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THE BRITISH
POSTAL
MUSEUM
& ARCHIVE

Newsletter

www.postalheritage.org.uk
Christmas 2013

2013 at the BPMA

As 2013 draws to an end, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our newsletter readers for their support over the past year. It's been a busy twelve months, not just for staff but for all those inside and outside the BPMA that have helped promote our project to build a new museum. I must give special thanks to my colleagues, who have worked tirelessly to progress the plans both for Calthorpe House and Mail Rail and also to our Trustees and Ambassadors who have given a great deal of their free time, blood, sweat and tears to help raise our profile.

We have enjoyed a number of highs across all areas of our work. Volunteer Erene Grieve won the British Museum and Marsh Trust's national award for museum learning, the Google Cultural Institute took our travelling exhibitions online and we confirmed a name for our new home – The Postal Museum. But you have to take the highs with the lows. Many of you will not have failed to notice the disappointing result of our sale of duplicate stamps in July that brought in significantly less than we were hoping for on the day. It is to the credit of the staff and our supporters that the effect was not felt too greatly and the fundraising campaign continues as planned.

2014 promises to be an incredibly exciting time and we approach it with optimism and enthusiasm. In April we hope to have reached our match funding target that will allow us to apply for a £4.5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and, under current plans, demolition works getting under way on schedule at Calthorpe House, paving the way for our new state-of-the-art facility.

Since embarking upon our quest for a new home, it has been clear that there is a great appetite for the stories we can tell, and the opportunity to bring these extraordinary stories of Britain's postal service to an ever-wider audience. The post is an integral part of Britain's social history, and the new museum will provide a world-class facility where all visitors can immerse themselves in our shared

history, putting our collections on centre stage and helping us better understand our past.

I look forward to your continued support as we move ever closer to our goal and wish you and your families all the best for the festive season.



Adrian Steel
Director

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Twitter: @BPMA_Adrian

Clockwise from top left:

QEII Registration Sheet from the pre-decimal stamp artwork added to BPMA's online catalogue in July

BPM&A ST Lukes Harlow 75

Volunteer Erene Grieve receives the British Museum and Marsh Christian Trust's National Volunteer Award for Museum Learning 8 July.

Jo Swinson MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Relations, Consumer and Postal Affairs has a tour of the Archive and Mail Rail 11 June

Head of Archives Vicky Parkinson gives an interview to Japan's NTV 22 November
High Value Packet label from the Great Train Robbery

High Value Packets (HVP) used as formal evidence in court. Image courtesy of Thames Valley Police.

No Service © Bradley Photography 2013

An actor from Big Wheel Theatre Company gets into character for the BPMA's Museums at Night event at the Debden Store, 16 May

Matthew Offord MP holds a sheet of Penny Blacks during his visit to Freeing House 24 July

Engineer Taking Memorial Photos



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www.postalheritage.org.uk

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Christmas through the Post

Exhibitions Officer Dominique Gardner delves into the history of post at Christmas and introduces a new BPMA exhibition.



Above: 'Compliments of the Season' chromolithographic card from scrapbook Date: 1966 (E10869)

Below: 'Post early for Christmas' campaign. Date: c1956 Artist: Not known (POST 109/320)

Background image: New Year greetings card Date: 1866 (E10869)
Parcel concentrator at Moreton Street Sorting Office, Manchester Date: 1959 (POST 118/5272)

The first Christmas card

The first known Christmas card was commissioned by Henry Cole in 1843, the same year as Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, was published.

It was some years later that cards began to be manufactured specifically to be sold in large quantities. They were initially produced by companies as a side-line to other items they were already manufacturing, such as playing cards, and slowly grew in popularity.

A Christmas card boom

In 1843, the year of Cole's Christmas card, just 1000 Christmas cards were made. The sending of Christmas cards has grown throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and in 2005, for example, Royal Mail delivered a staggering 744 million Christmas cards.

Post Early for Christmas

By 1881 the sending of Christmas mail had increased in popularity. The General Post Office (GPO) recognised the need to manage the volume of Christmas mail and decided to involve the public in solving this problem. In 1881 the GPO first encouraged the public to 'Post Early'.

