

**PICTURE POST
BRITISH POSTAL MUSEM AND ARCHIVE**

Do you have a picture we can add here?

An Evaluation of an Outreach Programme
DRAFT
Kate Pontin
January 2011

Summary

Designated Collections funding has provided an opportunity to digitise the BPMA's photographic collection. The resulting digitised material has been used to develop access projects for new audiences and forge new outreach and community partnerships for both London and South West regions. Projects included a volunteer-led research project into the photographic collection and *Post Office Magazine* with the U3A (University of the third Age), educational outreach projects in London and Swindon. The latter will work with artists and photographers to produce artistic responses to the photographic collection, create a project Flickr group, create two touring displays using archive images and responses produced from the outreach projects, and create an image-based introductory pack to the collection and a schools leaflet for promotion to and use with visiting schools and other groups, and available online.

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The key outcomes relating to the learning and access programmes are:

- the communication of a *Designated* Collection's unique story (the GPO's role in British social history) to new audiences in two regions,
- for the BPMA to demonstrate commitment to involving Swindon/South West community in relocating a Designated Collection to Swindon,
- to develop partnerships in two regions – facilitating improved London outreach and strengthening of current partnerships; and enable development of new partnership with national organisation U3A via London pilot.

Further to this, it is hoped that the evaluation process and final report will actively inform future developments in BPMA learning and access provision by:

- Outlining benefits (e.g. Generic Learning and/or Social Outcomes) gained by the participants from London and/or Swindon;
- Highlighting key themes or topics of interest to the project participants
- Guiding BPMA learning and access staff in best practice in evaluating events and activities for a wide range of audiences (e.g. children, families, and lifelong learners);
- Suggesting ways that the BPMA can build on the DDF project – especially with key partners in Swindon and London.

Evaluation methodology used a number of tools (developing validity). Tools included observation, interviews, surveys and postcard feedback. Pro-formas of the surveys can be found in appendix 2 but were in the event only used occasionally. Children were often difficult to persuade to fill in forms and sessions were often dynamic with a range of activities happening at the same time leaving little opportunity.

Findings

The pilot sessions were generally very successful with a wide range of outcomes for participants, developing greater knowledge and understanding of the postal service and its history while developing skills in cataloguing, IT or creativity. Sessions included a wide range of interesting activities. Participants generally immersed themselves in the sessions and enthused about their experience. The session highlighted a number of key areas for improvement but the development of new partnerships has been a great success and it is hoped these can be built on. Promotion of these projects through displays, leaflets, Flickr etc will continue to develop a wider profile

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Topics or approaches that particularly interested participants were:

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- The tour of the sorting office – participants were surprised how interesting this was
- Looking at the photos and articles of the postal service in the past

Activities that most appealed:

- Using a camera to look differently at the postal centre
- Creating art work – especially the collage work, model making
- Trying on costume
- Writing work – e.g. writing telegrams, letters etc.

A raised awareness of the BPMA has certainly occurred in those adults attending. The children have found out more about the postal service in the past and today, although they may find this harder to link to a particular museum or archive as the workshops were not at the BPMA. Hopefully the exhibitions and leaflets will widen this awareness too. Of equal importance is the increased awareness amongst partners as this will hopefully also have a longer term impact.

The partnerships have been initiated successfully and it will be important these are continued, developing new themes or project work (eg U3A). The Holborn community centre offers opportunity to reach a wide range of audiences whereas creative work with *Artsite* perhaps with young people or those with learning difficulties would certainly continue a strong partnership in Swindon. Mechanisms might include:

- Continued communication about the project in general,
- Continuing display of panels, leaflets etc,
- Consultation on new projects and best practice.

Areas for improvement include:

- Taking time to plan more earlier,
- Improve communication strategies with partners particularly early on,
- Producing publicity early on to include and capture wide audiences groups and defining key age groups, carers attendance, etc,
- Consider the best use of the BPMA site and the numbers etc. possible for projects there – including assessing space and making sure all staff are on board and informed is essential

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1.0 Introduction

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is the leading resource for British postal heritage. 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. There BPMA have recently acquired funding from the Museum, Library and Archive (MLA) Council's Development Designation Fund (DDF). This new stream of funding from MLA supports *Designated* collection holders to increase care, access to, and understanding of their collections and to improve future sustainability.

As part of this there has been an instigation of a digitised image management system taking the BPMA's photographic collection as pilot and using resulting knowledge and digitised material to, amongst other things develop access projects for new audiences both in London and the South West regions, laying the groundwork for community engagement in the South West as part of BPMA's longer-term capital development in Swindon.

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Focus for outreach work was as follows:

- A ten-week volunteer-led research project into the photographic collection and *Post Office Magazine* undertaken by students from the University of the Third Age (U3A) at the BPMA as a U3A Shared Learning Project.
- Two education outreach projects in London and Swindon, working with artists and photographers to produce artistic responses to the photographic collection. Swindon partners will be Artsite Limited (www.artsite.ltd.uk), and Sheena Dean, a freelance artist, photographer, and community collaborator. London partners are Holborn Community Association (<http://www.holborncommunity.co.uk>) and Dan Salter, a freelance photographer (www.dansalter.co.uk).
- Creation of a project Flickr group, where both London and Swindon community groups will upload images of their work and where (it is hoped) discuss the project, the archive images, and their responses to them.
- Creation of two touring displays (e.g. banner-stands), using archive images and responses produced from the outreach projects, to subsequently tour public and community spaces (e.g. libraries) in London and Swindon, and grow awareness of BMA's Designated collection for a diverse range of new audiences.
- Creation of an image-based introductory pack to the collection and a schools leaflet for promotion to and use with visiting schools and other groups, and available online.

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2.0 Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The consultant carried out qualitative research to assess some of the key outputs and outcomes outlined (see below) with particular focus on those relating to BPMA learning and access provision.

The key outcomes relating to learning and access project are as follows (key **evaluation** objectives in bold):

- Raised public awareness of the Royal Mail Archive as a key part of UK national heritage.
- Raised profile, PR and advocacy for whole of BPMA's Designated collection – we will seek media features based on strong visual appeal of photographs and story they tell, as means of raising profile of entire collection.
- **Communication of a *Designated* collection's unique story (the GPO's role in British social history) to new audiences in two regions (including adults, families, schools, young people and community groups).**
- **BPMA demonstrates commitment to involving Swindon/South West community in relocating a Designated Collection to Swindon and facilitating wide public access and engagement and takes practical steps to realize that ambition.**
- **Partnership development in two regions – investment will lay groundwork for future Swindon-based partnership working, allowing us to pilot outreach mechanisms; facilitate improved London outreach and strengthening of current partnerships; and enable development of new partnership with national organisation U3A via London pilot.**
- Improved and extended cataloguing, development of knowledge base, and improved user access to a currently under used and little understood part of a Designated collection.
- BPMA staff to engage with MLA's digital agenda, including improving showcasing of the Collection via Culture 24 website and link to Collections Trust Culture Grid.

Further to this, it is hoped that the evaluation process and final report will actively inform future developments in BPMA learning and access provision by:

- **Outlining benefits (e.g. Generic Learning and/or Social Outcomes) gained by the participants from London and/or Swindon – see appendix one for evaluation questions for each session observed)**
- **Highlighting key themes or topics of interest to the project participants**
- **Guiding BPMA learning and access staff in best practice in evaluating events and activities for a wide range of audiences (e.g. children, families, and lifelong learners);**
- **Suggesting ways that the BPMA can build on the DDF project – especially with key partners in Swindon and London.**

2.2 Approach

Evaluation methodology used a number of tools (enabling findings to be compared across approaches). Tools included observation, interviews, surveys and postcard feedback. Pro-formas of the surveys can be found in appendix 2 but were in the event only used occasionally. Children were often difficult to persuade to fill in forms and sessions were often dynamic with a range of activities happening at the same time. As these were pilot sessions, quantitative data on demographics was not kept in detail.

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Sessions attended were:

- 25th October, Bedford House Community Centre, London
- 13th and 27th November, Swindon outreach project
- 9th and 23rd November, U3A project, London

3.0 Results

Full results are provided in appendix 1.

