

The Postal Museum Visual Story

Welcome to The Postal Museum - this guide will help you on your visit.

There are useful tips to help you **plan your trip**, find out what **activities you can take part in** and what **facilities are available**.

CONTENTS

- 3** Planning your Visit
- 10** Facilities at The Postal Museum
- 17** Mail Rail
- 31** Sorted! The Postal Play Space
- 35** The Postal Museum
- 46** The Archive

Planning your Visit

Visual Story

In this guide you can find out information to help you **plan your visit** to The Postal Museum.

The Postal Museum

The Postal Museum is a museum about **postal history**. It is in **central London**.

It is a place where **people of all ages can go**. There are **activities for children, young people, families and adults**. On your visit you can:

- Ride a **small underground train** called Mail Rail.
- Visit the **permanent exhibition about Mail Rail**.
- Visit **Sorted!** The Postal Play Space.
- Visit the **permanent exhibition about postal history**.
- Visit the **temporary exhibition** that changes every 6 months to a year.
- Visit the **Archive**.
- Visit the **café** in The Postal Museum.
- Visit the **gift shop** in Mail Rail and The Postal Museum.
- Use the **Changing Places Toilet, unisex toilets** and **baby changing** facilities.

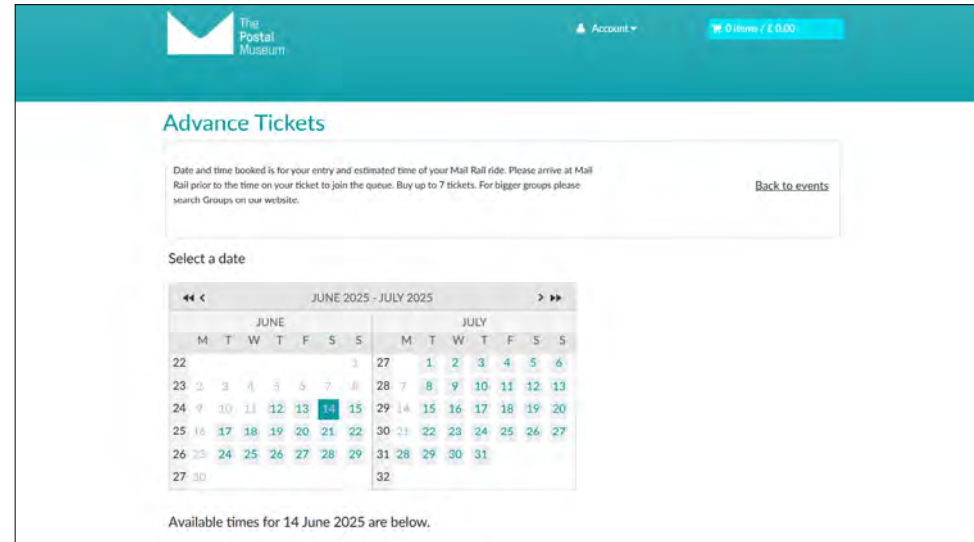
You can **find out more** about these activities and facilities in this **visual story**.



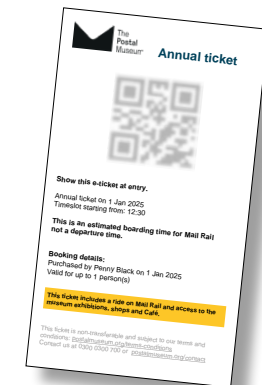
Tickets

Before you visit The Postal Museum, you should **book your tickets in advance**. This will **guarantee entry** and it is **cheaper to book online**. You can show your tickets on your phone or tablet or print them out.

You can buy a ticket on arrival, but **we cannot guarantee entry if the museum is fully booked**. Your ticket will have a half hour timeslot on it - this is your queue entry time for the Mail Rail ride.



Your ticket provides you with **unlimited access to The Postal Museum exhibitions** for one year, and **one ride on Mail Rail** on the date shown on your ticket. If you want to ride on Mail Rail again, you can buy a Mail Rail top-up ticket.



