

BBC Written Archives Centre

Information for Visiting Researchers

Archives Technology & Services

BBC TECHNOLOGY GROUP

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Service Provision

You can access the BBC Written Archives Centre if you are an academic in higher education undertaking accredited research, a writer commissioned to write a book or article on BBC history, or undertaking research for a commercial project.

Opening Hours

Our Reading Room opening hours are 10am to 5pm, Wednesdays to Fridays by appointment only.

Contact Details

We can be contacted using the general enquiries telephone number, 0208 008 5661, or by emailing the general enquiries address heritage@bbc.co.uk.

Our web address is: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/bbc-written-archives-centre/zdy9scw>

How to find us

The street address for the archive is: BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham Park, Peppard Road, Reading, RG4 8TZ.

Please note that the BBC Written Archives Centre has a separate entrance from the main Caversham Park site, which is also on Peppard Road. The building is a small white bungalow, in between the school and main drive to Caversham Park.

Public Transport

Trains

The closest train station is Reading Station.

Buses

Buses run from central Reading to within walking distance of the Written Archives Centre. Bus routes and timetable change frequently, and we recommend visitors refer to www.reading-buses.co.uk for current information on ticket prices, payment options and bus times.

Taxis

If you would prefer to catch a taxi from the station, there is a taxi rank on Station Road, which is opposite the main entrance to Reading Station.

By Car

Reading is situated along the M4 corridor and is also easily reached from other major routes. Free parking is available in the grounds of the Archive. There are parking areas on both sides of the building. If all the spaces are full please park in the street outside.

Before your Visit

When we confirm your appointment, we will issue you with a copy of our researcher Terms of Use. Please sign these by hand and return a digital copy to us via email ahead of your visit.

Upon Arrival

Our Reading Room is open from 10am. If you arrive slightly early, you are welcome to wait in our Waiting Room until we are fully open to visitors.

When you arrive at the Centre please press the button for the intercom, which is located on the wall to the right of the front door. Please identify yourself and the purpose of your visit to the member of staff who answers, who will then give you access to the building.

When you enter the building, the Reception desk will be on your immediate right. On arrival we will provide a brief safety induction and ask you to sign the Visitors' Book, which we will use as a register in the unlikely event of emergency. Please remember to sign out again when you leave, including if you leave the building for lunch (in which case, please sign back in upon return).

We will let you know which desk has been assigned to you in the Reading Room (and/or Microfilm Room). We will also assign you a numbered locker.

We will show you to the Waiting Room, where lockers are available for your bags, and a coat rack for outer garments. Bags and coats must be left in this area, as they are not permitted in the Reading Room or Microfilm Room.

Once you have left your bags and coat in your locker, please ensure you wash your hands thoroughly using the facilities in the toilet area before making your way into the Reading Room.

A member of the team will be on hand in the Reading Room to show you to your desk and carry out a brief induction on how to use our archive material. If you are using microfilm only, please report to the member of staff in the Reading Room to collect your material. If you are using our machines for the first time, we will arrange for a member of the team to provide you with an induction.

Using the Reading Room

Reading Room Etiquette

The Reading Room opens at 10am and closes at 5pm.

Please leave all bags, cases and coats in the Waiting Room; they may not be taken into the Reading Room.

Please wash your hands thoroughly before entering the Reading Room. If you have recently used hand sanitiser, please wash your hands with soap and water before handling archive material.

No food, drink, or any other form of liquid or gel, is allowed in the Reading Room. This includes cough lozenges, gum, water bottles and hand cream or sanitiser. This is to protect the files. The Waiting Room is available for consuming meals and snacks.

Please do not use ink of any kind. Pencils, laptops, and tablets may be used for note taking.

Please be considerate of the needs of other researchers and maintain silence as far as possible. Artificial noises from electronic devices, including phones, cameras, laptops, and tablets, should be switched to silent.