3.1 London Outreach project with children, Bedford Community Centre: Summary

The session observed used a range of creative opportunities to develop an interest and understanding in postal history. Children were able to dress up in old postal uniforms and be photographed and to develop their own artwork using collage, model making and colour. Completed pieces were photographed.

Strengths:

- Great partnership with access to a wide range of families from different backgrounds. Catherine the Director has asked for a meeting to follow up after the half term to think of new activities to link in to different audiences – e.g. story times, writing activities – e.g. rap, designing post boxes etc
- Good activities appropriate for wide range of children including boys
- Enjoy dressing up and acting – some children acted out post work on a train.

Learning from pilot sessions

- Age range needs to make sure younger children are either excluded or attend with parents
- Think through how to run a session with both regular attendees and drop-ins
- Photo activity not so successful – a lot of sitting around and not creative for the children – just the photographer – might work better if children take the photos!
 - I'm getting bored
 - I'm a prisoner
 - Singing a rap song while waiting
- Some finish much earlier than others – short fill in activities might be useful
- High staff ratio needed if creative work is truly relevant and stretching for each child and also for any behaviour issues that need sorting with older children
- Needed to promote Flickr to the grown-ups more so they look at it later

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Learning by Participants

Generic Learning Outcome	Children's responses
Enjoyment, Inspiration and creativity	Yes Very creative
Knowledge	History of post – costume, photos – those who attended the previous session knew quite a lot. Those who had only attended this one had little context for the activities.
Skills	Craft work, taking photos. Skills developed: Parcel making Letters/writing Creating scenes with collage, 3-D and colour Cutting and basic skills for younger children
Attitudes	-

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BPMA – learning about	Saw photos, costume, wrapping parcels etc to learn about the postal service
Future intentions	-

3.2 Swindon Outreach project

The first session observed was a tour of the postal centre in Swindon. Before looking, the session was introduced. The tour was really interesting and all enjoyed it. It was made especially successful with everyone having cameras to take photos – with guidance on how to take interesting views and angles. The results put up on the web were excellent and very creative. Afterwards there were activities to do including looking at the collections, making their own telegrams and writing letters to post. We watched a video of Publicity material made by the Post Office in the mid 20th century. There were a range of sources to support different interests and ages and thus there were also books and colouring activities for young children.

The second session observed was a creative session at the Platform Youth Centre using their train carriage as a craft room. Most children spent time model making (postal service of the future) but also everyone dressed up in old uniforms for photographs with their art work. There was also a range of other craft activities and old photographs to look at.

Strengths:

- Families have all returned, although some were late. This shows commitment and enjoyment
- Feedback shows that participants enjoyed it
 - *Yes I have enjoyed it – particularly the tour of the postal centre*
 - *I have enjoyed myself very much. I enjoyed the first week especially – the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot.*

Learning from pilot session

- Finding the location, travel to get there – one family had to use a taxi
- Recruitment in the time scale was a challenge. In the future more focus needs to be made using approaches to attract key audiences
- Consideration needs to be made as to the maximum numbers and to the younger age limit. With younger participants a slightly different approach is needed with less talk and more activity
- Technology was sometimes an issue e.g. there wasn't a link for the Sony camera
- Some families couldn't book a place on the project as it was on consecutive Saturdays so thought on days/dates is needed for future projects
- Sometimes a difficulty in balancing grown up discussion and activities for children
- Space at the Platform lovely and well resourced but the train room is a bit tight for movement
- IT generally very good at the Platform
- Clarity of directions at beginning difficult when people come at different times and have different needs!
- Skilled leader needed (Sheena was really good and experienced)
- Needs mums to help their children be creative – a family activity – this generally happened but sometimes carers need support as how best to do this

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Comment: I think there was a link cable for the BPMA Sony cameras...

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Comment: Do we know who these families were?

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Comment: Sentence meaning is a bit ambiguous. Does this mean that you thought Sheena was not a skilled leader... or that she was?

Learning by Participants

Generic Learning Outcome	Children	Adults
Enjoyment,	Yes	Yes – and also the social

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Inspiration and creativity	<p>Very creative activity e.g. robot making And thinking about the future of the postal system</p> <p><i>I haven't had to drag them here every week ...so clearly successful!</i> They're really enjoying seeing their work on computer and Flickr – they can show their friends and family.</p> <p><i>It has been really good for my friends daughter too – she has responded well and told her mum all about it. Yes the children have enjoyed it too – they are always happy. They go off at their own tangent (one child 5 years old)</i></p>	<p>aspects important</p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed it – particularly the tour of the postal centre</i></p> <p><i>I have enjoyed myself very much. I enjoyed the first week especially –</i></p> <p><i>I haven't enjoyed the future stuff so much – the robots – not so interesting</i></p>
Knowledge	<p>History of post – costume, writing letters and telegrams, stamps etc</p>	<p>About scene setting in art and photos observed History of postal service Old photos etc Tour of sorting office – <i>the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot</i></p>
Skills	<p>Collage work, taking photos, craft work, writing, reading, model making</p> <p><i>Yes I enjoyed it. Taking photos at the sorting office was best. I didn't want to do it as the Post Office doesn't sound interesting but Sheena and my Mum said to try it first and I have stayed.</i></p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed – especially the trip around the post room – it was best. I liked taking photos – I don't have a camera.</i></p> <p><i>It has been good for the girls to do something creative and do what they want, use their own ideas and imagination. It is not so easy to be so flexible at school.</i></p>	<p>Photography and collage mentioned</p>
Attitudes	<p>Found learning about the postal service more interesting than they thought it would be</p>	<p>Learnt something, enjoyed and social</p>
BPMA – learning about	<p>Saw postal material, costume, enjoyed sending telegrams and letters, wrapping parcels etc.</p>	<p>Enjoyed learning about the history of the postal service and seeing archives etc. Good trip around the sorting office – <i>the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot</i></p>
Future intentions	<p>Will be sending and receiving material through the post – from Sheena</p>	<p>Possible event when the banner display is ready –</p>

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		hopefully a leaflet too – launch – possibly at the Platform but have a number of venues to tour
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3.3 U3A project

The first session observed was a lunch time gathering when all participants discussed the project and any issues etc. Some had already done some cataloguing in the morning and others worked in the afternoon, where I observed for a short time. The second session continued this format but also provided power point training for anyone who wanted it – as they were at the stage of preparing their talks (on a subject that interested them) and were encouraged to use appropriate technology. The talks were to be presented to each other in a few weeks time.

Strengths

- Staff lovely – really good
- The work is good
- Found ways of attaching photos and articles from the magazines together
- Developed working practices as project developed – need to review the key considerations about working practices and processes
- U3A like the opportunity to learn but also make new friends etc., a challenge, interest and new skills
- Had good discussion at beginning of project - parameters on what to catalogue and key terms etc. – perhaps reviewing as go e.g. logging articles without photos etc.
- Have enjoyed being treated appropriately – rather than like primary school pupils
- Project works best if negotiated between partners
- 10 is ok size
- Finish with a session of talks to each other about a topic related to the post office
- Simple database so although tentative to start with got going ell quickly. Programme allows searches with in notes field so very flexible

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Comment: Subsequent discussions with U3A suggested 8 might be a better number given the BPMA's space limitations...

