever closer to our new home and being able to build on our vision of connecting people through the evolving story of communications past and present. 2014 is sure to bring more good news.

*Dr Adrian Steel, Director*

Man holding large cauliflower posts  
a letter - Brecon, Mid-Wales, 1949



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# CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT



The past year has been one of frenetic activity for all, working towards the ultimate goal of the new museum and the opening of Mail Rail, but also keeping the show on the road to demonstrate the importance and relevance of postal history.

In answer to requests from those who responded to a survey earlier in the year BPMA's presence has been trumpeted all over the country. Travelling exhibitions, free to hire for suitable venues, are a fantastic way to do this and have recently included the much acclaimed *Last Post: remembering the First World War*, *Designs on Delivery: GPO Posters*, *the Great Train Robbery* and *Christmas through the Post*. In an exciting development which we hope will lead to further partnership opportunities the Google Cultural Institute also took two of these exhibitions online. The Museum of the Post Office in the Community at Blists Hill, Ironbridge Gorge continued to draw a large number of visitors and objects from the core collection, like uniforms and pistols, have been loaned out on a regular basis to other museums. National attention was drawn to another aspect of BPMA's work away from Phoenix Place this year with the British Museum and Marsh Christian Trust's national volunteer award presented to BPMA volunteer Erene Grieve for the *Stamps in Schools* programme. So, while we may be cramped in our current home it is clear that with increased press coverage, a regular presence on social media, radio and television appearances by staff and the wide interest generated by

plans for Mail Rail, the profile of BPMA is rising rapidly. As a statement of intent, and to make it somewhat less of a mouthful, we also confirmed that we will be adopting a new name for our new museum - The **Postal** Museum – lots of people call it that already!

The failure of the sale of duplicate stamps at Sotheby's in the summer was a bad blow to our plans but it was temporary and I am proud of the way the staff recovered and moved on. Re-organising those plans, drawing up alternatives and pitching even more strongly into fundraising has dominated activity during the autumn. Mail Rail continues to be a great draw for all sorts of visitors, and the offer of a train ride enthralled and delights all those that I have the pleasure of describing it to. Heritage railway enthusiasts queue up to see the raw site of the railway and the enthusiasm generated has spread widely. We have had great support in all directions, from politicians, national and local, from industry and businesses, from Trusts and Foundations and from those who boast a railway in their back garden but always want to see more. It is clear that there is a lot of excitement around this project and a real desire, not just among our core audiences, to make this a reality. We have also been given great support from the Heritage Lottery Fund which has been very patient with our ever changing plans, by Royal Mail which has been exceptionally helpful with advice and suggestions and from Post Office Ltd which has backed us time and again in making difficult decisions.

Most of all I want to pay tribute to the staff, trustees and volunteers at BPMA who, as a combined effort, make working there both exciting and rewarding. None of the above could be achieved without their dedication, sheer hard work and enthusiasm from which we have benefited so much during the past year. 2014 promises to be another exciting year - is there ever a dull one at BPMA?

*Dr Helen Forde, Chairman of Trustees*



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# WHO WE ARE

## Our Vision

To build a new, permanent, national postal museum in Central London and provide public access to Mail Rail, the Post Office's Underground Railway, for the first time in its history.

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, adjacent to Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant site in Central London.

## Our Mission

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

## Our Aims

Through a new postal museum the BPMA aims to:

### *Reveal and enrich*

The BPMA is an independent educational charity that encourages exploration of a familiar service, revealing extraordinary stories through its iconic collections in an innovative way.

### *Educate and inspire*

The BPMA provides accessible learning for people at all levels and from all backgrounds. From stimulating exhibitions and experiences to outreach activities we immerse people in their past and encourage them to relate it to their present.

### *Be inclusive and dynamic*

The post has played a central role in British history over the past four centuries and continues to connect people across the globe. The BPMA applies this to its own community, encouraging people to share in its stories and contribute their own fresh insights into the evolving story of communications.

## *Protect and preserve*

The BPMA safeguards Britain's iconic postal past for future generations. By applying the highest standards of preservation and conservation it ensures the long-term sustainability of the collections while supporting and encouraging access for all, both now and in the future.

## Our Work

The BPMA 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.

The BPMA employs 43 full-time paid staff and is supported by approximately 30 volunteers. Our principal funders are Royal Mail Group and Post Office 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 Achievements

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

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# DELIVERING THE POSTAL MUSEUM

In 2013 the BPMA made significant steps towards achieving its vision of a new home. It succeeded in:

- Securing funding agreements with Royal Mail Group and the Post Office Ltd which will contribute towards the long-term funding of The Postal Museum for the next 25 years (please see section on Royal Mail Group and Post Office Ltd for further information)
- Obtaining a 999 year lease of Calthorpe House, where the new museum will be based, from Royal Mail Estates

Fundraising through other sources was also a major priority in 2013 in order to secure both the short-term success required to build a new centre and the long-term success necessary to ensure the sustainability of the new museum well into the future. To this end the BPMA:

- Received pledges in excess of £1m from a number of charitable Trusts and Foundations
- Utilised the significant Development Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
- Employed a Campaign Assistant, Campaign Events Assistant and two experienced fundraising consultants

With plans for Calthorpe House at a more advanced stage than aspirations for Mail Rail, the former Post Office Underground Railway, the project team focussed much of its attention on opening up this subterranean network to the public by:

- Significantly developing the Designs
- Submitting a planning application to the London Borough of Islington

- Capturing the imagination and enthusiasm of the public and the press, including various journalists and high profile individuals, such as historian and TV presenter Dan Snow
- Hosting well attended themed events for stakeholders and potential funders

While the project team was busy progressing architectural designs and planning proposals, colleagues across BPMA were looking further ahead through:

- Planning the future move from Freeling House to Calthorpe House
- Beginning to develop a new brand
- Furthering plans for the permanent exhibitions at Calthorpe House and Mail Rail

On the fundraising side BPMA Trustees and Ambassadors worked hard throughout 2013 advocating the project and helping the organisation move towards achieving its fundraising targets. Their contributions have been invaluable and by working alongside BPMA staff their contributions have allowed the organisation to successfully widen its supporter base and reach more people. In the past year, they have helped the organisation strengthen relationships within:

- The political sphere, including local councillors, MPs and representatives from City Hall
- All Party Parliamentary Groups including Arts & Heritage, Philately and Heritage Railways
- National and International philatelic and heritage railway groups



Artist's impressions of how the new museum might look



Artist's impressions of how the new museum might look

## Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd Contracts

In March, Royal Mail Group and Post Office Ltd. (POL) signed contracts with BPMA committing them to 25 year revenue funding agreements totalling approximately £2m per annum. In part, this funding pays for the basic costs of the archive service and commercial records management. The rest of the funding is made up of a charitable donation provided to support core BPMA activities. This too has been secured for 25 years.

An upfront reassurance of £50m to cover the majority of our core operational costs has provided the BPMA with long-term security. This enables the BPMA to plan ahead, build in suitable contingencies and provide a secure base from which to develop further opportunities and provide a greater range of services to its user base.