Travelling to The Postal Museum

You can get to the museum by **train, tube, bus, cycling or walking:**

- There are **walking trails** from each of the **nearest train and tube stations**. You can view them at: **postalmuseum.org/visit-us/walking-trails**
- The nearest **London Underground** stations are Farringdon, Russell Square, King's Cross and Chancery Lane.
- The nearest **National Rail** stations are King's Cross, St. Pancras and Farringdon.
- The **17, 19, 38, 46, 55, 63 and 341 bus routes** all stop near the museum.



You may want to **allow more time for your journey** or travel at a time when there might be **less people on public transport**.

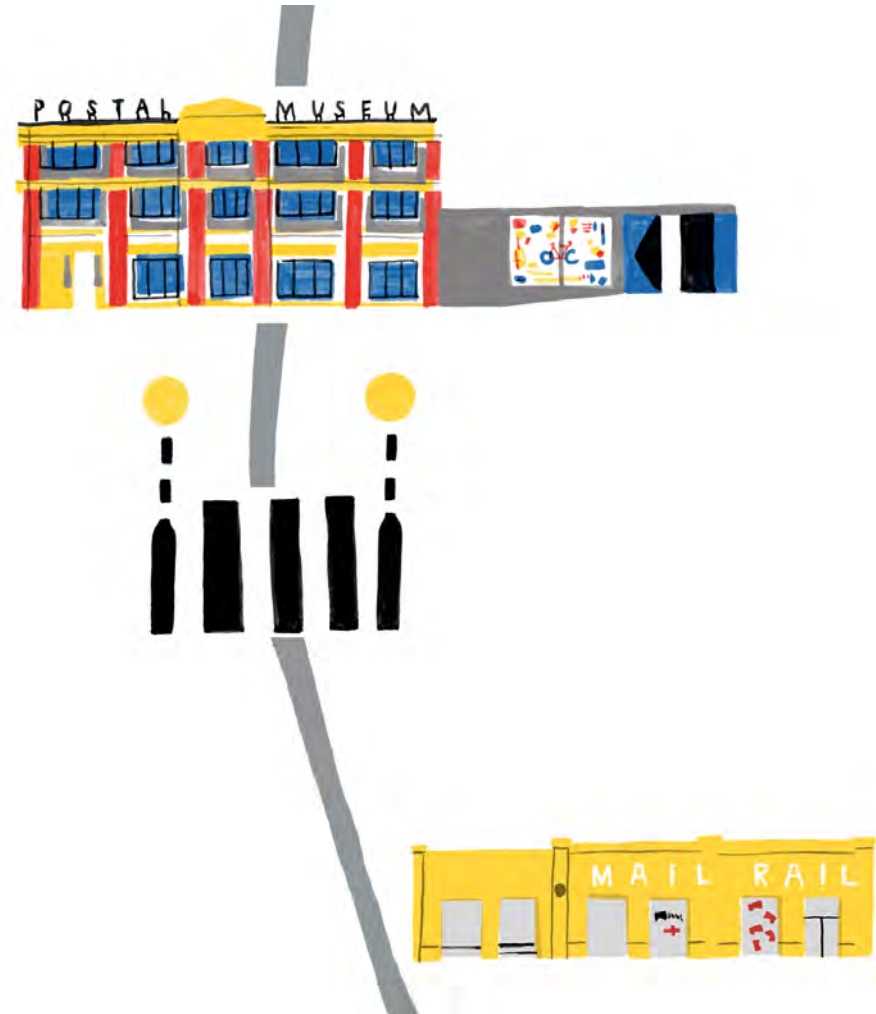
There is **no parking** available at The Postal Museum, our suggestion is using **public transport, walking or using a taxi**. There is a bike shed at the Postal Museum building and there are bike stands close to the museum

When you arrive

The museum is **split over two buildings**. The **Postal Museum building** is on **one side of Phoenix Place** and the **Mail Rail building** is on the **other side of Phoenix Place**. It is a **short walk** between the buildings and you will cross a road using a zebra crossing.

When you **arrive** you should go to the **Mail Rail building first** unless you are early for your timeslot. This is where you will **start your visit**. You can go to The Postal Museum building after visiting Mail Rail.

There are **building works** happening around the museum so it might be **noisy** when you visit.



Staff at The Postal Museum

If you need **some help** during your visit, or you would like to **ask a question**, just speak to our **friendly team of Visitor Hosts wearing purple t-shirts**.

You can **write a message down** and show them if you would prefer.