Learning from the Project

- The IT has been a bit of an issue – staff have been good sorting it out – making computers talk to each other and the web
- Haven't had a tour of the museum and archive
- Not as many photos to start with as thought there would be
- Issues with working in the archive room as need to talk to their working partner and this does not fit when it is busy with other users
- Issues with other archive staff so need to get them all on board at start of project – found some opposition
- Small and warm
- Number of computers available
- IT issues – logging in and web access

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Successes:

- Laura there to support us
- Linda is competent
- Support when developing new skills
- Enthusiasm
- Materials, resources to support the project

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Learning by Participants

Generic Learning Outcome	Feedback
Enjoyment, Inspiration and creativity	<p><i>A lack of confidence to start with (relating to power point)</i></p> <p><i>Brilliant</i></p> <p><i>You've done it</i></p> <p><i>Thank you</i></p> <p><i>Enjoyed it so far yes</i></p> <p><i>Interesting</i></p> <p><i>A lot of material</i></p> <p><i>Laura has been a rock</i></p> <p>When talking to U3A leader she said they were just feeling their way with the project at present – (a pilot here, although she has done similar things elsewhere) – <i>it is always like this when you start a new project – you have to learn about how they do things – it is always different</i></p> <p><u>Observations</u> The participants are certainly all confident and able to talk and discuss issues.</p> <p>Very excited when find another set of photos – they are very thorough in their documentation</p> <p><i>You get side tracked by adverts and things ...</i></p> <p>Feedback from the survey showed that they enjoyed <i>Looking at magazines and photos, making friends</i> and they wanted more chance to share their learning as they worked through the project</p>
Knowledge	<p>Survey form listed learning from one participant:</p> <p><i>My interest in letter writing – snail mail = delivery in general respect for postman/women</i></p> <p><i>Into history</i></p> <p><i>I learnt</i></p> <p><i>Lots! Areas I'm continuing to explore _ Anthony Trollope and his mother as writers</i></p> <p><i>Post boxes – their history of postal service, manufacture, women as workers etc</i></p>
Skills	<p>Computer skills including cataloguing, power point.</p> <p>Cataloguing archive material</p>
Attitudes	
BPMA – learning about	See knowledge
Future intentions	<p>Presentation session held in January where each participant gave a short talk using power point where appropriate on their chosen theme.</p>

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3.4 Partnerships

Feedback from both staff and partners suggests that key successes were

Successes were:

- **interaction and engagement with the children** involved in the project went very well
- *range of young people taking part*
- **new relationships** with groups such as Holborn Community Association, U3A

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- *I think that the partnership works very well. The team I was working with from the BPMA was dynamic and responsive*
- *I think this partnership has worked really well, as mentioned above, and the outcomes (e.g. the hundreds of photos we have of the activities, the artwork produced, the touring display, not to mention the [hopefully] satisfied families that took part) will be very useful for both us and them in terms of raising awareness of and publicising who we are and what we do.*
- Running sessions in holidays worked well *Holborn Community Association keen to work with us in holiday times again.*
- The **creative ideas**, planning and delivery at Swindon were good – *I was really impressed at the number and variety of different activities they developed in such a short period of time, and the way that each of the session themes linked together in a logical way that were brought together in the final photo-shoot.*
 - *She (Sheena) coped amazingly well, though (with short time frame, unclear objectives etc), and didn't seem to be too put off by the experience – so I'd be very happy to work with her again in the future, and hope to do so!*
- *Arts and crafts activities seem to be a very good way for families to access and learn from our collections – especially the more visual elements, such as the photos or stamps.*
- *The photographic element – taking as many pictures as possible has given us a great **visual record of the project**, and the images are a great resource to use in the future.*
- *Using a variety of external venues for the sessions seems to be a good approach for making new contacts in a new area, and also helps to raise local awareness of the BPMA and our A&L work.*

Aspects that were highlighted for improvement included:

- The need to **limit the age range** to make sure that the planned programme was successful. The need for **layered activities**, *that is, a base activity that children could drop in and out of while more focused activities ran in parallel. Whilst this was a challenge, I thought the strategy worked very well in allowing a more individualised approach with all the children, at different times.*
- Lack of understanding of how much space the U3A group would need and how often
- Negotiation of certain projects eg U3A to **make sure aims clear and communication strategies in place**. Who manages and numbers possible need to be established before hand and the whole staff aware of project etc. All need to buy in.
- Making sure clarity when making agreements with freelancers e.g. creative element.
- **Logistical issues** of *transporting material to and from Bedford House – a real struggle at times even with a taxi as the activity room was upstairs and we had several cases/bags etc, including our own laptop, printer etc. – possibly in future agree to use IT on site if available or less technical activities*
- **Clarity of publicity** – who for, when attend, how often etc and especially on the need for parents to stay with younger children unless appropriate staff available
- **Project initiation and planning** – when I joined the BPMA, there was a distinct 'hole' in the project, found between the application for funding being accepted and the designated delivery phases. The planning and development stages were thus very rushed, and actions like building a relationship with 'new' project partners (e.g. Artsite), involving them in planning, considering the audiences and recruiting them (for the outreach sessions especially) were done more hurriedly than I (and the partners) would have liked.
- Much **more communication/consultation** needs to be carried out with partners and/or participants prior to delivery (especially of learning activities) in future.

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3.5 Summary of findings according to key questions (see introduction)

The table below provides a summary of all three projects in terms of the key objectives and their success.

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Topic	
<p>Outreach: Bedford House Community Centre, London</p> <p><u>Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you and your family enjoyed the Picture Post project? What did you like best? 	<p>The children that attended clearly enjoyed themselves:</p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed it – I've just finished my pictures. I didn't want to do another one so I am reading my book. I enjoyed doing the photo activity the most.</i></p> <p><i>The photos show real people – you can find out about them. I like history but we are doing pre-history at school at the moment and that is not so interesting.</i></p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed it lots – 10 out of 10. I like doing craft. I didn't like the photos – it was boring. That is my photo.</i></p> <p><i>I have enjoyed myself – I like doing crafts. (shows me her picture with postal scene but also some bombs!). I enjoy talking to everyone. I liked dressing up but I like the crafts better.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any ways it could be improved? 	<p>There are a small number of suggestions for improvement with a wider range of activities and more on the postal history. Older children enjoyed learning about the past especially dressing up in the costume and looking at the photos. If there were new activities they would come again</p> <p><i>I don't know how to improve it – I have enjoyed myself</i></p> <p><i>We found out about the postal service more last time. I think they should have told us more today</i></p> <p><i>We need some different activities to do – it's always crafts.</i></p> <p><i>We did some letter puzzles at school – we could do them here too. I would come again if there were more new things to do.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you find out about the collections of the BPMA? What did you find out about local postal history? 	<p><i>At the end we can make a project of everything we have learnt. I've found out about clothes and what they wore but that's it.</i></p> <p><i>The photos show real people – you can find out about them. I like history</i></p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you used the Flickr material at all? Would you be interested in attending another event at the BPMA in the future? <p>Other key outcomes can be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking photos Developing photographic skills Creative responses Team work Communication skills 	<p>There appeared to be little use of Flickr Skills developed did not include taking photos but focused on creative art work and communication</p> <p>Some continued to come to all the sessions. One child when asked said she would come again if there were different activities to do.</p> <p>Observations showed that children did develop creative skills – at their own individual level, creating interesting art works. Some worked with others while whilst other children preferred to work alone, but all communicated with each other about what they were doing. The photography session was lead by the photographer with the children dressing up and thus no photographic skills were developed.</p>
<p>Outreach: Swindon</p> <p><u>Key questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you and your family enjoyed the Picture Post project? What did you like best? <p>• Are there any ways it</p>	<p><u>All enjoyed the project/What did you like best?</u></p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed it – particularly the tour of the postal centre. I used to work there.</i></p> <p><i>I have enjoyed myself very much. I enjoyed the first week especially – the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot. Really interesting. The second week was good too – the trip around the sorting office – good too.</i></p> <p><i>Yes the children have enjoyed it too – they are always happy. They go off at their own tangent (one 5 years old).</i></p> <p><i>Yes similar feelings – I enjoyed the trip and the history – I agree the robots not so good but its been really good overall. My daughter – it’s been something to look forward to – a project on a Saturday – we go into town afterwards for a treat too. I am a single mum so money is tight to so this is really good.</i></p> <p><i>We have all come back every week so clearly successful (we saw it in a newspaper)</i></p> <p><i>Yes I enjoyed it. Taking photos at the sorting office was best. Didn’t want to do it as the Post Office doesn’t sound interesting but Sheena and my Mum said to try it first and I have stayed.</i></p> <p><i>I have enjoyed it very much – the trip round the sorting office was really interesting</i></p> <p><i>I haven’t had to drag them here every week ...so clearly successful .. They’re really enjoying seeing their work on computer and Flickr – they can show their friends and family</i></p>