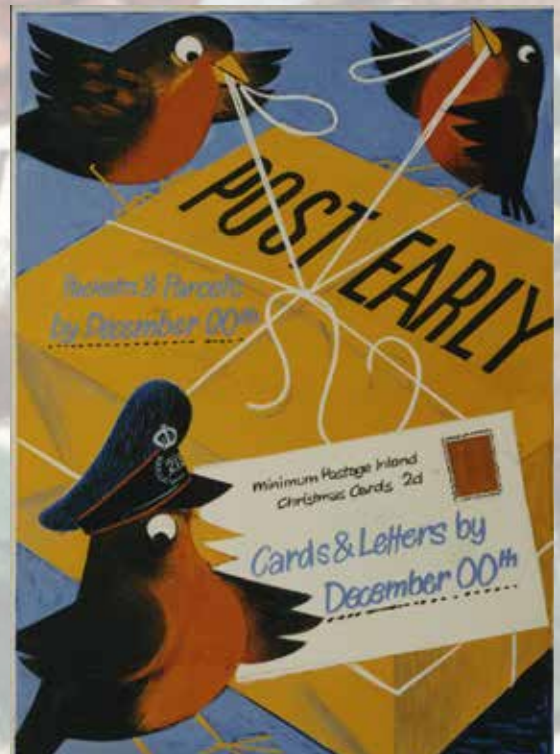
Advising the public to post early was further developed within a GPO publicity poster campaign that was first introduced in 1933. The drive to encourage the public to post early has since become the longest running campaign by Royal Mail.

Victorian Christmas (1837- 1901)

In the Victorian era it was traditional to wish family and friends seasonal greetings, through a series of personal visits, or perhaps writing a letter. With the adoption of the universal penny post system in 1840 this custom became easier to do by post.

The earliest Christmas cards were printed on one-side only and were the size of a typical calling card. Many were printed in monochrome or sepia and were hand coloured. As printing processes improved, Victorian cards used a surprisingly wide range of imagery including naturalistic and pagan yuletide symbols such as holly and ivy, lambs, and images of the coming of spring.

It also became increasingly fashionable to celebrate Christmas at this time, with many of the practices that we enjoy today adopted. Along with Christmas trees and Christmas crackers, Christmas cards became increasingly popular - with their colourful designs enabled by innovations in printing techniques.



You can buy Christmas cards featuring both the Henry Cole image and popular GPO posters from the BPMA Gift Shop - see overleaf for details.

POST EARLY



→ PARCELS BY DEC. 18 • LETTERS & CARDS BY DEC. 20

'Post Early. Parcels by Dec. 18. Letters and cards by Dec. 20', Jan Lewitt and George Him. POST 110/4162

Christmas stamps

The idea of having special stamps issued for Christmas was brought in by the Post Master General Tony Benn in 1966. Benn initiated a competition for children to design the first Christmas stamps. The very first designs were 'King Wenceslas', by Tasveer Shemza, aged six and 'Snowman', by James Berry, aged six.

Following the first Christmas stamps in 1966, special Christmas stamps have continued to be issued every year with designs of either a religious or a secular nature (largely alternating between the two).

Royal Mail received over 240,000 entries to the 2013 Christmas stamp design competition. Tasveer Shemza, the 1966 winner, was on the judging panel. The winning first class stamp was created by Molly Robson, aged seven, and entitled 'Santa'. The winning second class stamp design was by Rosie Hargreaves, ten, entitled 'Singing Angels'. The two winners also had postmarks including their names used throughout Britain for a week each.

It has been estimated that a staggering 17 billion Christmas stamps have been printed in Britain since they were first issued in 1966. They continue to be the most popular stamp sets bought throughout the year.

New BPMA Christmas exhibition

When: Saturday 7 December 2013 and running until the second week of February 2014 (final closing date to be confirmed on our website nearer the time).