## Make a Donation

While Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd.'s contributions provide significant support for BPMA's work, the organisation relies on additional funding from a variety of sources to maintain existing levels of service, grow its offer and preserve our fascinating history for the enjoyment of future generations. Donations provide us with invaluable support right across the collections – allowing us to target resources wherever need is greatest. Should you wish to make a donation please visit [postalheritage.org.uk/support](http://postalheritage.org.uk/support) or contact the campaign team on **020 7354 7274**

## BPMA Supporters

### The Postal Museum and Mail Rail campaign

Royal Mail Group Ltd  
 Post Office Ltd  
 British Philatelic Trust  
 Garfield Weston Foundation  
 Rosemary Green  
 Association of British Philatelic Societies  
 The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation  
 Donald Brydon  
 Krystyna Kościa ACR  
 The Marsh Christian Trust  
 Royal Bank of Scotland Philatelic Society  
 The Stuart Rossiter Trust  
 Schuyler Rumsey

And those who wish to remain anonymous.

### Archive and Collection Funders

Royal Mail Group Ltd  
 Post Office Ltd  
 AiM/Pilgrim Trust Conservation Grant Scheme  
 Arts Council England PRISM Fund  
 Friends of the BPMA  
 Letter Box Study Group

### Access and Learning Programme Funders

Arts Council England Partnership for Excellence Fund



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# ACCESS & LEARNING

The BPMA works hard to ensure that more and more people can access our collections and benefit from associated opportunities for learning, skills development and pure enjoyment. During 2013, we continued to develop a number of initiatives, raising public awareness of the organisation and its work, and providing access to the collections

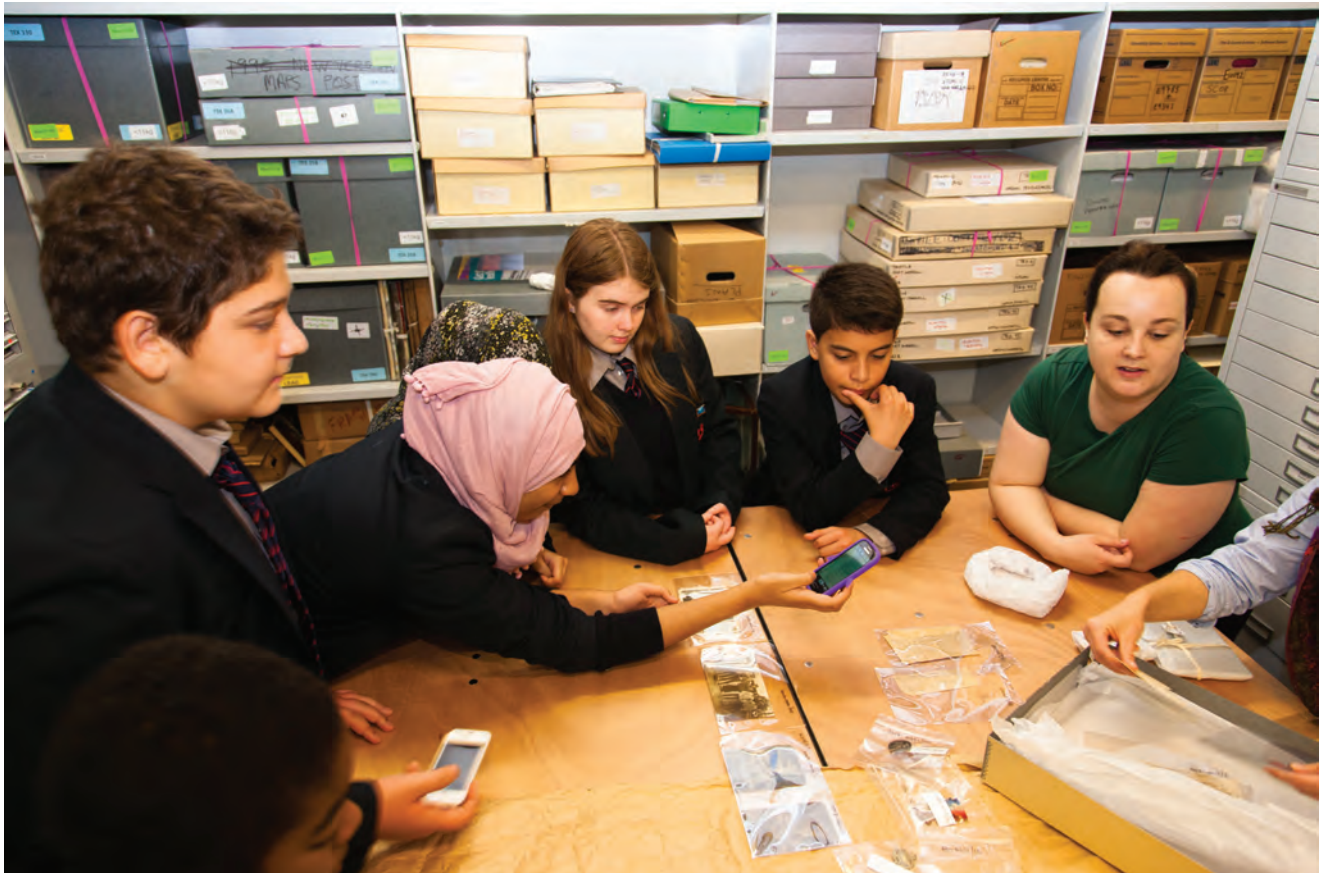
## Statistics

During 2013:

- More than 200,000 people across the country visited a BPMA exhibition or display
- Over 10,000 people met us through our public programme of talks, walks, tours, open days, family days, and other outreach activities,

including major events such as the **Bloomsbury Festival** and **Stampex**

- Of those surveyed at events:
  - 93% rated them as 'good' or 'very good'
  - 97% learned something new
  - 98% said they would recommend them to a friend.
- Nearly 2,500 teachers and students took part in school workshops and special projects, including the BPMA-sponsored Stamps in Schools outreach programme
- Over 3,000 copies of our award-winning learning packs and resources were distributed to teachers in hard-copy and online



A school group explore First World War objects in the BPMA Archive

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## Exhibitions

### ***Mail Rail: A Photographic Exhibition***

In July 2013, a brand new exhibition opened in the BPMA's Search Room exhibition space. Mail Rail: A Photographic Exhibition consisted of a collection of striking images taken by photographer Jonathan Bradley. The photos document the Post Office (London) Railway, capturing snapshots of the mothballed network, from the tunnels to the underground stations.

The exhibition drew high numbers of first-time visitors to the Search Room, including staff from the Mount Pleasant Sorting Office – many of whom had personal experiences of working within the network.

### ***The Great Train Robbery, the aftermath and the investigations: A story from the Archive***

To mark fifty years since The Great Train Robbery of 1963, the BPMA developed a new touring exhibition showcasing Post Office files from the aftermath of the robbery, the subsequent investigations and the key role played by Post Office officials. The display travelled to a number of venues across the country during 2013, including the Thames Valley Police Museum and Head of Steam: Darlington Railway Museum, and was seen by nearly 12,000 people over the course of the year.



### ***Christmas through the Post***

Another new touring exhibition developed during 2013 was Christmas through the Post – a display designed around the themes of Victorian Christmas Cards, the long-running Post Early campaign, and Christmas stamps. Opening at **Beverley Art Gallery**, East Riding, in December, it received around 2,500 visitors in its first month.



### ***Designs on Delivery: GPO Posters 1930 to 1960***

A new venture for 2013 saw the BPMA partner with **Paintings in Hospitals** – a registered charity that uses visual art to create environments that improve health and wellbeing for service users, their families and staff. The BPMA's touring exhibition of posters Designs on Delivery travelled to **The Great Western Hospital** in Swindon, reaching around 40,000 people between March and June.