You might also meet our **security guards wearing black suits**. They will also be **very happy to help you**.



Resources you can borrow

When you come to The Postal Museum you can **borrow some resources** that might help you on your visit.

- **Ear defenders.**
- **Communication Cards.** These are visual cards that show the highlight objects and interactive activities and where to find them.
- **Sensory bags** containing sensory toys, ear defenders and communication cards.



Facilities at The Postal Museum

Visual Story

In this guide you can find out information about the **facilities** you can access at The Postal Museum.

Mail Rail

On your visit to The Postal Museum you will go to the **Mail Rail site**.

There are **activities for children, young people, families and adults** and you can:

- Ride a **small underground train** called Mail Rail.
- Visit the **permanent exhibition** where you can learn about the history of Mail Rail and play with fun interactive exhibits.
- Sometimes there are arts and crafts and other activities taking place in the Mail Rail depot. This would be advertised on the website.
- Visit **Sorted!** The Postal Play Space. You need a separate ticket for Sorted!
- Visit the **gift shop** in Mail Rail.
- Use the **Changing Places Toilet, unisex toilets** and **baby changing** facilities.



You can **find out more** about these activities and facilities in this **visual story**.

Sorted! The Postal Play Space

On your visit to The Postal Museum you can **book tickets to Sorted! The Postal Play Space.**

Sorted! The Postal Play Space is an **indoor play area for children aged 8 and under.**

You can pretend to be a **postal worker** in an **interactive village** with **streets, buildings, trolleys, pulleys, slides and chutes.**

Sorted! is located on the **ground floor of Mail Rail** next to the gift shop. Sessions are **45 minutes** and start every hour, on the hour. You will **need to purchase a separate ticket to visit Sorted!**

You can **find out more** about Sorted! in this **visual story.**



The Postal Museum

On your visit to The Postal Museum you will go to **The Postal Museum site**. There are **activities for children, young people, families and adults** and you can:

- Visit the **permanent exhibition** where you can learn about the history of Royal Mail and the postal service in Britain and play with fun interactive exhibits.
- Visit the **temporary exhibition** that changes every 6 months to a year. The theme of the exhibition will be linked to the post.
- Visit the **Archive** when it is open (Wednesday to Friday and the second Saturday of each month).
- Visit the **Learning Space** if an activity is taking place. This would be advertised on the website.

- Visit the **gift shop** in The Postal Museum.
- Visit the **café** which serves a selection of hot and cold drinks, cakes and sandwiches.
- Use the **unisex toilets** and **baby changing** facilities.

You can **find out more** about these activities and facilities in this **visual story**.



The Archive

On your visit to The Postal Museum you can visit the **Archive**.

The **Archive** is on the **first floor** and can be accessed using the **stairs or lift**.

This room is where you can look at the archives and find out about people who **worked for the Post Office**. You can also find out more about the items cared for by the museum. This includes information about items not on display in the exhibitions.

You can find out more about **stamps** here as well.

A team of **friendly archivists** can **help you and answer any questions** you might have.



Gift shops and café

On your visit to The Postal Museum you can visit the **gift shops** and the **café**.

There are **two gift shops** at The Postal Museum. One is in the **Mail Rail building** and one is in **The Postal Museum building**.

There is a **café** in The Postal Museum building where you can buy a selection of hot and cold drinks, cakes and sandwiches. There are **indoor tables and seating available**.

There is an **outdoor courtyard with additional seating**. You are also welcome to **eat café products here**, as well as your **own food and drink** you bring with you.



Toilet facilities

On your visit to The Postal Museum you can **access a range of toilet facilities**, including:

- **Unisex toilets** in The Postal Museum and Mail Rail.
- **Accessible toilets** in The Postal Museum and Mail Rail.
- **Baby changing units** in The Postal Museum and Mail Rail.
- A **Changing Places toilet** on the lower ground of Mail Rail, accessed by a platform lift. If you need a **RADAR key** please speak to a member of staff.



Mail Rail

Visual Story

In this guide you can find out what your visit to **Mail Rail** will involve.

Where to go when you arrive

The Postal Museum is split over **two buildings**. The Postal Museum site is on **one side of Phoenix Place** and the Mail Rail site is on the **other side of Phoenix Place**.

