

THE BRITISH  
POSTAL  
MUSEUM  
& ARCHIVE

# Reprographics Policy

August 2007

## Contents

1. **Statement of Purpose**
2. **Scope of Policy**
3. **Our Obligations at BPMA**
4. **User Requirements**
5. **Procedure for dealing with requests for copying from remote users**
6. **Preservation Considerations**
7. **Limits of Staff Time And Equipment**
8. **Copyright Considerations**

---

## **1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This reprographics policy outlines the copying services that we will provide at The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) with rationale for any limitations that we may impose on the provision of copies. The policy will take into consideration the following:

- requirements of the researcher to obtain copies suitable for use in private research
- preservation requirements to ensure that our documents remain in a fit state for use by present and future researchers
- limits of staff time and existing equipment.
- copyright considerations

Along with the accompanying guidelines, the policy aims to standardise the reprographics services that BPMA users are offered and receive, and will provide guidance for all staff when dealing with reproduction and publication of BPMA material.

## **2. SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy covers all material that the BPMA holds, particularly our public records and museum collections.

Library books and journals are also covered by this policy. Although not necessarily unique, many of the volumes in our library are quite old and would be difficult to replace and expensive to conserve if damaged. The policy that applies to our archival volumes will therefore be extended to all volumes in our library to comply with National Preservation Office guidelines and to preserve them for future use by researchers. Our trained staff will use their discretion to advise on copying methods for fairly new volumes, depending primarily on tightness of bindings and weight and dimensions of the book.

## **3. OUR OBLIGATIONS AT BPMA**

Many of our holdings at BPMA are public records as a result of the Post Office originally being a Government department. BPMA has been designated as a repository for public record keeping by the Lord Chancellor under the Public Records Act 1958.

Our primary obligation under the Public Records Act is as follows:

- to provide access to our public records to all who wish to consult them in a broadly comparable manner to The National Archives

We will endeavour to provide copies of the majority of our materials, subject to conservation and copyright concerns, and the limitations of staff time and reprographics equipment that we have in common with other small archives services.

#### **4. USER REQUIREMENTS**

We appreciate that researchers who visit BPMA may require copies of material that we hold for their own personal research purposes. We will endeavour to provide such copies, subject to preservation needs of the material, copyright considerations, limitations of staff time and of our reprographics facilities, and requirements for maintaining intellectual control over our holdings.

Charges are levied on all copies made, in-line with other archive and library services, and a price list has been published for our reprographics services, available in our public Search Room. Prices reflect indirect costs such as the conservation equipment and specialist staff required to repair cumulative damage likely to result from copying documents, and direct costs connected with equipment and staff time.

Our obligation to researchers ensures that:

- Search Room staff will be trained to recognise when documents will be put at risk by copying, advise on suitable methods of copying, and also to provide good quality copies for research purposes
- our reprographics facilities will be extended so that users are provided with a range of options for receiving copies of documents at a range of prices. The variety of reprographics services that we will offer will ensure that the majority of our documents can be reproduced by some means, dependent on copyright.
- we will set targets for completion of copying orders to ensure that researchers receive their copies within a guaranteed time-frame, subject to correct reference numbers being supplied on copy order forms

#### **5. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH REQUESTS FOR COPIES FROM REMOTE USERS**

The same policies with regard to preservation considerations and copyright will apply to all copying-whether ordered on site or requested remotely. However in view of the additional work involved in processing remote orders there is a specific procedure to follow. All requests for copying received from remote users will require the preparation of an invoice detailing the cost of the copying. As the preparation of the invoice will itself involve staff time in checking the suitability of the document for copying, and calculating the cost of the copies all requests for copies will be subject to a £5.00 handling charge. This charge will be payable before an invoice is prepared. Payment for the copies will be required before copying is carried out.

---

## **6. PRESERVATION CONSIDERATIONS**

At the BPMA, the preservation of our unique and historically important documents has to be at the forefront of all our activities. It is important that we are faithful to our responsibility to current and future researchers to maintain and protect our documents to ensure their survival for as long as possible.

Measures that we have adopted to protect our holdings include the following:

- staff guidelines have been drawn up which outline documents that are suitable for copying, based on guidelines issued by the National Preservation Office and on archival best practice. Copies of our guidelines are available on request.
- all researchers must read and sign a 'Request for Reprographic Services' form, giving reference numbers of the material copied to assist staff with identifying the most heavily copied material and allow them to give due consideration to the possible provision of surrogates.

The variety of copying methods that we use at the BPMA ensures that, on most occasions, we can provide copies of material. However, the following restrictions must be enforced to ensure satisfactory preservation of our materials.

- Copies of microfilmed documents must always be taken from the microfilm, which is our least expensive method of copying. We will work towards microfilming more of our material as part of our annual preservation microfilming programme to ensure that researchers can obtain their copies in this convenient and inexpensive way.
- We reserve the right to refuse to copy certain documents according to our policy and guidelines. Handling of the documents during positioning on the scanner and the heat and light generated causes cumulative damage to documents. However, in cases where we can not scan, we will offer alternative forms of copying if appropriate to the document's condition.

To lessen the impact of these restrictions, we will work to expand our range of 'preservation-friendly' digital reprographics services to enable more documents to be copied in this way. Where copying restrictions are in place, commissioning of photographs from our photographer may be an option. However we cannot allow the use of portable scanners as the light emitted by these devices is potentially damaging to the documents.

Decisions on whether documents can be copied will ultimately be based on the suitability of the document for copying, and our Head of Archives will always make the final decision on suitability for copying, with input and assessment from our on-site conservator. However, copyright may also impose limitations on copying of BPMA material.

## **7. LIMITS OF STAFF TIME AND EQUIPMENT**

---

As we are a small unit, we have no dedicated reprographics department, and the amount of staff time available to complete copying orders is necessarily limited. Similarly, our reprographics equipment is limited, and we have no specialist reprographics staff on site, so options for copying and timescales for receiving copies may not be comparable with larger archive services.

However, we endeavour to supply a range of copying services, including microfilm printouts, scanning and photography, which are sufficient for taking copies of most documents. We have established targets for time taken to complete copy orders, as set out in our Service Standards. We aim to meet these targets in all cases, providing full reference numbers are given on the copy order forms, our reprographics equipment is fully functional, and we have sufficient staff to carry out the order. In cases where our staff levels are unavoidably low, or we have a high demand in the Search Room, copies may not be able to be supplied within established timeframes, but we will keep users informed of the reason for any delays and let them know when to expect the material.

## **8. COPYRIGHT CONSIDERATIONS**

All BPMA material is subject to copyright law, and we must ensure that this is followed in every case. BPMA staff will give due consideration to copyright issues when supplying copies. However, in all cases, it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that requested copies comply with current legislation.

Prior to issuing any copies, we require that researchers read and sign a 'Request for Reprographic Services' form. This form will comprise a declaration that any copies issued will only be used for research or private study, and will not be used for publication or presentation. If a false declaration is made, any copy supplied will be an infringing copy, and the researcher will be liable for the infringement.

In cases where researchers wish to obtain permission to publish material from BPMA, our publication process must be followed. If Royal Mail does not own the copyright for the material (often the case where Royal Mail has not authored the document), the onus is on the researcher to track down the copyright owner and obtain permission to publish.