<p>could be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you find out about the collections of the BPMA ? • What did you find out about local postal history? <p>Other key outcomes can be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking photos • Developing photographic skills • Creative responses • Team work • Communication skills 	<p><i>I haven't enjoyed the future stuff so much – the robots – not so interesting</i></p> <p><i>We found out by chance as we dropped into the Platform youth centre on its first Saturday open and saw this advertised.</i></p> <p><i>I used to work there. It was different but also the same but much more mechanised there now. Some of the people are the same . I even remembered some of the names. The machines seem to do most of the work now though.</i></p> <p><i>the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot</i></p> <p><i>I enjoyed doing the collages – I was very proud of what I achieved – it is good to do something creative</i></p> <p><i>I liked taking photos – I don't have a camera.</i></p> <p><i>It has been good for the girls to do something creative and do what they want , use their own ideas and imagination. It is not so easy to be so flexible at school.</i></p> <p>Observations show that all members of the group enjoyed taking photos and developing a different view point of the world through this process. Their art work was enthusiastically enjoyed and provided opportunity for individual responses. The children enjoyed art and writing and model making for the future postal service but adults were less enthusiastic here. They enjoyed their creative collages and writing letters most. Communication skills for younger participants were developed, whilst teamwork worked especially well within families.</p>
<p>U3A project <u>Key questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the cataloguing project went? (did you enjoy it?) • What went well? • Have you learnt about the BPMA and its collections (prompt on what)? • Have you developed any new skills? 	<p>Enjoyment</p> <p><i>Enjoyed it so far yes</i></p> <p><i>Interesting</i></p> <p><i>you get side tracked by adverts and things ..”</i></p> <p><i>Lots! Areas I'm continuing to explore _ Anthony Trollope and his mother as writers</i></p> <p><i>Post boxes – their history of postal service, manufacture, women as workers etc ... My interest in letter writing – snail mail = delivery in general respect for postman/women</i></p> <p><i>A lack of confidence to start with ..(relating to power point)</i> <i>I'm scared</i></p> <p><i>Helper I've done this before – (shows them) you try</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you made new friends, kept in contact with them? • What issues were there? <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT skills development • Cataloguing skills • How archive works 	<p><i>Brilliant</i> <i>Helper You have to check it first</i> <i>How do I move a whole picture</i> <i>Helper You've done it</i> <i>Thank you</i></p> <p>Making friends <i>Looking at magazines and photos, making friends</i></p> <p>Most of the issues were in setting the project up. When talking to U3A leader she said they were just feeling their way with the project at present– <i>it is always like this when you start a new project – you have to learn about how they do things – it is always different.</i> Also some participants felt that there should be <i>less concentration on final presentation – more chance to talk about what learning as we go along</i></p> <p>There were also issues with the communication with other staff at the BPMA: <i>Problems with U3A relationship mainly down to communication and lack of clarity over what would happen on each visit. I found this very frustrating as I was aware the group may have felt unwelcome/a nuisance which should not have been the case.</i></p> <p>Observations show that all participants developed IT skills especially those less familiar with computers. Their cataloguing skills developed and although slow they were thorough and consistent. They certainly understood what they were doing and why but did mention that they had not been on a tour of the archives which may well have given them a better context to put their work in.</p>
<p>Partnerships <u>Key questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How successful do you feel the project was? • What worked best? 	<p>Partnerships were good and have initiated relationships that can be continued if time is put in to develop them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think this partnership has worked really well, as mentioned above, and the outcomes (e.g. the hundreds of photos we have of the activities, the artwork produced, the touring display, not to mention the [hopefully] satisfied families that took part) will be very useful for both us and them in terms of raising awareness of and publicising who we are and what we do.</i> • Running sessions in holidays worked well <i>Holborn Community Association keen to work</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues were there? 	<p><i>with us in holiday times again.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creative ideas, planning and delivery at Swindon were good – <i>I was really impressed at the number and variety of different activities they developed in such a short period of time, and the way that each of the session themes linked together in a logical way that were brought together in the final photo-shoot.</i> • <i>Using a variety of external venues for the sessions seems to be a good approach for making new contacts in a new area, and also helps to raise local awareness of the BPMA and our A&L work.</i> <p>Of particular importance are the partnerships with Artsite in Swindon and the Holborn Community Centre.</p> <p>Issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Negotiation</u> at beginning of project with U3A to make sure aims clear and communication strategies in place. Who manages and numbers possible need to be established before hand and the whole staff aware of project etc. All need to buy in. • Making sure clarity when making agreements with freelancers e.g. creative element. • Logistical issues of <i>transporting material to and from Bedford House – a real struggle at times even with a taxi as the activity room was upstairs and we had several cases/bags etc., including our own laptop, printer etc – possibly in future agree to use IT on site if available or less technical activities</i> • Clarity of publicity – who for, when attend, how often etc and especially on the need for parents to stay with younger children unless appropriate staff available • Project initiation and planning – when I joined the BPMA, there was a distinct ‘hole’ in the project, found between the application for funding being accepted and the designated delivery phases. The planning and development stages were thus very rushed, and actions like building a relationship with ‘new’ project partners (e.g. Artsite), involving them in planning, considering the audiences and recruiting them (for the outreach sessions especially) were done more hurriedly than I (and the partners) would have liked. • Much more communication/consultation needs to be carried out with partners and/or participants prior to delivery (especially of learning activities) in future.
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4.0 Achieving Objectives

Outlining benefits (e.g. Generic Learning and/or Social Outcomes) gained by the participants

Participants were all keen to state that their experiences had been positive. Learning (using GLOs) shows that they gained in all areas (as seen in summary tables in section 3) showing a breadth of learning for adults and children. Learning was particularly focused on skills development and on learning about the postal service and its history.

Generic Learning Outcome	Children's responses
Enjoyment, Inspiration and creativity	<p>Very creative activity</p> <p><i>I haven't had to drag them here every week, so clearly successful"</i></p> <p><i>They're really enjoying seeing their work on computer and Flickr – they can show their friends and family.</i></p> <p><i>It has been really good for my friend's daughter too – she has responded well and told her mum all about it. Yes the children have enjoyed it too – they are always happy. They go off at their own tangent (one child 5 years old)</i></p> <p>Yes – and also the social aspects important</p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed it – particularly the tour of the postal centre</i></p> <p>Feedback from the survey showed that they enjoyed <i>Looking at magazines and photos, making friends</i> and they wanted more chance to share their learning as they worked through the project</p>
Knowledge	<p>History of post – costume, photos</p> <p>Saw postal material, costume</p> <p>Enjoyed learning about the history of the postal service and seeing archives etc. <i>the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot</i></p> <p>Tour of sorting office <i>– the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot</i></p> <p><i>My interest in letter writing – snail mail = delivery in general respect for postman/women</i></p> <p><i>Into history</i></p> <p><i>I learnt Lots</i></p>
Skills	<p>Parcel making</p> <p>Letters/writing</p> <p>Creating scenes with collage, 3-D and colour</p> <p>Cutting and basic skills for younger children</p> <p>Collage work, taking photos, craft work, writing, reading, model</p>

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	<p>making</p> <p><i>Yes I enjoyed it. Taking photos at the sorting office was best. I didn't want to do it as the Post Office doesn't sound interesting but Sheena and my Mum said to try it first and I have stayed.</i></p> <p><i>Yes I have enjoyed – especially the trip around the post room – it was best. I liked taking photos – I don't have a camera.</i></p> <p><i>It has been good for the girls to do something creative and do what they want, use their own ideas and imagination. It is not so easy to be so flexible at school.</i></p> <p>Computer skills including cataloguing, power point. Cataloguing archive material</p>
Attitudes	Found Postal History more interesting than they had first thought
BPMA – learning about	Saw photos, costume, wrapping parcels etc to learn about the postal service
Future intentions	<p>Event when the banner display is ready – hopefully a leaflet too – launch – possibly at the Platform but have a number of venues to tour</p> <p>Presentation session where each participant gave a short talk using power point where appropriate on their chosen theme.</p>

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Observations also show that participants were involved in their activities at a deeper level. The table below shows the range of engagement and associated activity.