### ***Last Post: Remembering the First World War***

In the run up to 2014 Last Post, the BPMA's exhibition exploring the role of the Post Office in the First World War, visited a number of museums and heritage venues around the country. Between 25 March and 27 September it received over 9,500 visitors at **The Museum of Army Flying** in Hampshire and a further 1,800 visitors during a short stay at the **Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum** in Dunfermline.

Additional runs at the **Guildhall Library** and **Bletchley Park** resulted in another 6,600 visitors, significantly increasing awareness of the BPMA and its planned programme of activities to mark the First World War Centenary and illustrate the important role the Post Office played in this conflict.

### ***The Post Office in Pictures***

The Post Office in Pictures photographic exhibition, featuring inspiring and unusual images selected from the Archive, went on tour in 2013, visiting both Bletchley Park and Gainsborough Heritage Centre, and reaching over 2,000 visitors.

These exhibitions will continue to tour in 2014, allowing the BPMA to reach even more visitors from across the country.



Haverstock School Students attend a creative workshop for their Bronze Arts Award project 'Communicating Conflict'

## Community Learning

In February 2013, the BPMA appointed its first Community Learning Officer, supported by funding from the **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)**. The role has involved developing activities for informal learners of all ages, including families, adult learners and local community groups

### Family Activities

The BPMA is a firm supporter of the concept of 'family learning', where parents, grandparents, carers and other family members are encouraged and supported to be an active part of their children's learning, as well as becoming learners themselves.

Our partnerships with family learning organisations such as the **Camden Adult and Community Learning Team** and **City Lit**, have continued to grow during 2013, allowing us to successfully engage with and pilot activities for families with school-age children and build links with local communities.

A new partnership for 2013 saw the BPMA join with Best Start for Families to deliver family learning activities in **Pentonville and Holloway prisons**. This project aimed to enhance the relationship between parents in prison and their children, enable parents to support their children's learning more effectively and develop new and existing skills in science, maths, literacy, and art in both parents and children.

## Bloomsbury Festival

In October 2013 the BPMA took part in the annual Bloomsbury Festival for the third year in a row.

In collaboration with the **Charles Dickens Museum**, **Holborn Community Association** and film-maker Elaine Duigenan we produced a short film showcasing the educational and cultural highlights of Bloomsbury – including footage of a programme of activities delivered for adults and children at the various partner venues over the summer. A screening of the film at The Art Workers' Guild was attended by more than 50 people.

Other BPMA contributions to the festival included a letter-writing workshop at **The October Gallery's** 'Homeland' event, which reached around 200 people, and the 'Pedal Powered Postman from the Past', entertaining visitors to Russell Square with poems, quizzes, handling objects and craft activities delivered from a vintage parcel tricycle.

## Tours and Open Days at the Museum Store and Archive

The BPMA continued to open the doors of the Museum Store and Archive during 2013, engaging new and existing audiences with our collection in a variety of creative ways. Over 1,000 people took part in tours and open days at the BPMA's main sites, including special events such as:

- *Pillar Box Perfection* – a family open day at the

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Museum Store, that included 'spotlight talks' about popular pillar boxes, a mystery object trail, and a hands-on craft activity where visitors could design and make their own letter boxes

- *Stories from the Store* – a special after-hours opening marking Museums at Night, featuring fascinating characters from our postal past brought to life by the **Big Wheel Theatre Company**, activities from **Craft Guerilla**, and opportunities to explore a Second World War handling box
- *Mail Rail Archive Open Day* – a themed open day to celebrate the Post Office Underground Railway, with a guest appearance by **Jonathan Bradley**, the photographer behind the images displayed in *Mail Rail: A Photographic Exhibition*

### Evening Talks

The BPMA's evening talks were attended by an average of just under 50 people per event during 2013, peaking at an audience of 70 for *The Royal Mail Past and Present* by journalist and author Duncan Campbell-Smith held at the Guildhall Library in October.

The December talks, *The Future of the BPMA* by BPMA Director Adrian Steel and *Charles Dickens and the Postal Service* with Dr. Tony Williams, were also popular, drawing an audience of 65 people each.

### Formal Learning

In January 2013 the BPMA appointed a new Learning Officer, with a remit to develop the formal learning offer aimed at primary and secondary schools, and Formal Education (FE) and (HE) providers.

#### Schools Workshops

Looking ahead to the opening of The Postal Museum, work began in 2013 on development of a range of tutor-led workshops aimed at primary schools. Ideas for activities were tested through a teacher focus group held in July, with pilot sessions delivered in schools across London, as well as with groups visiting the Museum Store.

In December, the BPMA partnered with **Westminster Abbey** for the second year in a row – delivering workshops linked to the themes of Victorian Christmas and greetings cards. Around 370 teachers and students took part in the sessions, which were jointly delivered with the **Charles Dickens Museum**.



Erene Grieve delivers a Stamps in Schools workshop

#### Stamps in Schools

The BPMA continued to support the invaluable work of ex-teacher and volunteer Erene Grieve, whose *Stamps in Schools* outreach programme reached over 1,000 teachers and students in schools across the country during 2013.

In July, Erene won two prestigious prizes, as outright regional winner (for London) and joint national winner of the **British Museum and Marsh Christian Trust's awards** recognising 'Volunteers for Museum Learning'. These awards recognise the best practice and most innovative ways in which volunteers work in museums and galleries to engage the public with collections.

#### Special Projects

In 2013, the BPMA received funding from **Arts Council England (ACE)** to deliver 'Communicating Conflict' – a Bronze Arts Award outreach project – with **Haverstock School** in Camden. The project sees 25 Year 9 English students take part in a programme of arts activity including creative workshops with **Big Wheel Theatre Company** and Joelle Taylor, a professional spoken word artist, published poet and playwright, a visit to the BPMA Archive and Museum Store and a visit from a contemporary war poet.

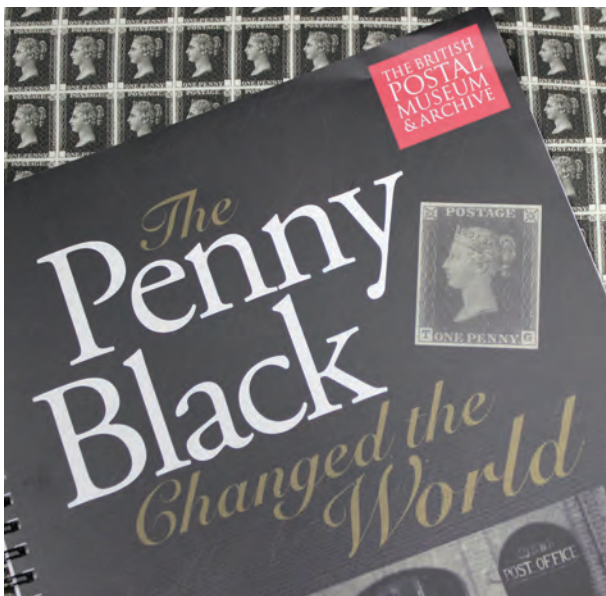
The Arts Award will be completed in 2014 with a performance of the students work at the **Roundhouse** in Camden.