Venue: Beverley Art Gallery, Treasure House, Champney Road, Beverley, West Yorkshire, HU17 8HE

Entry: Free

This exhibition reveals Christmas postal history through images drawn from the collections of the BPMA. Christmas through the Post is explored through the themes of Victorian Christmas cards, Post Early for Christmas, and the birth of Christmas stamps. Also on display will be a fascinating small display of Victorian Christmas cards and Christmas stamp artwork facsimiles. Christmas stamps have only been manufactured in the UK since 1966, and have since sold in their millions. Our small display will be exploring this story of Christmas stamp design. The images that will be on display around the gallery space are taken largely from the iconic General Post Office (GPO) advertising poster collection, held at the BPMA, illustrating the promotion of the services offered by the GPO and the campaign to encourage people to 'Post Early for Christmas'. Festive worksheets and prizes for children will also be available..



Above: 'King Wenceslas' stamp artwork, Tasveer Shemza

Below: 'Christmas Greetings from Toyland' postcard, Date: c.1920. (OB1994.296/5)





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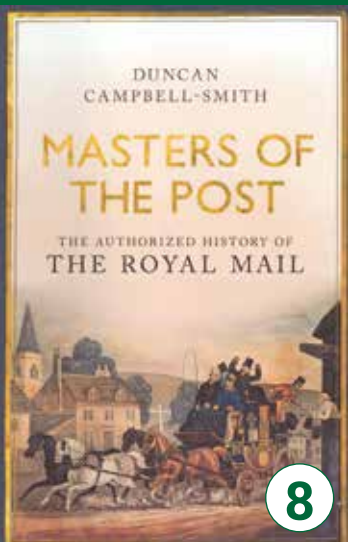
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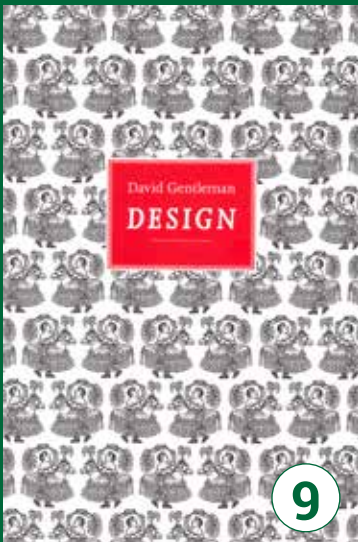
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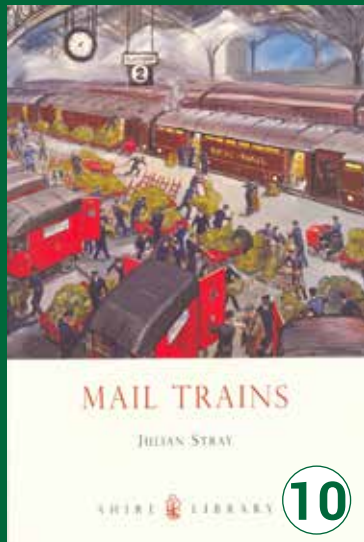
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11

Get FREE DELIVERY on all orders in December - no minimum spend.

Orders over £15 will also receive a FREE copu of Speeding the Mail CD worth £5.99

Quote XMASGIFT13

1. MULTI STAMP TEA TOWEL

£7.99

Brighten up your washing up with the help of this multicoloured royal tea towel! Comes in a gift box.

100% cotton

Machine washable

2. MULTI STAMP OVEN GLOVE

£12.99

Add some colour to your cooking with these regal oven gloves! Comes in a gift box.

Outer lining 100% cotton

Wadding 100% polyester

Machine washable

3. THE WORLD'S FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD

£4.50

A reproduction of the first commercial Christmas card commissioned by Henry Cole in 1843.

Blank inside.

5 cards - 1 design.

Enveloped provided.

148 x 105 mm

4. MORRIS MINOR KEYRING

£2.00

A key ring of the Morris Minor Z van from 1950 in famous red livery which was used extensively by the postal service after the Second World War.

30mm long. The image of the vehicle appears on one side only. It is made from soft enamel with an epoxy keyring on iron.

5. TELEGRAM MESSENGERS SET

£10

The apron is 100% cotton & machine washable, length 800mm.

The tea towel is 100% cotton & machine washable.

6. FATHER CHRISTMAS SET

£3.50

Featuring Father Christmas GPO posters from the 1950s by John Rowland Barker and Manfred Reiss. Message inside reads: 'Season's Greetings'.