Behaviour	Commonly seen
Initiation behaviour including doing the activity, spending time watching others, gathering information on how to do	<p>All engaged in the activity (at least initially – some younger children less able to be on task at the community centre). Adults asked lots of questions Participants watching others and some asking questions about what to do Everyone enjoying and excited Enthusiasm The cataloguers share experiences and ask questions of each other and some watch before starting</p>
Transition behaviours: repeating activity, expressing positive emotion	<p>Activity generally continued through out the session Much positive conversation about the activity Some relate activity to their own lives eg looking for their own part of town in the sorting boxes Generally confident of what doing U3A developing computer skills</p>
Breakthrough behaviours: referring to past experiences while engaging in activity,	Sharing their experiences and expressing interest and surprise

seeking and sharing information, testing , comparing, using information	Creative outputs took risks, tried new approaches Compared the results A lot of communication about what they are doing and what their pictures are about (younger children less reflective) Sharing experiences and information with each other and using information to continue with their project – using new skills to catalogue effectively
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Key themes or topics of interest to the project participants were as follows:

Topics or approaches that particularly interested participants were:

- The tour of the sorting office – participants were surprised how interesting this was
- Looking at the photos and articles of the postal service in the past

Activities that most appealed:

- Using a camera to look differently at the postal centre
- Creating art work – especially the collage work, model making
- Trying on costume
- Writing work – eg writing telegrams, letters etc

Raised Profile Communication of a Designated collection's unique story to new audiences in two regions and Commitment to involving Swindon/South West community and facilitate wider public access and engagement

A raised awareness of the BPMA has certainly occurred in those adults attending. The children have found out more about the postal service today and in the past too although may find this harder to link to a particular museum or archive as the workshops were not at the BPMA. Hopefully the exhibitions and leaflets will continue to widen this awareness. Of equal importance is the increased awareness amongst partners as this will hopefully have a longer term impact.

The history of the postal service was communicated effectively using a range of different approaches depending on audience needs. Children learnt about the postal service in more general terms and enjoyed looking at the photos and trying on the costume. Adults found the history interesting and some were genuinely surprised by this (Swindon). The U3A group enjoyed the work with the archives whilst adults in the family sessions in Swindon enjoyed learning about the past but also looking around the sorting office as it is today. They helped engage their children too.

Partnerships have certainly been initiated. It will be important these are continued. Feedback from staff and partners suggests:

- New partnerships were generally successful despite some teething problems,
- These need maintaining and developing,
- Work with U3A could extend the cataloguing,
- The Holborn [Community Association](#) offers opportunity to reach a wide range of audiences,
- Creative work with *Artsite* perhaps with young people or those with learning difficulties would certainly continue a strong partnership in Swindon.

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Mechanisms might include:

- Continued communication about the project in general
- Continuing display of panels, leaflets etc
- Consultation on new projects and best practice
- New projects in the future

4.1 Conclusions: Suggesting ways that the BPMA can build on the DDF project

The pilot sessions were generally very successful with a wide range of outcomes for participants, developing greater knowledge and understanding of the postal service and its history while developing skills in cataloguing, IT or creativity. Participants generally immersed themselves in the sessions and enthused about their experience. The session highlighted a number of key areas for improvement but the development of new partnerships has been a great success and it is hoped these can be built on. Promotion of these projects through displays, leaflets, [Flickr](#) etc. will continue to develop a wider profile

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Recommendations:

- Planning for and taking time to *plan* earlier,
- Improving communication strategies with partners particularly early on to set up agreed objectives,
- Producing publicity to attract wide audience groups and defining key age groups events are aimed at and whether carers need to attend,
- Considering the best use of the BPMA site and the numbers etc. possible for projects there – including assessing space and making sure all staff are on board and informed is essential
- Continuing to develop the partnerships

APPENDIX 1 Evaluation data

The timetable for the project is as follows:

Task	Date
Brief circulated	Friday 1 st Oct 2010
Costed proposals received	Thurs 14 th Oct 2010, by 12 noon
Selected consultants notified	Mon 18 th Oct 2010
On-site meeting with key BPMA staff. Brief refined as necessary.	Weds 20 th Oct 2010, between 11am-5pm
Contract issued	Fri 22 nd Oct 2010
U3A research visits (7 in total)	21st Sep to 7th Dec 2010
Swindon outreach sessions (4 in total)	6th, 13th, 20th, 27th Nov 2010
London outreach sessions (4 in total)	9th, 16th, 25th, 27th Oct 2010
Production of touring displays	Nov 2010 to Jan 2011
Public space tour of above displays	Jan to Feb 2011
Draft evaluation report to BPMA for comments	Fri Jan 28 th 2011
Final evaluation report submitted	Tues Feb 8 th 2011

LONDON OUTREACH PROJECT

Holborn Community Centre

Session 25th October

Observations of children attending session

At start of session 9 children (2 boys, 5 girls) – some others came later, including older boys (10). Youngest is four years old – too young to really appreciate point of activity but ably gets on with activities. Mother does not support her – need to provide guidance for parents. Session set up and explained to the group – some have been to previous sessions and some not so difficult to find right balance of information (some treat as drop in rather than a full set of sessions that interlink). One girl who had been before did tell me all about the post collections they had seen last time.

They worked in groups on different activities, rotating round: dressing up and being part of a photo, and creative activities (looking at parcels and post boxes). There is much enthusiasm and activity.

Interviews:

Mother of 4 year old:

This is a great community centre – always does lots of things – there is not much else on at half term so we have come here – sometimes we go to Coram Fields too. I thought this looked interesting – it is good to learn things by doing something – learning skills and it will be good to see her work on display. This is much better than playing so we will see how it goes for her

Young girl:

Yes I have enjoyed it – I've just finished my pictures. I didn't want to do another one so I am reading my book. I enjoyed doing the photo activity the most – we found out about the postal service more last time. I think they should have told us more today – like they did last time. We need some different activities to do – it's always crafts. The photos show real people – you can find out about them. I like history but we are doing pre-history at school at the moment and that is not so interesting. I like Maths best. We did some letter puzzles at school – we could do them here too. I would come again if there were more new things to do.

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2 girls

Yes I have enjoyed it lots – 10 out of 10. I like doing craft. I didn't like the photos – it was boring. That is my photo. We are now making cakes to put in our kitchen (off task) . I asked about the post in the past but they didn't respond.

Interview with older girl:

I don't know how to improve it – I have enjoyed myself – I like doing crafts. (shows me her picture with postal scene but also some bombs!). I enjoy talking to everyone. I liked dressing up but I like the crafts better. At the end we can make a project of everything we have learnt. I've found out about clothes and what they wore but that's it.

2 boys (11 and 8):

They are enjoying doing the craft – *it is sick* (meaning it is good). They also thought that the photographs were *sick*. *I like being artistic*. They are though less focused than many and have not finished their pictures and have stopped.

2 younger girls:

Yes we are really enjoying the craft especially the play-dough

Interview with Director of the centre:

We have about 1000 people through a week – coming to our activities. 56% have social housing needs and so many of the children also have parenting issues. Many of our events are therefore free so there is wide access for the activities. The centre is open to parents 6 days a week. We are getting a lift to improve access. I hadn't heard of the postal museum before – this is a new venture. It is really exciting. We are keen to keep working with them (interview interrupted and she goes).

Alison – BPMA staff:

This is the most frantic session we have had. The younger ones need a lot of attention. Less parents are staying – perhaps because it is half term. They seem to be enjoying themselves – I just let them be creative if they are enjoying themselves (even if off task).

Laura: - BPMA staff

It is difficult to repeat the background detail on postal history as there are some who have been before and some new children. We have had staff from the Community centre sit in before but we are on our own this time – this is an issue with a 4 year old being left by her mum

Observation summary

Initiation behaviour including doing the activity, spending time watching others, gathering information on how to do	Excited, lively and chatty Not necessarily listening to the instructions etc Some difficult words in introduction. Interact with leaders well
Transition behaviours: repeating activity, expressing positive emotion	Not entirely clear about what doing but get help as they go Creative ideas for their craft ideas They are not entirely clear about the purpose of the scene photographs where they are dressing up. Takes a little long to set up so sitting in costume for a while waiting. Perhaps they could take the photos Some working with play do but off task
Breakthrough behaviours: referring to past experiences while engaging in activity, seeking and sharing information, testing, comparing, using information	Some running out of enthusiasm Because of wide age range difficult to provide extra information and background Lots of laughter and show their work to others. No real context to place them in if not been before. Those who attended yesterday have a context of the history of

	the post etc A lot of communication about what they are doing and what their pictures are about. Asking practical questions rather than reflective
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Generic Learning Outcomes

Generic Learning Outcome	Children
Enjoyment, Inspiration and creativity	Yes Very creative
Knowledge	History of post – costume, photos – those who attended the previous session knew quite a lot. Those who had only attended this one had very little context for the activities.
Skills	Craft work, taking photos. Skills developed: Parcel making Letters/writing Creating scenes with collage, 3-D and colour Cutting and basic skills for younger children
Attitudes	
BPMA – learning about	Saw photos, costume, wrapping parcels etc to learn about the postal service
Future intentions	

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Strengths:

- Great partnership with access to a wide range of families – this needs maintaining. Catherine the Director has asked for a meeting to follow up after the half term. Think of new activities to link in to different audiences – eg story times, writing activities – eg rap, designing post boxes etc
- Good activities appropriate for wide range of children including boys
- Enjoy dressing up and acting – some children acted out post work on a train.