When you arrive you should **go to the Mail Rail building first**, this is where you will start your visit. You should **aim to arrive** on the **time slot stated on your ticket**.

There are **building works** happening around the museum so it might be **noisy** when you arrive and during your visit.



Where to go when you are in Mail Rail

When you enter you **walk down a ramp**. A member of staff may ask you if you have tickets and what your ticket time is when you enter.

In the **Mail Rail welcome space** there is a **gift shop** and **access to Sorted! The Postal Play Space**.

There are **20 stairs** or alternatively a **platform lift** to the **lower ground floor of Mail Rail**. On the lower ground floor you can access the **ride, exhibition and Changing Places toilet**.

It is **darker** on the lower ground floor and it might **smell of damp and feel colder**. This is because of the **tunnels**.



Mail Rail depot

When you enter the **lower ground floor** of Mail Rail you will arrive into the **Mail Rail depot**. This is a large open space.

In this space there is a **video about the history of the Mail Rail**. There are **metal benches** to sit on.

There are **toilets and a Changing Places toilet**. You will need a **RADAR key** to open the Changing Places toilet door. Please **ask a Visitor Host** if you need to **borrow one**.

You can also see the **Mail Rail ride and the exhibition**. From this space you can **look at the carriages, the tracks and the tunnels** so you can **decide** if it is something you might like to do.



Mail Rail rules and restrictions

There are some **safety restrictions and conditions** that might mean you cannot ride Mail Rail.

If there is an **evacuation** you **must be able to walk for a minimum of 100 metres on uneven surfaces and in the dark.**

If you are **unable** to do this, you **won't be able to board the train.**

You **cannot take your bag or any food or drinks** on the ride but you can take a medical bag - please ask a Visitor Host about this. You can put your belongings in a **lockable cage** next to where you board and it is **looked after** by a Visitor Host.

People **younger than 12** need to ride **with an adult (over 16).**



What to expect when riding Mail Rail

The ride takes around **20 minutes**, including embarking and disembarking.

You might have to **queue** when **boarding** the train. The time on your ticket is a timeslot and not an exact departure time.

The ride takes a **loop** under Mount Pleasant Mail Centre. The tunnels and tracks that the museum trains use are the original ones used by trains that carried mail across London from 1927 to 2003. There is a **horn sound** as each Mail Rail train leaves the station. There are two Mail Rail trains, one is **red** and one is **green**.



What you will experience when riding Mail Rail

The ride can teach you about the **history of Mail Rail**.

It stops at **two platforms** but you **stay seated** in your carriage. You can **watch videos projected** onto the underground platform walls. The videos are of animations and real footage, which represent what **working on Mail Rail** would have been like.

Some of the videos can **move very quickly** and could make you feel **dizzy**.

The ride is **narrated** by a Mail Rail engineer called Ray and a man called Andy. The sound is played through **speakers in the carriage**.



Mail Rail environment

- People who do not like **loud noises, strong smells, darkness, small spaces or flashing lights** might not like the Mail Rail ride.
- The lights are **switched off completely** for one part of the ride. This is a pretend power cut. It will last **30 seconds**.
- The **carriages are small** so it can **feel cramped**.
- It can feel **snug or claustrophobic** as the carriage is small and some of the **tunnels are small**.
- When the Mail Rail carriage canopy closes it can make your **ears feel funny**.
- The ride is **noisy** as it travels through the tunnels. The rails and wheels may make a squeaking or screeching noise on some parts of the ride.
- The tunnels can **smell of damp** and it can smell stronger at specific points of the ride.



Mail Rail safety procedures

The **driver** sits at the front of the train.

Once the train leaves the platform you **cannot get off the ride** until the **experience comes to an end**, except in **emergencies**.

There is an **emergency button** in your carriage if you need to stop the train. The driver will **drive to the next platform** and stop the train and **speak to you** to find out how they can help you.

If there is an emergency **caused by something outside the train** the driver will **calmly explain** and **show you what to do**. The train **will stop** and you will hear the **driver's voice in the carriage, through a speaker**. They will tell everyone what to do.

They will come and open the carriage doors **in order**, from the front of the train to the back of the train.

Then you will follow the driver along the **evacuation route**. There are **70 steps**.