8 cards - 4 of each design.

Envelopes provided.

121 x 170 mm

7. FIRST CLASS CUPPA MUG

£8.99

Give your morning cuppa the stamp of approval with this fantastic mug.

Porcelain

Dishwasher and microwave safe.

8. MASTERS OF THE POST: THE AUTHORIZED HISTORY OF THE ROYAL MAIL

Duncan Campbell-Smith

£30.00

A comprehensive and fascinating history of Royal Mail from the very first 'master of the post' in 1512 to the present vast network.

'Vivid, detailed, colourful ... a first-class history ... all sorts of delights leap out of these pages' Daily Telegraph

Hardback

880 pages

9. DAVID GENTLEMAN (DESIGN)

Brian Webb

£12.50

This beautifully designed book provides an introduction to one of Britain's most eminent designer-artists, David Gentleman.

Hardback

96 pages

10. MAIL TRAINS

Julian Stray

£6.99

This book provides a history of the overland carriage of mail by rail; from draughty and poorly lit sorting carriages in 1838 through to the purposeful late twentieth century 'Ladies in Red'.

Softback

64 pages

11. MOVING THE MAIL...BY ROAD

Julian Stray

£5.99

Provides an informative overview of the major developments in the transport of the mails by road since the public postal system began in 1635. From horses through to motor vehicles, it looks at what lead to the genesis of the modern day motor fleet, and considers some possibilities as to its future.

Softback

100 pages

12. POST EARLY FOR CHRISTMAS

£5.50

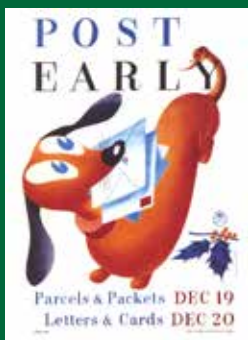
Christmas cards featuring striking images of GPO posters from the 1930s to the 1960s.

Blank inside.

6 cards - 1 of each design.

Envelopes provided.

121 x 170 mm



12



Get FREE DELIVERY on all orders in December - no minimum spend.

Orders over £15 will also receive a FREE copu of Speeding the Mail CD worth £5.99

Quote XMASGIFT13



PENNY BLACK TIE
Navy Blue 100% Silk £4.99
Grey 100% Polyester £2.99

A great Christmas gift for any stamp lover.

OFFICIAL FIRST DAY POST & GO COVER CHRISTMAS 2013
£7.50

Following the issue of the new Christmas Robin stamp on 5th November 2013, the BPMA have produced official limited edition first day covers featuring the new stamp design. These covers feature the unique overprint for the BPMA machine and have been cancelled with the official BPMA cancellation stamp dated for the first day of issue.

Limited edition - 50 copies available

POSTAL ARCHIVE COASTERS
£6.99

Set of 4 coasters featuring classic GPO posters from the BPMA Archive.
106x106mm

WRITE INSTEAD NOTEBOOK
£4.95

150x210 mm blank with frosted acetate cover.

Order this notebook and receive a FREE correspondence card pad worth £3.50!
20 detachable standard sized (A6) plain white postcards.



GOLD NOTEBOOK
£3.99

A priceless way of organising your notes or a great stocking filler for a friend.

Softback
A6 Ruled

SAVE FOR DAYS AHEAD MONEY BOX
£9.99

Help teach the value of saving up your pennies with this lovely money box.

Ceramic
116x116x55mm

SPEEDING THE MAIL CD
£5.99

This CD features contributions from a wide variety of postal workers past and present including counter staff, mail sorters, a former Postmaster General and of course, postmen. Covering 60 years of history from the 1930s, it provides a fascinating insight into post of the past.



How to order:

www.postalheritage.org.uk/shop
020 7354 7272;

shop@postalheritage.org.uk

Post: Product Sales, BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London, WC1X 0DL

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to 'Postal Heritage Services Ltd'.

Add the following to your order for postage & packaging:
UK £3.50, EU £6.50, Rest of World £8.50

QUOTE XMASGIFT13 in December for free delivery.

Please remember to give the product name, quantity, your telephone number and delivery address when ordering by post or telephone. All orders are sent by standard first class mail unless you request Special Delivery.