Issues

- Age range needs to make sure younger children are either excluded or attend with parents
- Think through how to run a session with both regular attendees and drop ins
- Photo activity not so successful – a lot of sitting around and not creative for the children – just the photographer – might work better if children take the photos!
 - I'm getting bored
 - I'm a prisoner
 - Singing a rap song while waiting

- Some finish much earlier than others – short fill in activities might be useful
- High staff ration needed if creative work is truly relevant and stretching for each child and also for any behaviour issues that need sorting with older children
- Needed to promote Flickr to the grownups more so they look at it later

SWINDON OUTREACH PROJECT

Session 2 at the

Postal Centre: Rowland Hill Road, SWINDON

Outreach session for families

Participants 11

Before looking around the postal centre the session was introduced and then afterwards there were activities to do including looking at the collections, making their own telegrams and writing letters to post. We watched a video of Publicity material made by the Post Office in the mid 20th century. There were a range of sources to support different interests and ages and thus there were also books and colouring activities for young children.

The tour was really interesting and all enjoyed it. It was made especially successful with everyone having cameras to take photos – with guidance on how to take interesting views and angles. The results put up on the web were excellent and very creative.

Strengths

- Families have all returned although some were late. This shows commitment and enjoyment

Issues

- Finding the location, travel to get there – one family had to use a taxi (funded?)
- Recruitment in the time scale was a challenge but did provide opportunity to a number of families. In the future more focus needs to be made on the approaches used to attract key audiences and consideration needs to be made as to the maximum numbers and to the younger age limit
- Considering the makeup of the sessions so that there is a variety of activity with limited amounts of talking to when children are young
- Technology as always seems to let one down when it worked before they arrived. There wasn't a link for the Sony camera
- Some families couldn't book it as consecutive Saturdays
- Difficulty in balancing grown up discussion and activities for children – e.g. platform session

Session 4 (last) at Platform Youth Centre in Swindon

Last week the group built robots (postal service of the future) they didn't finish these so that if part of today's session. The organisers also want to take photos of these and also some scenes with the participants dressed up in postal dress from the ages. Andy Richmond has brought costume from the museum.

The space that is booked for today is an old train – well resourced with computers etc – but a little thin making moving about a bit crowded but lots of spaces for groups to work together.

Feedback from family groups

From gentleman (ex-postman)

Yes I have enjoyed it – particularly the tour of the postal centre. I used to work there. It was different but also the same but much more mechanised there now. Some of the people are the

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same . I even remembered some of the names. The machines seem to do most of the work now though.

I came because I know Sally (one of the leaders) . I am now looking at these photos (of postman in the past) and finding out about scene setting in photographs (compared with for example Rembrandt style paintings)

Mother One

I have enjoyed myself very much. I enjoyed the first week especially – the old photos and the history and everything – I learnt a lot. Really interesting. The second week was good too – the trip around the sorting office – good too.

Yes the children have enjoyed it too – they are always happy. They go off at their own tangent (one 5 years old). I haven't enjoyed the future stuff so much – the robots – not so interesting. I enjoyed doing the collages – I was very proud of what I achieved – it is good to do something creative.

Mother 2

Yes similar feelings – I enjoyed the trip and the history – I agree the robots not so good but its been really good overall. My daughter – it's been something to look forward to – a project on a Saturday – we go into town afterwards for a treat too. I am a single mum so money is tight so this is really good.

We have all come back every week so clearly successful .. we saw it in a newspaper.

Girl aged 13

Yes I enjoyed it. Taking photos at the sorting office was best. Didn't want to do it as the Post Office doesn't sound interesting but Sheena and my Mum said to try it first and I have stayed.

Girl (7)

Yes I have enjoyed – especially the trip around the post room – it was best. I liked taking photos – I don't have a camera.

Family 3 – Boy is dressed up but playing on the computer. Girls making lots of things out of foil for the modern robot – and to dress up, and accompany it. Mother is a classroom assistant and has brought her children and a friend's daughter who has special needs. I have enjoyed it very much – the trip round the sorting office was really interesting. It has been good for the girls to do something creative and do what they want , use their own ideas and imagination. It is not so easy to be so flexible at school. (There may be some way of supporting the needs of the boy – perhaps computer design – encourage boys to be creative).

I haven't had to drag them here every week ..so clearly successful. They're really enjoying seeing their work on computer and Flickr – they can show their friends and family.

We found out by chance as we dropped into the Platform youth centre on its first Saturday open and saw this advertised. It has been really good for my friend's daughter too – she has responded well and told her mum all about it.

Possible issues

- Space at the platform lovely and well resourced – train a bit tight for movement
- IT here very good
- Clarity of directions at beginning difficult when people come at different times and have different needs!
- Very young children
- Took ages to take the scene photos
- Numbers of people – what is the maximum
- Skilled leader needed (Sheena really good and experienced)
- Needs mums to help their children be creative – a family activity

Learning

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Generic Learning Outcome	Children	Adults
Enjoyment, Inspiration and creativity	Yes Very creative activity eg robot making And thinking about the future of the postal system	Yes – and also the social aspects important
Knowledge	History of post – costume, writing letters and telegrams, stamps etc	About scene setting in art and photos observed History of postal service Old photos etc Tour of sorting office
Skills	Collage work, taking photos, craft work, writing, reading, model making	Photography and collage mentioned
Attitudes	Found learning about the postal service more interesting than they thought it would be	Learnt something, enjoyed and social
BPMA – learning about	Saw postal material, costume, enjoyed sending telegrams and letters, wrapping parcels etc	Enjoyed learning about the history of the postal service and seeing archives etc. Good trip around the sorting office
Future intentions	Will be sending and receiving material through the post – from Sheena	Possible event when the banner display is ready – hopefully a leaflet too – launch – possibly at the Platform but have a number of venues to tour

U3A Research Group LONDON
Observations of U3A group
Session 9th November 2010
Cataloguing – meet at lunch time to discuss issues etc

Observation summary

Initiation behaviour including doing the activity, spending time watching others, gathering information on how to do	Do cataloguing successfully but have already had a number of cataloguing sessions Share experience and ask questions between partners and in the group Some watch before starting to check approach
Transition behaviours: repeating activity, expressing positive emotion	Cataloguing for a number of sessions Interested in articles and photos Generally confident of what doing Developing computer skills using power point too for their end of project talks Able to ask if need to
Breakthrough behaviours: referring to past experiences while engaging in activity, seeking and sharing information, testing, comparing, using information	Using new skills to develop a catalogue, developing these as they encounter new factors, articles etc Sharing experiences and information with each other and using information to continue with their project

Discussion from participants during their power point training (for their presentation they give on a chosen topic related to the project – this helps make it more interesting and personal) They all do a lot more work on this at home – they don't have to:

A lack of confidence to start with (relating to PowerPoint)

I'm scared

I've done this before – you try

Brilliant

Doesn't help if you have to get a real machine (i.e. connected to the web)

You have to check it first

How do I move a whole picture?

You've done it

Thank you

When asked if they were enjoying the project they said:

Enjoyed it so far .. yes

Interesting

A lot of material

Laura has been a rock

When talking to U3A leader she said they were just feeling their way with the project at present – (a pilot here although she has done similar things elsewhere) – *it is always like this when you start a new project – you have to learn about how they do things – it is always different.*

Observations

The participants are certainly all confident and able to talk and discuss issues. They haven't met before this project as these are advertised to all U3A members.