At the top of the steps you will exit into the **Mount Pleasant Mail Centre** or the entrance to the flats and houses **next door to the Mail Rail building**. There is a **safe fire escape route** and you will keep **following the driver** to the safety meeting point.



Mail Rail accessible experience

If you do not want to or cannot go on the Mail Rail ride, you can visit our immersive projection space. This will provide an audiovisual experience of the train going through the tunnels.

At present we are showing test content in this space, and from January 2026 a new immersive show will be available with newly filmed content.



Mail Rail exhibition

In the exhibition you can learn about the **history of Mail Rail** and about the **people who worked on it**.

You can learn about how **Mail Rail changed over the years**. Before Mail Rail the Victorians used **pneumatic carriages to move post underground**. You can see a **pneumatic carriage** in the exhibition. You can see **other Mail Rail carriages** on display as well.

You can learn about how post was **transported by trains**. These were called **Travelling Post Offices**.

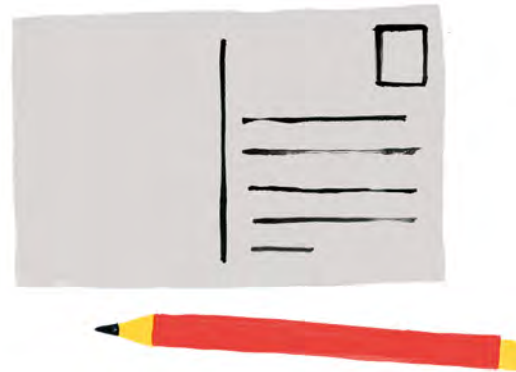
A **game** at the **end of the exhibition** is in a pretend red train carriage. In the game you can **sort post and the floor of the carriage moves**. It feels like a moving train. This is like the **Travelling Post Office**.



Mail Rail gift shop

The **gift shop** is located in the welcome space area.

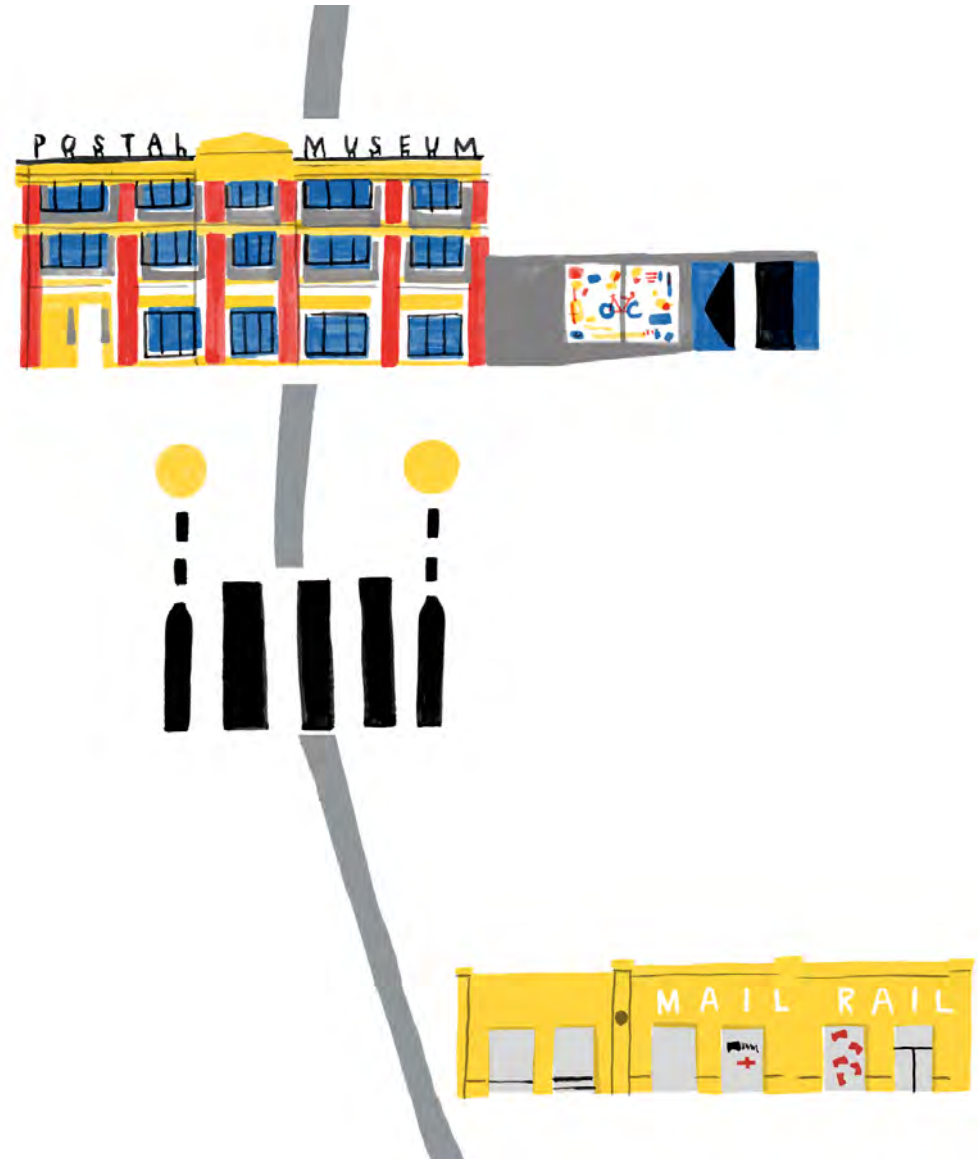
There is **another gift shop in The Postal Museum** building but it doesn't sell all of the Mail Rail related stock.