#### Samiah and Aldis – students from Haverstock School:

*"We are extremely lucky to be taking part in this Arts Award project. The stories we discovered at the BPMA have really made us think about what war is like and have inspired our own writing."*

## Learning Packs and Resources

2013 was another successful year for BPMA Learning Packs and resources, with over 2,000 downloads from the Times Educational Supplement (TES) website. Popular packs included: *The Penny Black Changed the World* (857 downloads); *Last Post – Primary* (484 downloads); *First Class* (329 downloads); and *Last Post – Secondary* (219 downloads). In addition, high numbers of downloads were received via the BPMA website, and just under 350 hard-copies of the packs were distributed to teachers and home educators across the country.



The BPMA learning pack 'The Penny Black Changed the World'

## Schools Partnerships

The BPMA worked with a number of educational partners in 2013, including:

- **Enabling Enterprise** – an award-winning not-for-profit company, set up by a team of teachers in 2009, with a mission to “equip young people with the skills, aspirations and experiences they need to succeed in life”

BPMA provided stories and images for the ‘Postal Service Project’, which will work with school students aged 5-7 years old in deprived areas across London, encouraging them to learn about the postal service in their community and develop and run their own school postal service.

- **Cityread London** – an “annual celebration of literature that aims to bring reading to life for the whole capital”

We provided material for a reading resource which will be distributed to secondary schools in London, designed to support the novel *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo.

## Collaborative PhD Students

The BPMA is a partner in the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme, a national scheme run through **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**, an academic funding body. The Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme funds studentships and encourages joint supervision of PhD research by an academic institution and heritage organisation to create better research outcomes.

Throughout 2013 the BPMA continued to work with the AHRC and higher education partners to support collaborative PhD research. Two students from the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), University of London, Vicky Davis and Kathleen McIlvenna, continued their 19th / 20th Century studies and Helen Kearney, based at the Royal College of Art, continued researching the London Postal Map.

Vicky Davis’s First World War research formed the basis of a recent exhibition at the V&A and further publications, conferences and articles are planned from the students in 2014.

The BPMA supports students in delivering better research and raising awareness of our collections and their contents among the academic community by looking into new subject areas or challenging existing views.



Example of a postcard from the Archive, 1935

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## Higher Education

The BPMA has continued to provide support for the Higher Education sector in 2013. From September to December 2013, the BPMA hosted an internship for an undergraduate student from the **University of Westminster**. Coco Corr joined us one a day a week for three months to help with cataloguing of files from the Archive, operating the Search Room information desk and carrying out exhibition research. The placement formed part of Coco's degree course – namely the Practical Work in Archives module.

A BPMA partnership with a class of MA Character Animation students at **Central St. Martins** resulted in 33 one-minute films inspired by the theme of 'Near and Far' and the BPMA collections. The films, scored by music students from Guildhall School, will be showcased on the BPMA website and eventually displayed at The Postal Museum

Other short-term placements hosted by the BPMA included students Melissa Collins, Flora Fyles and Elli Hadjigeorgiou (a Cypriot MA student researching postal museums around the world), and Tommy Douglas who is a trainee primary school teacher

### Melissa Collins **UCL Museum Studies MA Student**



*"As a requirement for my Masters programme in Museum Studies, I was expected to complete an internship in the museum sector. At the start of term, I was presented with an extensive list of museums to pick from and as soon as I saw that the BPMA was offering an internship, I knew that this was the organisation I wanted to work with. Only a few*

*days prior I had come across the BPMA's website and was very impressed with their policies and the personal touch felt in their blog posts. Working with the staff at the BPMA has been even more rewarding than I ever could have expected. I have had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in collections management from a team of highly trained professionals and experience that I know will greatly strengthen my CV and confidence when I seek full time employment. Every day I feel welcomed and comfortable approaching anyone for help, which means a lot to me."*



### Flora Fyles **University of Leicester Museum Studies MA Student**

*"I'm an MA Museum Studies student at the University of Leicester and in April, I volunteered at BPMA, helping to audit and pack objects in preparation for the impending move to the new museum.*

*I spent most of the time at Freeling House, delving into the Archive. Sorting the postcards was particularly interesting, especially trying to make out the messages on the back of some of them! I was also responsible for counting a large number of duplicate badges for disposal. Two days a week were spent out at the Museum Store in Debden where I was involved in organising and packing lots of vehicle parts. There were definitely a few challenges out in Debden such as oddly shaped objects that, just as you thought you'd finally wrapped them up, would burst back through the acid-free tissue paper. I also got to dust a couple of post boxes and post vans, which was fun.*

*I spent two days of my time at the BPMA in the Archive checking the old uniforms for signs of moth activity. The range of uniforms hiding in the corner was astounding: I found Danish, Canadian and Swiss postal uniforms, as well as Foreign Office uniforms from when the General Post Office won the contract to dress some departments of the Civil Service.*

*I've thoroughly enjoyed my time here, and it's been a great introduction to the practical side of collections documentation and management."*



Letterboxes in the BPMA Museum Store, Debden



# PRESERVING OUR PAST

## New Acquisitions



Photograph of Sgt. Thomas Ernest May in uniform

The BPMA Curatorial team were extremely pleased to welcome 39 diverse and interesting items into the Museum Collection in 2013. Of particular interest were a number of items relating to one man: Thomas Ernest May. As well as having been a Post Office employee, Thomas had also been a member of the Post Office Rifles. Personal items passed to the BPMA included his diary from 1915, photographs, medals and an engraved cigarette

case. These were donated by his daughter Edna, who was interviewed for her recollections of her father. Edna explained what each piece of memorabilia meant to her, and why she was passing the collection to the BPMA.

Not surprisingly, the BPMA holds a vast collection of Christmas cards, including the first commercially produced card from 1843. A large and intriguing addition to this collection came from Martin Norgate, who gave the BPMA examples of the special, unique, strange and wonderful Christmas cards that he has been making for family and friends for the past few decades. There would appear to be no immediate end to these as he continues to make them each year. The BPMA were delighted to have received the card made for Christmas 2013 through the post from him. Martin was also interviewed for the oral history collection. He explained his reasoning and creative process, he was also asked to pull out his particular favourites for in-depth discussion.

Amongst many other donations, the BPMA were surprised to obtain examples of two gold plaques fixed to gold painted post boxes that commemorate the achievements of Olympians and Paralympians. These examples are an earlier, non-adopted plaque and an example that had a mistake on and had to be replaced.

## Move Preparation

In 2013, work continued on auditing and repacking of the museum collection in preparation for the move to The Postal Museum. This work will ensure items can be easily and accurately relocated once the new museum opens.

Over 3,500 objects have now been packed and are ready to move. This includes a variety of objects such as handstamps, lantern slides, model vehicles and letter boxes, trophies, medals, ephemera such as Valentine and Christmas cards and founder of the Royal Mail Archive Francis Freeling's travelling case, all of which have different packing requirements.

With the help of volunteer Cyril Parsons the slogan die collection was also completely repacked. Other objects repacked and prepared for moving include a training model of a post office wagon for carrying mail bags; a fragment of a pneumatic tube used to carry telegrams between the Head Post Office Cardiff and subsidiary Post Offices; and a postcard with the address written in Morse Code. In addition, more of the textile collection has been packed, particularly some of the BPMA hat collection, including a Mail Coach Guard's top hat. This work ensures that the collection is stored to a high standard and it ready to move when the time comes.

