

# Get Inspired

Glenn H Morgan

Stamp collectors and lovers of the history of the post are being given a rare opportunity this December to help secure major lottery funding that would enable many of the artefacts currently held by the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) in store at Debden in Essex to be put on permanent display at a new site.

Funding is being sought from the Big Lottery Fund and The National Museum of Science & Industry (NMSI) is in the final round of bidding for a £50 million grant towards the costs of an exciting development and has already successfully raised commercial sponsorship. They will know that this venture is going ahead by this Christmas thanks to a television programme that will seek the public's opinion via telephone voting as to which of six worthy projects should win the grant—which is where you come in, but more of that later after some further background information.

The BPMA collection occupies approximately 1500 square metres of storage and the objects within the collection include circa 50 motor vehicles, 100+ letterboxes, sorting equipment and a range of smaller, but no less fascinating, artefacts. The collection's themes cover important areas of the development of postal services including delivery and transport, sorting and mechanical innovation, street furniture and changes in design and brand. These items are sometimes accessible at Debden, but not on a regular basis.

The Science Museum already uses a 545-acre airfield at Wroughton near Swindon for storage and events. They are currently working on the design and funding for a National Collection Centre (to be known as 'Inspired') for their own material and that of three other national museums at that location and the new museum is scheduled to open in 2010. This unique £64 million world-class attraction will be environmentally friendly with energy provided by renewable sources and a super-insulated structure and a sympathetic design blending in with the surrounding landscape.

The aim is to provide quality surroundings that are environmentally sustainable, coupled with low running costs and further partners, so if BPMA joins NMSI they would be able to store the majority of the museum collection for a guaranteed 125 years with the only future cost being an annual maintenance fee. The NMSI scheme offers BPMA high profile collections access alongside the national collection most closely related to it.

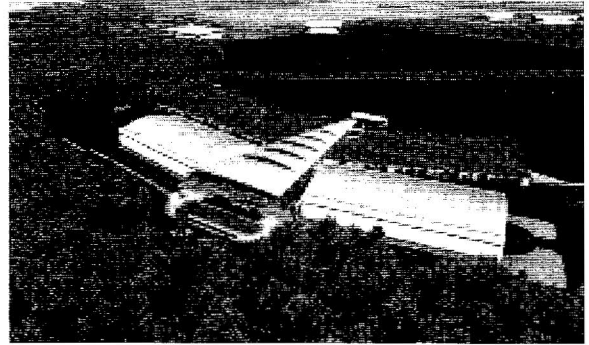
The site at Wroughton will have conservation laboratories, learning facilities and event space that would allow BPMA to meet its access and learning targets for this important area of its work. The collection would still be available for events and exhibitions elsewhere linking with BPMA's outreach ambitions.

The aim is still for BPMA and the National Philatelic Society to relocate its philatelic collections, library and archives from Freeling House to new London premises and discussions continue with Royal Mail. The Wroughton project is separate and additional to the plans for London.

It is hoped that you now have enough information to be able to cast your telephone vote and choose Inspired as your preferred recipient of the Big Lottery Fund's £50 million. Details of the TV station, date and timing of the programme is not currently available, but it is hoped that December's *Stamp Lover* will be able to publish this information—if not, be sure to look at your favourite Christmas TV listings paper.

The opportunity to be part of helping to secure funding of this huge amount of money will not come again and I would ask that you give it your support.

Enquiries: Visit [www.voteinspired.org.uk](http://www.voteinspired.org.uk) or text 'SMS Inspired' to 88833 to sign-up for free updates and the latest news as it happens on this exciting project.



The exterior appearance of the planned building



Children inside the current facility with aircraft in background

*Inspired*  
science museum swindon