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Very excited when find another set of photos – they are very thorough in their documentation
They discuss referencing sources; *you get side tracked by adverts and things.*

Issues: the room

- Small and warm
- Number of computers available
- IT issues – logging in and web access

Successes:

- Laura there to support us
- Linda is competent
- Support when developing new skills
- Enthusiasm
- Materials and resources to support the project

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23rd November 2010; group conversation

Last formal session: review of the project with evaluator

Feedback from discussion of what worked well and what improvements need to be made in future

Strengths

- Staff lovely – really good,
- The work is good,
- Found ways of attaching photos and articles from the magazines together,
- Developed working practices as project developed – need to review the key considerations about working practices and processes,
- U3A like the opportunity to learn but also make new friends etc, a challenge, interest and new skills,
- Had good discussion at beginning of project - parameters on what to catalogue and key terms etc – perhaps reviewing as go e.g. logging articles without photos etc,
- Have enjoyed being treated appropriately – rather than like primary school pupils,
- Project works best if negotiated between partners,
- 10 is ok size,
- Finish with a session of talks to each other about a topic related to the post office,
- Simple database so although tentative to start with got going ell quickly. Programme allows searches with in notes field so very flexible.

Issues

- The IT has been a bit of an issue – staff have been good sorting it out – making computers talk to each other and the web,
- Haven't had a tour of the museum and archive,
- Not as many photos to start with as thought there would be,
- Issues with working in the archive room as need to talk to their working partner and this does not fit when it is busy with other users,
- Issues with other archive staff so need to get them all on board at start of project – found some opposition,
- Some felt that there was too great an emphasis on the talks (see feedback forms) they were doing at the end – the U3A leader seemed to focus on these too much. Participants wanted to spend more time on the documentation as they found it interesting.

Kate Pontin 2011

Key behaviours

Behaviour	Commonly seen
Initiation behaviour including doing the activity, spending time watching others, gathering information on how to do	All engaged in the activity. Adults asked lots of questions about the postal centre. Participants watching others taking photos and gathering information about the centre by looking reading etc Everyone excited Enthusiasm for taking photos
Transition behaviours: repeating activity, expressing positive emotion	Photos taken throughout the visit. Much positive conversation about the venue and its activity now and in the past. Relating to their own lives- looking for their own part of town in the sorting boxes
Breakthrough behaviours: referring to past experiences while engaging in activity, seeking and sharing information, testing , comparing, using information	Post man who had worked there referred to what it used to be like. Sharing their experiences and expressing interest and surprise Taking photos of difficult aspects to see how they come out Comparing and showing photos taken Later activities in the classroom used the experience to develop ideas about writing letters, telegrams , families

Feedback from staff and key partners
Dan Salter, Holborn outreach project, photographer

Q1 What aspects of the project went particularly well?

I thought the interaction and engagement with the children involved in the project went very well. Using photography, Images, Modelling materials, costume to create images made the process informative and fun, learning with out it feeling like learning!

Q2 What aspects didn't go so well? How might these be improved in the future?

The varied ages of the groups of children was the biggest challenge and meant that each session had a wide focus, and this required a strategy of having layered activities, that is, a base activity that children could drop in and out of while more focused activities ran in parallel. Whilst this was a challenge, i thought the strategy worked very well in allowing a more individualised approach with all the children, at different times.

Q3 How do you feel the partnership with the BPMA work?

I think that the partnership works very well. The team I was working with from the BPMA was dynamic and responsive. I have worked with many sessions with young people and knowing that even the most carefully conceived plans will almost always need to be adapted in the session.

Laura Dixon, staffQ1 What aspects of the project went particularly well and would, you feel, be appropriate approaches for the future?

Range of young people taking part

New relationships with groups such as Holborn Community Association, U3A

Running London side in half term worked well for attendance – HCA keen to work with us in holiday times again.

Q2 What aspects didn't go so well? How might these be improved in the future?

Issues with U3A side and lack of understanding of how much space the group would need and how often. U3A team leader quite formidable and difficult to negotiate with. See attached sheet.

The photographer we used could have been more hands on – we ideally wanted him to be more of a creative force and I think he struggled a little with this. Need for more clarity when making agreements with freelancers.

Issues with transporting material to and from Bedford House – a real struggle at times even with a taxi as the activity room was upstairs and we had several cases/bags etc, including our own laptop, printer etc – possibly in future agree to use IT on site if available or less technical activities. Also the suitcase for transporting handling collection/uniform is not suitable for carting around – something more hardwearing and with a larger capacity for different sizes of hats, uniforms etc would help to protect the collection and make life easier for the person transporting them.

There was a mixture at the London sessions with some children attending all the sessions but also children at each who attended only once – could have been clearer that the idea was to attend all four sessions. However, it worked quite well in the end despite repeating information for newcomers. More children were reached this way.

Issues with parents leaving children onsite – for 2 of the sessions we had a Bedford House staff member who took a register etc but she wasn't present at the last 2 sessions and I wouldn't advise or want children as young as 4 or 5 being left alone; should have been aware that this was what parents intended and then could have made clear that parents, or at least a selection of parents should have stayed onsite, especially with very young children.

Q3 How do you feel the partnerships worked?

Problems with U3A relationship mainly down to communication and lack of clarity over what would happen on each visit. I found this very frustrating as I was aware the group may have felt unwelcome/a nuisance which should not have been the case. I think it was difficult that several people had been involved before the group was handed over to me, and also a mistake that me rather than someone based in the Archive/Search Room was managing the group – someone from there would have made more sense as it was the SR the group worked in and the archive material the group used. In future a smaller group and also a more manageable project would be preferable.

Some communication issues with HCA e.g. in relation to staff members on site and what the families had been told the project would involve but overall good and they are keen to work with us again.

Kate Pontin 2011

Andy RichmondQ1 Things that went particularly well...

The creative ideas, planning and delivery from Sheena and Artsite – I was really impressed at the number and variety of different activities they developed in such a short period of time, and the way that each of the session themes linked together in a logical way that were brought together in the final photo-shoot. It was really good to have a different (i.e. artistic/creative) perspective on how we can make postal history and the postal service relevant to families in a fun and interactive way. Arts and crafts activities seem to be a very good way for families to access and learn from our collections – especially the more visual elements, such as the photos or stamps.

The photographic element – taking as many pictures as possible has given us a great visual record of the project, and the images are a great resource to use in the future.

The relationships with Swindon-ites that we built along the way – particularly with the families, Ian at The Platform and Paul from Royal Mail. Using a variety of external venues for the sessions seems to be a good approach for making new contacts in a new area, and also helps to raise local awareness of the BPMA and our A&L work.

Q2

Project initiation and planning – when I joined the BPMA, there was a distinct ‘hole’ in the project, found between the application for funding being accepted and the designated delivery phases. The planning and development stages were thus very rushed, and actions like building a relationship with ‘new’ project partners (e.g. Artsite), involving them in planning, considering the audiences and recruiting them (for the outreach sessions especially) were done more hurriedly than I (and the partners) would have liked. The end project date being brought forward at the last minute didn’t help, and the fact that this had not been communicated properly to some of the project partners (e.g. Artsite) made matters even worse.

In future, I think we need to do as much of the project planning as we can prior to submitting any detailed applications for funding – clearly thinking through and recording our objectives, and those of the (possible) partners and participants. This particular application was very BPMA focused, in terms of the outcomes of the project. Much more communication/consultation needs to be carried out with partners and/or participants prior to delivery (especially of learning activities) in future.

Q3

Artsite – I think this partnership has worked really well, as mentioned above, and the outcomes (e.g. the hundreds of photos we have of the activities, the artwork produced, the touring display, not to mention the [hopefully] satisfied families that took part) will be very useful for both us and them in terms of raising awareness of and publicising who we are and what we do.

I think Sheena felt a bit overwhelmed by the initial brief, especially given the lack of clear cut objectives, the timescale, and maybe a lack of experience as a freelance educator on her part... not helped the nervous look on my face as I delivered it – partly due to my lack of experience in partnership work, and relative lack of experience as a project manager. She coped amazingly well, though, and didn’t seem to be too put off by the experience – so I’d be very happy to work with her again in the future, and hope to do so!