It is objects such as these that the BPMA hopes to incorporate into its exhibitions galleries at The Postal Museum.

## Conservation projects

A considerable amount of work was carried out by the Conservation and Curatorial teams in 2013, inspecting and assessing objects prioritised for inclusion within the new museum. In the course of the year the Conservation team worked on 184 items, some of the highlights included.

### *Museum Collections*

A rare example of a square, sheet steel F-type pillar box - none of which survive in use today - received minimal but necessary treatment prior to going on loan to the Design Museum.

The third of our underground rail carriages, that had seen service deep below the streets of London, was worked on in the Museum Store at Debden, Essex. The conservation work carried-out on the only surviving original stock carriage, dating from 1927, was an expensive but very necessary undertaking.

Smaller objects that received treatment included a phosphor dot machine. The degradation of organic compounds in this object came to light during audit and periodic object assessment. This highlights the importance of such work which can reveal hidden problems. The treatment that this machine has received not only protects it for the future but has removed the secondary danger to other objects stored on shelves below.

A positive development has been that skills passed on to one of our volunteers during outsourced conservation work on our railway carriages have enabled Don Bell to begin work on a 1930s Envelope Making Machine. Don is now working to a treatment work plan that will ensure the survival of a fascinating, large and industrial oddity within our collection.



New boxes for the safe storage of broken glass plate negatives

### **Broken glass plate negatives**

With the appointment of a new Assistant Conservator in February 2013, the opportunity arose to deal with and make safe a large quantity of broken glass plate negatives. Having assessed the options the pressure-sensitive, adhesive tapes were removed from consecutive glass plate negatives, which were then cleaned as far as was possible without disturbing the delicate medium. Bespoke supports and housing were created for each different size of glass plate negative. The broken pieces were housed together but separated by a tiny gap, so as to ensure the broken edges would not grate together, whilst the image could

be discerned. The end result is an array of boxed glass plate negatives, which can be safely viewed, digitised and ultimately transported to their new home.

### **Christmas cards**

The Conservation team also supported the Curatorial team in preparing the selected Christmas cards shown in "Alex Polizzi's Christmas Fix" on BBC2 in December. This entailed creating a variety of appropriate mounts, created individually for each card, so that they could be easily viewed and filmed. The selection included the first commercially available Christmas card by Henry Cole, of which only a few examples survive.



Henry Cole's 1843 Christmas Card

### **Addition of Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Pre-Decimal Stamp Artwork to Online Catalogue.**

In 2013 the BPMA made a substantial update to its online catalogue. Some 2450 QEII pre-decimal stamp artwork items, complete with images, were added to the database, along with 248 pre-decimal GB commemorative stamp registration sheets. This project allowed access to first designs, modified designs, essays, final issued stamps, presentation packs and first day cover designs, showing the design and production process for all QEII stamp issues from beginning to end. Each catalogued artwork item included a digital thumbnail image enabling online users to see the artwork itself.



1863 Paris Postal Conference Centenary stamp artwork, one of many items added to the online catalogue

Head of Archives Vicky Parkinson is interviewed for a documentary on Japanese national television



# PROFILE RAISING

## Digital

### Digital Engagement

#### Website:

223,421 visits (15% growth on 2012)  
71.9% were new visitors

#### Social media:

Blog 151,000 visits  
Flickr 495,390 image views  
Google+ 58,600 followers  
Facebook 2,720 fans by the end of 2013  
Twitter 4,630 followers by the end of 2013  
Pinterest 893 followers by the end of 2013



Dan Snow @thehistoryguy Dec 11

For more on the amazing underground postal railway on #theoneshow, please check out the excellent @postalheritage pic.twitter.com/NBWwRQev9



Expand

Retweeted

During 2013 the BPMA began deployment of its Digital Media Strategy (DMS) aimed at engaging audiences with our digital offer both now and at the new museum. There was a strong focus on continuing to raise our profile and promote new centre activities through social media, resulting in an increase of visitors to the website and followers on our various social media channels.

A Digital Audience Survey was also completed by over 100 of our digital users, which gave insight into the value of our current offering and proposed projects. A final report will be completed in early 2014. In addition, the first stage of a major Data Project was completed enabling tracking of shop users' actions on Google Analytics.

As part of the BPMA's plans to improve its digital offer work to re-develop the online catalogue was started in 2013 with a view to launching a beta version of the new catalogue in early 2014 to gain feedback. The catalogue currently provides basic search functions



Andy Hoang via Facebook – "Tomorrow I'm going to start listening to all the podcasts produced by The British Postal Museum & Archive cos they are frankly excellent."



@slylnwilkin via Twitter – "remember when I first heard of this...soooo cool! I'm such a geek!"

and presentation of information, but does not offer the opportunity to explore the collections online. The new catalogue will offer features such as access to bigger images, and keyword categorisations such as creators, materials and formats, for records.

Future developments of the new catalogue later in 2014 include document ordering facilities and the ability to download digital copies of material.

### Students from WPI

Three students from the **Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)**, Massachusetts, spent seven weeks at the BPMA in March/April 2013 evaluating the viability of a mobile device app to provide access and information for the BPMA's philatelic collection. Supervised by the BPMA's Access & Learning Manager, Digital Content Development Manager and Web Officer, the students conducted research about nascent technology in use at a range of museums and galleries around London and in New England. As part of their evaluation the students also created a prototype app based on audience research and stamp design. This comprehensive evaluation concluded that a successful museum app needed to provide novelty, content that adds and enhances the physical exhibition spaces, and maintain a high level of interactivity. These conclusions have informed the development of the BPMA strategy for using technology in the new museum galleries and online.

### Google Cultural Institute

In August 2013, the BPMA launched its first exhibition on **Google's Cultural Institute** platform giving digital users access to the BPMA's touring exhibitions for the first time. The Google Cultural Institute aims to put the world's cultural treasures at user's fingertips. The BPMA's exhibition *The Great Train Robbery, the aftermath and the investigations: A story from the Archive* was launched to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event and told the wider story of the Travelling Post Office, the subsequent investigation by the Post Office Investigation Department, and the robbery itself. Since its launch, the exhibition has been viewed over 7000 times. A new exhibition, *Christmas through the Post*, was launched in December and has been viewed over 300 times in less than a month. New exhibitions are being planned for 2014.

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## Communications

In April 2013 a new Communications Manager was appointed to head up the Communications team. As a result of this the amount coverage, in particular high profile coverage that the BPMA received steadily increased over the course of the year. This led to a Communications Officer being recruited in December.

### Coverage and Enquiries

Number of Media Enquiries: 189

Print Coverage: 71

Online Coverage: 62

Broadcast Coverage: 9

### High Profile Coverage

#### Print:

- Daily Mail – Full page feature on the BPMA – Circulation of 1,821,684.
- TimeOut London – Feature on Mail Rail - Circulation of 307,000
- The Economist – Feature on Mail Rail - Circulation of 210,386
- London Evening Standard – Feature on Mail Rail - Circulation of 686,585
- RAIL – Feature on Mail Rail - Circulation of 20,123
- Camden New Journal – Feature on Mail Rail - Circulation of 69,323

#### Online:

- The New Statesman – Feature on London Pneumatic Dispatch Railway - Circulation of 2,600,800
- The Guardian – Photo Gallery on postal history - Circulation of 77,900,000
- Mail Online – Feature on the BPMA – Circulation of 112,588,515 (UMV)
- Camden New Journal – Feature on Mail Rail
- TimeOut London – Feature on Mail Rail



@liz\_lizanderson via Twitter – “Fabulous item on the #oneshow. That little boy’s face when he saw santa was a delight.”