Leaving Mail Rail

When you are ready to leave the Mail Rail building and visit The Postal Museum **exit the Mail Rail building and turn right.**

The Postal Museum is a **short walk down the road.** Please use the **zebra crossing** to safely cross the road and get to The Postal Museum.



Sorted! The Postal Play Space

Visual Story

In this guide you can find out what your visit to **Sorted! The Postal Play Space** will involve.

Things to do in Sorted!

Sorted! The Postal Play Space is an **indoor play area** for children aged **8 and under**. You can pretend to be a **postal worker** in an **interactive village** with streets, buildings, trolleys, pulleys, slides and chutes.

There are lots of **activities** that you can take part in.

There is a **pretend van and post office**. You can **post, sort and receive** letters and parcels.

There is a **slide** which is fun, you can **dress up** in postal uniforms and you can **read books**. **Sorted can be noisy when it is busy**. There are also some houses that make different sounds when the doors are open.



Visiting Sorted!

Sorted! is located on the **ground floor of Mail Rail**. The entrance is **through the gift shop** on the right.

Sessions are **45 minutes** and start every hour, on the hour and you will need to purchase a **separate ticket** to visit Sorted! This can be combined with a visit to the museum, or you can book entry just for Sorted! **Adults must accompany children but do not need a ticket.**



Rules to keep you safe

There are some rules to keep you safe in Sorted!

Please be **respectful** of other children.

Please **keep your shoes on**, this is so people do not get hurt.

Please **look after** your belongings.

Parents must **look after their children** at all times. Please walk and don't run.



The Postal Museum

Visual Story

In this guide you can find out what your visit to
The Postal Museum will involve.

When you arrive

The Postal Museum is **split over two buildings**. The Postal Museum site is on **one side of Phoenix Place** and the Mail Rail site is on the **other side of Phoenix Place**.

There is a **sign on the roof** which says **Postal Museum**. There is a **large painting** of a postman on one of the walls of the museum.

The Postal Museum **entrance** is through the **small grey brick building**. You will go down a **ramp** into a **courtyard**. The courtyard has artificial grass with tables and chairs and a wall covered in **green leaves**. You might see the **red post boxes** in the green wall.

At the bottom of the ramp you turn **left** to enter The Postal Museum. There is an **automatic sliding door** at the entrance.

On busy days you might need to **queue** to get in to the museum.



The Welcome Space

When you enter the museum you will go into The Postal Museum **welcome space**.

The **gift shop** and **café** are located in the **welcome space** area. Here you can also access the **unisex toilets, accessible toilets and baby changing facilities**, as well as the stairs and lift to the **Archive** on the first floor.

The welcome space has very **bright lights** and it can be **very noisy** when it is busy. The **café chairs** can make a **loud scraping sound against the floor** when they are moved.

A member of **staff will ask to see your ticket** before you enter the museum gallery.