Feedback from Laura about teething problems from U3A Project

Fortnightly Tuesday 'meeting' is not a meeting but a key part of the project whereby all 10 come in to work in the Search Room; SR not prepared and extra stress on staff	Group now aware that on the meeting days the SR will be set up ready for all 10 to work in pairs. On other days to inform us when they are coming. 3 computers will be available at all times but no more unless we know more people are coming.
IT: not all members of team equally competent with IT and need quite a bit of assistance	After 3 weeks most are now okay with systems. Asked Gav for 2 more mice/keyboards which makes access easier. Printed copies of photos to look through rather than online.
Not following SR rules; sound can get high (although with any group this will be the case)	Barry and rest of team will remind group of need to be quiet/library atmosphere
Not happy about leaving bags in lockers	Explained that this is the case for all visitors and staff
Not letting us know when they are coming in	Have repeatedly requested we are kept u to date via email or phone. Some are doing this.
Not working in pairs therefore not enough computers	Have stressed they must work in pairs as we only have 5 computers for the group.
Final presentation day not agreed: either 15 mins at 3.50pm on 7 Dec or another date in PC in January for one hour (!)	U3A went ahead with proposed date of 7 Dec for presentations before it was confirmed, now need to agree a new date suitable for all.
Nowhere to eat lunch: not allowed in meeting room, if between 1-3 then take up a lot of room in the small Freeling kitchen area.	Have suggested they use the foyer if necessary and advised not to use meeting room for food as part of the office where no staff are allowed to eat.
The impact of the project on other staff vs what we will actually get out of it	While U3A are helping, they are working quite slowly and we are unlikely to have many of the magazines catalogued by the end of the project. Something to bear in mind for future projects.
Unexpected costs: pen drives, extra mice/keyboards, ideally we would provide them with a thank you lunch at some point which I'm sure they would appreciate.	

Feedback from survey forms (1 response)

Question	Feedback
Rate project out of 5	3
What did you enjoy most?	Looking at magazines and photos, making friends
Can you suggest any improvements?	Less concentration on final presentation – more chance to talk about what learning as we go along
Have you found out anything new?	Lots! Areas I'm continuing to explore – Anthony Trollope and his mother as writers Post boxes – their history of postal service, manufacture, women as workers etc
What made you decide to join in?	My interest in letter writing – snail mail = delivery in general respect for postman/women Into history

Demographic details have not been analysed as such a small group and for Swindon many of those participating were personally known to workshop leaders as it had such a short run in time.

Appendix 2 Evaluation Approach

Work Plan

Topic	Tools	Action Required from BPMA
<p>Outreach: Bedford House Community Centre, London Events with families (children 5+) at community centre Have so far gone well Working with photographer using BPMA photos and objects to develop creative outputs for display Photos etc on Flickr and hopefully responses from the families <u>Saira Hassan: Community Centre (also Catherine?)</u> <u>Photographer: Dan Salter</u> <u>Key questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you and your family enjoyed the Picture Post project? • What did you like best? • Are there any ways it could be improved? • What did you find out about the collections of the BPMA ? • What did you find out about local postal history? • Have you used the Flickr material at all? • Would you be interested in attending another event at the BPMA in the future? <p>Other key outcomes can be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking photos • Developing photographic skills • Creative responses • Team work • Communication skills 	<p>Observe Monday 25th October (sorry I can't do Wednesday as already an appointment at 12) KP - form</p> <p>Interview individuals/families informally during the sessions</p> <p>Adult event evaluation form – I will look at this to see if any adaptations needed (KP)</p> <p>Children's form (KP)</p> <p>Postcards to gain some unprompted feedback on what they feel they "got out" of it – question to be developed (KP)</p> <p>Interview by email or phone Dan and Saira after programme finished</p>	<p>Does the programme have a name that participants will recognise?</p> <p>Do you have any blank postcards (or any others not wanted sitting in a cupboard) or shall I get some? I thought this might be an appropriate way to get some feedback on what they felt was their key outcome without prompting about GLOs.</p> <p>Keep any evaluation data you collect for me eg the responses to your initial questions about the BPMA and postal history – I think they were dot sheets Laura?</p>
<p>Outreach: Swindon Being developed with Artsite in Swindon to work with families to develop photographic material for display and Flickr <u>Sheena: Artist for Artsite</u> <u>Key questions (as above):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you and your family enjoyed the Picture Post project? • What did you like best? • Are there any ways it could be improved? • What did you find out about the collections of the BPMA ? • What did you find out about local postal history? • Have you used the Flickr account at all? • Would you be interested in attending another event at the BPMA in the future? <p>Other key outcomes can be observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking photos 	<p>Depending on times attend two sessions – probably 27th November plus one other.</p> <p>Data collection as above with observations, interviews, forms</p> <p>Interview Sheena after programme ended</p>	<p>Undertake initial and end feedback of what they know and feel about postal history</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing photographic skills • Creative responses • Team work <p>Communication skills</p>		
<p>U3A project Cataloguing of photos and staff magazines from the 30s, 40s and 50s Each volunteer has one year each and access to laptops to index articles etc This is a pilot and there has been a few teething problems. Keen to do more in the future so important to know what has worked well and how to improve the approach used. <u>Linda Crook is the U3A co-ordinator</u> <u>Key questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the cataloguing project went? (did you enjoy it?) • What went well? • What issues were there? • Have you made new friends, kept in contact with them? • Have you learnt about the BPMA and its collections (prompt on what)? • Have you developed any new skills? • Would you be interested in doing something like this again in the future? <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT skills development • Cataloguing skills • How archive works 	<p>Observe activity on 23rd November</p> <p>Interview the group (Mini focus group perhaps or as individuals if better approach logistically) for a few minutes at one of the later sessions: 23rd November</p> <p>Adapt the workshop form (KP)</p> <p>Possible use of Postcards to gain some unprompted feedback on what they feel they “got out” of it – question to be developed (KP)</p> <p>Interview via email or phone or on site with Linda – will ask her in person which approach is most practical for her</p>	
<p>Partnerships With the focus on the success of partnerships and best practice for the future interviews with key staff (Andy, Laura and Alison) and partner staff will be undertaken – names above in each outreach section <u>Key questions so far:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How successful do you feel the project was? • What worked best? • What issues were there? (prompt – communication, logistics, audiences) • How might this type of programme be improved? • Are you interested in working with BPMA in future? 		<p>Any other BPMA staff worth interviewing later?</p>

**Key Outcomes for the Learning and Access Components of the Picture Post Project:
Outreach**

Raised public awareness of Royal Mail Archive	Overarching conclusions from outreach evaluation. Key question about BPMA and the collections included
Raised profile of BPMA Designated collection	As above
Communication of Designated collection story	As above
Commitment to involving Swindon	Conclusions from outreach work in Swindon
Partnership between two regions	Key question about Flickr , partnership interviews

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Picture Post: Feedback Form

We like to ensure that our events are enjoyable and interesting. By filling out this questionnaire you will help us achieve this. If you have further comments, please note them on the back of this form.

Please rate today's event on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good)

1	2	3	4	5
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What did you enjoy most about it?	Can you suggest any improvements?

Have you found out anything new today? yes no

Please tell us more

What made you decide to come today?

Is this your first time at a BPMA event? yes no

Do you work for Royal Mail? Yes No Previously

How did you hear about this event?

BPMA website	BPMA Events Guide	Word of mouth	Other (Please specify)
BPMA newsletter	at another event	Search room poster	

Please tell us which age range you are in:

16-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	75+
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Please help us comply with equal opportunities monitoring by circling your ethnicity:

White British	White Other	Other ethnic group	Black Caribbean	Indian	Bangladeshi	Mixed
White Irish	Pakistani	Black African	Black Other	Chinese	Asian Other	Prefer not to say

If you would like to join our mailing list, please leave your name and address here. This information will be detached from the rest of the form.

Name:.....
 Address:.....

Email address:.....

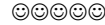
The information you provide on this form will be used to improve our future events and in reporting on our events programme. We may use comments (but not names) for publicity purposes.

Would you like to be contacted about comments made? Y/N

Picture Post: Feedback Form

We need your help to make our projects with children better in the future. Please answer the questions below.

How did the Picture Post event make you feel (please circle)?



What did you enjoy most about it?

What would make it better?

Have you found out anything new?

 yes

 no

Please tell us more

Did you learn how to do something new?

What would you tell your best friend about today?
(Please draw or write)

How old are you?

Thank you

Kate Pontin 2011