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### Broadcast:

- The One Show – Feature on Mail Rail – Viewing figures of 5,000,000
- BBC World News – Piece on the project to build a New Museum - Viewing figures of 74,000,000
- Alex Polizzi’s Christmas Fix, BBC 2 – Discussion about the World’s oldest Christmas card – Viewing figures of 1,780,000
- A Great British Christmas with Sarah Beeny, Channel 4 – Showed the World’s oldest Christmas card – Viewing figures of 1,150,000
- You & Yours, BBC Radio 4 – Interview with Chris Taft on Telegrams – Listening figures of 3,000,000

## Commercial

- Number of People Subscribed to the Newsletter: 2552
- Number of People Subscribed to the E-Newsletter: 3337

In 2013, the BPMA’s retail and commercial activities primarily focused on developing the opening offer for The Postal Museum and Mail Rail visitor attraction. Work was undertaken to further proposals for the Family Zone in Mail Rail as well as the shop and café in The Postal Museum itself to ensure the right services are provided for visitors from all backgrounds. These developments will represent a significant step change in the organisation’s operations, significantly increasing its commercial and retail remit

### Retail

- The BPMA exceeded its retail targets for the second year in a row. The strongest growth area in retail was online sales

### Licencing

- The licence with Gift Republic for a popular retail range was renewed and extended.
- The commercial team began research into potential licences for The Postal Museum and identified a number of opportunities for growth under the new museum

# Treasure trove that's a first-class secret

## HOW I SEE IT

by Robert Hardman

**O**UNCE for ounce, this treasure makes the Bank of England's gold pile look like Poundland.

I am holding a small sheet of stamps so rare that they are impossible to value. For these are the first Penny Blacks ever printed — the first edition of the first stamp in the world.

Some collectors would sell their entire families for the keys to this vault within a vault, beneath a deceptively dreary light industrial unit near London's King's Cross station. Only a splash of pillar box red above the door catches the eye and reminds the passer-by that this is the home of the British Postal Museum & Archive.

London Mayor Boris Johnson has described it as 'a national treasure of global importance', yet it boasts an average of just ten visitors a day (all of whom must make an appointment).

Right now, the total number of visitors, including me, is three. You could fit us in the proverbial phone box — literally. For this museum also owns a collection of old phone boxes, not to mention every sort of pillar box ever built. Its two-and-a-half miles of archives include treasures such as the telegram announcing the

## One stamp was designed without the Queen's head

loss of the Titanic, relics of the Great Train Robbery and a first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Still tied up with the Dublin bookseller's original string, it was confiscated by the postal authorities in 1922 for being obscene.

Apart from all this, the archive is sitting on its own six-mile private underground rail network stretching from Paddington in West London to Whitechapel in the East End. Almost all of this stuff is out-of-sight and off-limits to its owners — us. Now, though, at long last, the public is about to get a proper chance to see it all.

This is a glorious depository not just of British history, but of broken dreams.

One or two Scottish stamp collectors would probably swap a bucketful of Penny Blacks for the contents of a plastic folder under the vault. This contains the first set of a stamp which was never liked.

For this is the special issue which was designed, approved and ready to go the moment Scotland won the 1978 football World Cup. The second-class 9p stamp shows an artist's impression of Scottish captain Bruce Riech lifting the trophy. The first-class stamp — just 11p back then — shows Scottish players dancing at the final whistle.

In the event, of course, Scotland crashed out of the Cup at the group stage and these stamps were quietly put in a drawer and forgotten (maybe we could now have an Andy Murray one instead).

Political historians and republicans would no doubt like to study a set of 1965 stamps designed to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. It's not David Gentleman's immaculate images of the Spitfire and Hurricane which are interesting. It is the fact that there is no Queen on them.

They were commissioned by a bumptious new Postmaster General called Tony Benn shortly after



Going postal: Robert with two pillar boxes. Above: An unreleased stamp to celebrate Scotland winning the 1978 World Cup

the depot is 'Pillar Box Aisle', a guard-of-honour from every reign paying tribute to this reassuring and almost indestructible symbol of national identity and order.

During the Blitz, the pillar box was often the only thing left standing on the streets of London's East End. Of the 114,000 operational Royal Mail letter boxes in Britain, nearly a quarter still carry the G R (George Rex) cypher of George V, which makes them at least 76 years old. A good 7,000 working boxes proudly bear the 'V R' cypher which denotes they started life under Queen

## There are pillar boxes galore — and a TV detector van

Victoria. Yet they are still being built to pretty much the same design, using all-British components, by half-a-dozen chaps at the Machan Engineering works in Stirlingshire.

At the front of the line here is one of the very first pillar boxes, which is striking for two reasons. First, it is green. Second, the collection plate on the front has a French name — Hauteville. In 1852, a postal surveyor called Anthony Trollope has dispatched to the Channel Islands.

He came up with the idea of an 'iron stump' where people could leave letters day and night and the first was in the Hauteville area of Jersey. Trollope later achieved immortality as a novelist, but he also left a legacy which we see on our streets every day.

In those early days, green was the colour of choice — on the grounds that post boxes should blend in rather than stick out.

My favourite is an 1857 'V R' — Victoria Regina — model called the London Ornate which appears to be overgrown with golden vines.

Another Victorian model has actually enjoyed a revival in recent years. The hexagonal Penfold recently went back into production following demand from tourist attractions like the Tower of London. Sir Elton John has one in his garden.

In 1974, the Queen issued a fresh decree: all pillar boxes should, henceforth, switch from green to red, to make them more visible (in the urban smog, people kept bumping into them).

How long, though, will it be before this once-vital part of daily life starts to disappear like its late lamented cousin, the dear old red telephone box? Royal Mail privatisation is looming and letter-writing is a dying art.

One day, the notion of communication via an adhesive picture of the Monarch will be consigned to a museum. So it's just as well we're going to get a proper one.

## As it finally prepares to go public, a rare glimpse inside the breathtaking museum hardly anyone knows about

Labour's election win in 1964. Mr Benn, famously, was obsessed with erasing the Monarch from the stamps, and this was his first attempt. Fortunately, Prime Minister Harold Wilson — egged on by the Palace — scuppered the idea, but it's fascinating to see what might have been in Benn's socialist Utopia.

You don't have to be a goggle-eyed philatelist to be riveted by all this stuff. Yet in an age of relentless communication, when so many of us cannot get through breakfast without emailing, twittering, texting and squawking inanities at each other, who gives a second thought to how all this mass communication evolved?

Finally, more than two centuries since the first post box was installed in a wall in Wakefield, the British Postal Museum And Archive is about to do justice to this important area of the social history of Britain and the world.

It is in the process of building a new museum around the corner from the present spot. And this one will be a proper, state-of-the-art public space with lots of whizz-bang exhibits and an initial target of at least 80,000 visitors per year.

That number is likely to double

once the museum reopens a section of the old London Post Office Railway — the 'Mail Rail' — down below for tourist journeys.

But it won't be cheap. The National Lottery is providing some of the £20 million needed, but another £5 million is expected to come from an historic stamp auction on Thursday.

