When George Parker Bidder put his message in a bottle and threw it into the sea, asking whoever found it to contact him, he wasn't expecting a **speedy** response. Which is just as well, because it took just over 108 years – now officially confirmed by Guinness World Records as the oldest such message in the world.

The German woman who found it has been given the reward promised in 1908 - a shilling. The bottle was among more than 1,000 thrown into the North Sea in **batches** by George Parker Bidder, as part of his research into the patterns of currents. This one was part of a batch from 30 November 1906, and was found 108 years, four months and 18 days later in 2015 by a retired German postal worker, Marianne Winkler, on holiday on Amrun, one of Germany's North Frisian islands.

Inside she could see a message reading “break the bottle” but **she** and her husband Horst tried and failed to get the message out without destroying its container. Eventually they **extracted** a postcard with a message in English, German and Dutch, asking for it to be returned to the Marine Biological Association in Devon.

The Winklers could see it was old, but had no idea how old as the card had no date. They followed the instructions to fill in the date and where it was found, then put the card in an envelope and posted it.
The association, founded in 1884, still exists and is an international research institution. Although everybody was surprised when the post arrived, they recognised Bidder’s name as he had served as president of the association between 1939-45. He died in 1954 aged 91. His messages in bottles helped him prove for the first time that the deep sea current in the North Sea flowed from east to west.

The card promised what had been in 1908 the handsome reward of a shilling. The communications officer at the association, said they were determined Marianne would get the proper reward. “We found an old shilling, I think we got it on eBay. We sent it to her with a letter saying thank you.”

Marianne also has the honour of being in the Guinness World Records because of her find: her bottle comfortably beat the last record holder, a bottle found in Shetland in 2013 that had been adrift for 99 years and 43 days.