From the sensory trolleys at the ticket and information desk you can **collect any resources or activities** you would like to borrow during your visit, such as **exhibition trails** and a **sensory bag** - just ask a member of staff if you'd like to access these resources.



The Postal Museum exhibition

The exhibition **entrance** is in the **welcome space** next to the ticket and information desks. There is a **big sign** to show you where to go.

The Postal Museum **exhibitions** are **darker** but there are **spotlights** on some objects. It can be **very noisy** from the **sounds of the interactive exhibits**. When there are lots of people it can feel **very warm**.

In The Postal Museum **permanent exhibition** you can learn about the **history of the postal service**. It is divided into **five zones** which are times in history, starting from **500 years ago** through to the **present day**.

There is a **sixth zone** which is for **temporary exhibitions** that change every **6 months to a year**.



The Postal Museum exhibition: Zone 1

The **first zone** is about the **creation of the Royal Mail**.

The **key object** to look out for in this zone is the **Mail Coach**.

There are some **interactive activities**, you might hear the roar of a lioness!



The Postal Museum exhibition: Zone 2

The **second zone** is about how the **postal service changed** to allow everyone to send post.

You can learn about **stamps and pillar boxes**.

The **key objects** to look out for in this zone are the **Channel Islands green pillar box** and the sheet of **Penny Black stamps**.



The Postal Museum exhibition: Zone 3

Content warning: The **third zone** is about the Post Office during times of **conflict**.

You can learn about how **war** affected the postal service.

The **key object** to look out for in this zone is the **Victoria Cross**. The medal on display belonged to someone who worked for the Post Office.



The Postal Museum exhibition: Zone 4

The **fourth zone** is about the Post Office and **design**.

You can learn about **different stamp and poster designs**.

There is an **interactive exhibit** where you can **design your own stamp**.

The **key object** in this zone is the **air mail pillar box**.



The Postal Museum exhibition: Zone 5

The **fifth zone** is about **communication and changes** to how the post was **sent and received**.

You can learn about the **ideas** the **Post Office and Royal Mail** had to deliver post.

The **key object** in this zone is the **Post Bus**.



The Postal Museum exhibition: Temporary exhibition

The **final zone** in The Postal Museum exhibition is where you can visit our **temporary exhibition** that changes every 6 months to a year.

If you have an annual ticket, this includes **unlimited entry to all our exhibitions, including the temporary exhibitions for 1 year.**



Our current temporary exhibition is ***Voices of Resistance: Slavery and Post in the Caribbean.*** This exhibition includes descriptions of the violent and harsh conditions faced by enslaved people. Historical documents using racist terms to describe enslaved people are on display.



Leaving the museum

When you are ready to **leave** The Postal Museum **exit through the sliding doors**, out into the courtyard and up the ramp onto the street.

If you **borrowed any resources**, like a sensory bag or ear defenders **don't forget** to return them to a member of staff before you leave or leave them on the sensory trolley next to the welcome desk



The Archive

Visual Story

In this guide you can find out what your visit to the **Archive** will involve.

Visiting the Archive

On your visit to The Postal Museum you can visit the **Archive** when it is open (Wednesday to Friday and the second Saturday of each month).

The Archive is on the **first floor** and can be accessed using the **stairs or lift**.

This room is where you can look at the **archive materials** and find out about people who **worked for the Post Office**. You can also find out more about the items cared for by the museum. This includes information about items **not on display** in the exhibitions.

A team of **friendly archivists** can help you and answer any questions you might have.



Things to look at

There are lots of things to **look at** in the Archive.

You can use an **interactive screen** to search for **photographs and stamps** that the museum looks after.

You can look at **books in the library** and find out **interesting facts**.

You can use the **computers** to find out about people who worked for the **postal service**.



The Archive environment

The room is **cold** because some of the items are very **delicate**. The cold temperature helps to keep them in **good condition**.

Food and drink **should not** be taken into the Archive. This is so the items in the space do not get **damaged**.

Although it can sometimes get **busy**, the Archive is a **quiet place** where you can sit and read because the people who use it need to concentrate.





The
Postal
Museum



**Ambitious
about Autism**

Supported by the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, City Bridge Trust, the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and Art Fund.



Art Fund_

Thank you for visiting The Postal Museum, we hope you had a great time.