The present museum's trustees have been through the vault and picked out a number of philatelic crown jewels which are surplus to requirements and can, therefore, go under the hammer at Sotheby's. The rest, which are protected by law, will be held in perpetuity and displayed at the new museum.

Over at Sotheby's, senior philatelic expert Richard Ashton takes me through a sale which has excited stamp buffs around the world. They include 'registration' sheets of the very first 'Seahorse' stamps designed for George V, showing Britannia aside a seahorse, next to the Sailor King.

Also included are certified first sheets of the limited number of stamps designed for Edward VIII in the months before his Abdication. 'Whatever we think of him as a King,

he had a great eye for design,' says Mr Ashton, contrasting the clean, uncluttered design with the fussy heavily embroidered ones made for George VI.

The museum will be sad to let this material go but, with more than two million stamps in its vault, it still has far more than it can ever display. 'This isn't just the story of stamps. It's the story of people,' says director Adrian Steel.

He also has a larger and equally unassuming warehouse at Debden in Essex, home to a colossal selection of larger stuff from the earliest days of the Royal Mail right up to Postman Pat. When the producers of BBC series *Lark Rise To Candleford* wanted to recreate an authentic Victorian Post Office counter, they borrowed an original from here.

Among a bewildering collection of vehicles, I spot a 1910 postal van and an early TV Detector Van. For many years, of course, it was the Post Office's job to round up the BBC Licence Fee. So could it actually detect anything? When pushed, Mr Steel admits that it was little more than an elaborate hoax. 'But it did make people pay their licence fee!'

Yet the most striking section of

PICTURE: JAMES EMMETT

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# ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

## Changes to the Board of Trustees

The Articles of Association (the governing documents for charities) for both the Postal Heritage Trust and the Postal Heritage Collections Trust were updated in 2013. The main change dealt with the split between Royal Mail Group and Post Office Ltd (POL) both of whom can now nominate members to the PHT and PHCT boards.

There have been a few changes to the Board, some resulting from Royal Mail and POL appointments, others to fill remaining vacancies. This is the fullest and most varied Board to date, although there is scope to co-opt further Trustees should it be deemed advantageous.

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

## Staff Development

BPMA staff have budgets for developing skills and undergoing formal training to encourage retention and to support staff through organisational change. The organisation has a strong track record of continuing professional development within its staff body. This enables delivery of the best possible services to users and continued development of our ways of working.

In 2013:

Two members of staff took part in the Clore leadership short course programme developing the skills within our senior management team in advance of opening the new museum.

Support was given to staff studying for professional qualifications including the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA), which recognises the demonstrable museum experience of those with a formal qualification in museum practice.

## Volunteers

2013 saw another year of invaluable support from our volunteers. Over 30 individuals gave up their time and energy to assist the BPMA with a variety of activities that we simply could not have managed without their efforts.

Many of the new volunteer roles focused on preparatory work for the move to Calthorpe House, including the extension of archive boxes and the rehousing of materials into sturdier protective casings. Volunteers utilised their specialist training to undertake a conditions check of our textile collection, as well as assisting with the preservation and sorting of various records and items from the Archive.

The off-site support of our volunteers has enabled us to supply additional services, such as assessing war memorials to ensure the accuracy of our databases, providing BPMA representation at public events, and assisting with outreach workshops.

The annual Volunteer Celebration Event in July 2013 offered a chance for BPMA staff and trustees to thank the volunteers for their work, as well as seek feedback on the programme. A survey showed that around 93% were satisfied with their experiences with the BPMA, felt the organisation treated its volunteers well, and would recommend volunteering with the BPMA to a friend.

## Case Studies

### Colette Bush – Volunteer

*I started volunteering at the BPMA after I left university as I wanted to work in the cultural sector and felt experience in a museum environment would be helpful in my job search. The first project I undertook was making phase boxes to house fragile books in the Archive. Later, I went on to work on a project to surface clean and wrap paper documents. These projects taught me the correct object handling and packaging processes to use when working with museum collections and archive material. It was also beneficial to see how museums and archives help slow down the deterioration of their objects. I found the BPMA a friendly place to volunteer and the skills I learnt from the people there have helped me a lot now that I am working in a museum myself.*

### Become a Volunteer

Volunteers offer invaluable support on projects including research, documentation, cataloguing and repackaging. To see a list of current volunteering opportunities at the BPMA please visit the Volunteering section of the BPMA website and get involved by downloading the application form and send it to [volunteers@postalheritage.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@postalheritage.org.uk)



**Eric Hearn –  
Friend of the BPMA**

*I have been a Friend of BPMA for many years, having joined when the museum was still based in the King Edward Building. When the museum closed we all hoped that a new home would soon be found but that has proved no easy task. However when*

*I saw, in a Friends newsletter, that BPMA was planning to create a new museum nearby to Mount Pleasant, and needed volunteers to help prepare material for the move to the new home, I offered to help. Following an interview with two of BPMA curators it was suggested I try my hand at what is termed 'phase boxes'. This involves creating bespoke cardboard enclosures for the large numbers of bound records held in the Archive. The task required some initial training on the marking out, cutting and folding of sheets of card. I've been working on this for more than a year now and during that time the process has been modified and improved and so it's been a constant learning process for me. The BPMA staff are all very helpful and appreciative of one's efforts.*

**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. **If you want to become a friend please visit the Friends section of the BPMA website and download the application form.**



**Jim Baldwin –  
Mail Rail Ambassador**

*I have always been interested in social history and in particular things of an industrial and engineering flavour. So much so, that I now spend a lot of my working day writing books, producing TV programmes and getting involved in all things history.*

*It was little wonder therefore that when I was working at ITN as a picture editor several years ago, my antenna picked up the signs of 'Post Office Railway' on the gates to the Royal Mail sorting office at Mount Pleasant. I frequently contacted the Royal Mail Press Office to obtain permission to produce a documentary about this vestige of a bygone era, but to no avail and I abandoned hope of ever seeing anything to do with the system.*

*Then a couple of years ago, I received a telephone call from Nick Booker, a Trustee of the BPMA, inviting me to meet him for a chat about heritage railways in general.*

*He enquired if I would be interested in joining a group aimed at getting the mothballed Post Office Railway working as a major tourist attraction? I thought that I must be dreaming. I really couldn't believe my luck.*

*So I was appointed as an Ambassador to the Mail Rail Project. The experience has been beyond my wildest dreams. I have met some truly wonderful people here at the BPMA whose enthusiasm will carry this project through to a successful conclusion.*

*I hope that the necessary funding will be forthcoming sooner than later, so that this gem of industrial heritage can be opened up to visitors from all over the world and show them that, as well as leading the world in developing a global postal system, Britain also led the way 100 years ago, by building the first of the world's automated transport systems.*

*I will continue to support the Mail Rail Project, for 'the best is yet to come'.*



**Chris Naylor –  
BPMA Trustee**

*I love museums, I love new projects and I love Clerkenwell. I first happened across BPMA and the Postal Museum project as a local councillor when arguing in its support on Camden's Development Control Committee. Shortly after I*

*spotted an advert for Trustees and, with some trepidation, put my name forward.*

*I've been very impressed by the excellent staff – who have been totally committed even through challenging times - and by the open, inclusive ethos, whether at Board meetings, where we all bring quite different backgrounds and points of view, or in programming plans where community and educational access is absolutely at the heart of everything.*

*I still feel like the new boy to some extent and try to pull my weight where I can by introducing a few old contacts and forging links with the local press. I'm also now helping to support the vital Mail Rail planning application through Islington Council - which I know from my time with the Almeida years back. This is a fantastic project and the benefits for the local community are plentiful so I'm confident of our success. As we head towards opening the new museum over the coming years, I'm sure that there will be plenty more opportunities to get stuck in and I hope to do my bit to help where I can. I can't wait.*

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# FUTURE AIMS & DEVELOPMENTS

The BPMA is working towards the establishment of a nationally recognised, sustainable and fully accessible facility through The **Postal** Museum. This will transform the organisation from a small business archive into a leading open-access museum and visitor attraction and a hub for diverse communities across London.

