

Shared Learning Project at the British Postal Museum & Archive

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is the leading resource for all aspects of British postal history. It is a combined museum and archive, bringing together The Royal Mail Archive and a Museum Store. With collections ranging from staff records to stamps, poster design to photography and from transport to telegrams, it cares for the visual, written and physical records from over 400 years of innovation and service, illuminating the fascinating story of British communications. Records in The Royal Mail Archive are designated as being of outstanding national importance. For more information see www.postalheritage.org.uk. It is based in Clerkenwell at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. This is also the main office for The British Postal Museum & Archive as a whole.

The aim of the project is to help the BPMA to both document and understand how its photograph collection was used in the context of Post office Communications and how these in turn reflect the social and communications history of Britain in the 1930s -1960s. The project will support BPMA's research towards an exhibition of GPO photos planned for 2011 as well as providing an invaluable ongoing resource for researchers and family historians.

We will be researching the Post Office Magazine onsite, creating an index of articles and linking these to the collection of photographs in the Archive. This will then enable the production of a report on the key themes portrayed by the Magazine. The Magazines date from 1934 to 1966 and contain a wealth of information and photographs. Articles range from staff achievements, innovations in the mail service to personal stories and regular features such as 'The Postman Everywhere.' BPMA currently has no way of linking the information in the articles to the separate photograph collection. This project will allow us to do that.

The project will take place over 10 weeks and will require an interest in history, photography and exhibitions. Some computer skills are essential, as use of the online catalogue will be necessary, as well as entering data onto a simple database. Staff will be available to help get us started and to offer support in terms of printed materials, scanning, etc.

If you are interested in postal history, exhibitions, photography or magazines, enjoy research and like working in a team, this project could be of interest to you.

There will be a preliminary meeting in early September (date to be confirmed) and the project itself will begin on Tuesday 28th September from 1.0pm – 3.0pm with an introduction to BPMA and the project. Thereafter, meetings will be held fortnightly at the same time culminating with a meeting on 7th December.

Access to a computer and a basic knowledge of computer skills is a requirement as is your commitment to attend the meetings and work on the project on a very regular weekly basis. At the end of the project, it is hoped that you will be prepared to do a short presentation about the research you have undertaken. However, as always with Shared Learning Projects, your enthusiasm is paramount!

Please email Linda Crook for an application form linda.crook.uk@gmail.com. The closing date for applications is Friday 24th July 2010.