The future will do our collections justice, revealing the hidden stories of objects, records and people of the Post Office from King Charles I to the present day. It will enable people from across London, the UK and the globe to engage with an important part of our shared social history through an organisation responsible for landmark technical innovation that shaped the modern world.

The 1150m<sup>2</sup> museum will provide:

- A state-of-the-art search room and archive repository
- Brand new research facilities
- Interactive exhibition space with five zones to explore
- Subterranean Mail Rail exhibition in the old Mount Pleasant depot
- Dedicated learning studio reaching 10,000 school pupils and teachers a year
- A dynamic and inclusive community space



Artist's impression of Mail Rail exhibition space



Artist's impression of welcome space at The Postal Museum

At the heart of what we do is a desire to offer significant additional services to our current users as well as engage a new generation in our story.

Over the next five years we will:

- Secure the long-term sustainability of the organisation to ensure our independence
- Increase visitor numbers
- Establish wider-reaching creative learning opportunities
- Increase engagement with the local community
- Transform our audiences to engage more and more people in the story of Britain's postal heritage, reaching out to families and tourists among others
- Secure wider access and facilities for the research community, providing a better, more efficient service

A five year programme of activity will enable the BPMA to reach out to communities across Greater London through innovative activities that help address local issues and motivate new audiences to visit the Postal Museum. This will be done, in part, through regular consultation with members of the local community, the offering of work placements to local young people, and providing an environment for learning that is accessible and enjoyable for local families.

Through this five year programme, an intuitive and inspiring digital offer will be established that will both support visits to the Postal Museum by existing and potential audiences and offer a range of resources for distance users. The key elements of the strategy include improvements to the online catalogue, digitisation of the BPMA's collection and the creation of digital media elements for the Postal Museum galleries.

The BPMA also intends to continue its contract work with Royal Mail and expand further into heritage consultancy services both within the UK and the wider international community.

Above all, the BPMA will be developed to become a widely recognised learning institution.

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# GET INVOLVED

Everything the BPMA does aims to give ever increasing numbers of people the opportunity to engage with and enjoy Britain's postal heritage and the social history it represents. The BPMA also relies on on-going support to continue development of new exhibitions, educational and archive projects, and continuous conservation and preservation work. Many of the initiatives outlined in this report are examples of projects that would not have been possible without the generosity of funders, and the hard work of staff, volunteers, Friends and more.

You can help continue this work, protect this iconic element of Britain's heritage for generations to come, and open up the richness of the BPMA's collections to schools, families, collectors and the wider public throughout the UK by getting involved.

As well as becoming a volunteer or Friend of the BPMA, there are a number of other ways you can help support the long-term sustainability of the BPMA.

## Become a Friend

If you want to become a friend please visit the Friends section of the BPMA website and download the application form.

## Become a Volunteer

To see a list of current volunteering opportunities at the BPMA please visit the Volunteering section of the BPMA website and get involved by downloading the application form and send it to [volunteers@postalheritage.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@postalheritage.org.uk).

## Make a Donation

Should you wish to make a donation please visit [postalheritage.org.uk/support](https://postalheritage.org.uk/support) or contact our team, on **020 7354 7274**

## Corporate Partnership

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

## Remember the 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 the BPMA very much values the support of individuals, businesses and funders interested in supporting our work and helping to preserve the collections we hold.

The BPMA is grateful 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](https://postalheritage.org.uk/support) or contact the team on **020 7354 7274**

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“The work the British Postal Museum & Archive is undertaking to deliver a new museum is of utmost importance to the preservation of a key part of our nation's heritage. With world-class collections spanning 400 years of social and communications history, the BPMA is most deserving of support to help ensure it finds a world-class home to display its treasures for everyone to enjoy.”

**Boris Johnson**

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# TRUSTEES & STAFF

## PHT Trustees

Dr Helen Forde – Chairman

Jonathan Evans OBE – Vice-Chair  
(Royal Mail Nominated)

Richard Adams (Royal Mail  
Nominated)

Julian Barker

Jayne Billam

Errol Bishop

Nick Booker

Javid Canteenwala

Catherine Churchard

David Gold (Royal Mail  
Nominated)

Prof. Brian Goodey

Nicholas Kennett (Post Office  
Nominated)

CLlr Chris Naylor

Dr Adrian Steel

## PHSL Board

Nick Booker - Chairman

Directors:

Richard Adams

Michael Artis

Jenny Nunn

Tim Ellison – Executive

Vicky Parkinson – Executive

Dr Adrian Steel – Executive

## BPMA

### Management Team

Dr Adrian Steel  
Director

Tim Ellison  
Deputy Director

Martin Devereux  
Head of Digital

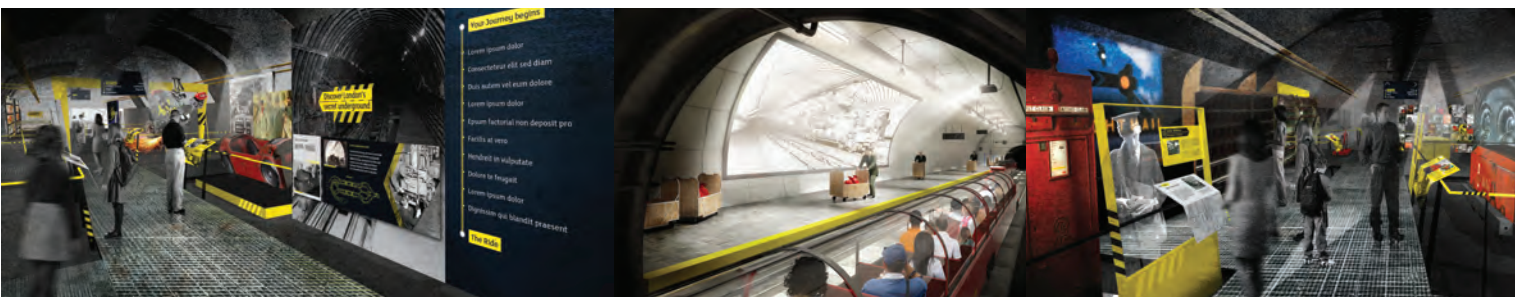
Hannah Gledhill  
Project Manager

Gerry Howley  
Administration Manager

Harry Huskisson  
Communications Manager

Andy Richmond  
Access & Learning Manager

Chris Taft  
Head of Collections



Artist's impression of the proposed Mail Rail exhibition space



The Postal  
Museum

Freeling House  
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BPMA is the public identity of the Postal Heritage Trust,  
Registered charity number 1102360, Company number 4896056