Should you have any questions, please ask the member of staff invigilating the Reading Room, or the member of staff on Reception.

Microfilm Room

The Microfilm Room should be treated in the same way as the Reading Room. Please note that files should not be taken into the Microfilm Room.

Should you experience any problems with the microfilm readers please ask the member of staff on Reception to help you.

Handling files

Please handle the files and their contents with the utmost care. Our archives are unique original documents and in many cases they are fragile and could be easily damaged. Our handling guidelines should be followed at all times:

- Please make sure your hands are clean before handling any archival material.
- Place the material you are consulting flat on the desk. If material requires additional support, use the preservation aids and rests provided.
- Do not prop files up, let them hang over the edge of the desk, or lean on them.
- Avoid making large piles of files. The number of files you are allowed at your desk may be restricted for this reason.
- Turn pages with care so as not to damage the documents.

- Documents should not be removed from files. If a document cannot be read easily without removing it from the file, please ask for assistance from a member of staff.
- File laces should be untied and the ends fitted together whilst reading a file, to reduce the strain on the punch holes in the papers. They should be retied in a bow, not a knot, when the file is finished with. Similarly, Jalema clips should have their tubes released from under the yellow bar whilst reading the file. Please do not separate the yellow tubes from the white bar piece. The tubes should be tucked under the yellow bar again when the file is finished with.
- Documents held loosely in files or boxes should be retained in their original order.

Please ask the member of staff in the Reading Room for assistance if you are unsure how to handle any material.

Requesting extra files

We advise researchers to request and confirm all material required in advance of their visit. Requests for additional material on the day are reviewed on a case by case basis, and are subject to the resource required to retrieve additional content and prepare it for use in the Reading Room.

At the end of the day

Please let the member of staff in the Reading Room know that you have finished for the day.

- If you have another appointment booked, please confirm the material you still require for your next visit, and what you have finished with
- If you have another appointment booked, but no longer require it, please let us know, as we may be able to offer your seat to someone on our waiting list.
- If you require another appointment to finish viewing your material, but do not have one booked yet, let our member of staff know which material you wish to view again, and provide details of your future availability. We will pass the message onto the Archivist you have been corresponding with, who will be in touch to arrange another appointment with you.

Please note that files are not left on the researcher desks overnight, even if you are returning the following day. All material is locked away each evening.

Please remember to leave your locker key in its locker before you leave the building.

Cancellations

Should you need to cancel or postpone your visit for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible, even if this is the day of your visit, as we may be able to offer your seat to someone on our waiting list.

Copying documents

Almost all the material at the BBC Written Archives Centre is covered by copyright, either owned by the BBC or by third parties, and researchers should check with a member of staff as to whether the copying of specific documents is allowed. More details regarding copyright and permission to take copies can be found in our researcher agreement forms.

Researchers wishing to take copies of documents for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research may do so, subject to any copyright or other restrictions that may apply.

Copies required for any purpose other than private study or non-commercial use, and any re-use or publishing of material (or extracts of material) obtained from WAC, requires specific permission from the BBC and any third party rights holders.

We do not provide a photocopying service for visiting researchers. Copies of hard-copy documents can be obtained by using your own device to take digital photographs. Self-service copying is available for microfilmed records. The process and charges for each method are explained below.

Digital Photography

It may be possible to take digital photographs of documents using your own equipment. Please consult a member of staff before taking any photos. Staff will need to check the items you wish to photograph for any copyright, conservation or other restrictions.

If you wish to take a photograph of any material you must include a BBC or third party copyright notice in the shot. Please speak to a member of staff if you are unsure which notice you should use.

There are no charges for using your own device to take copies of documents for private study or non-commercial research.

Flash photography is not permitted and any noises (e.g. beeps) made by the camera must be switched off (the shutter sounds from SLRs are the only exception to this).

Please note that the use of scanners is not permitted, as these may damage material.

Whilst we may permit researchers to take photographs of documents, it is not permissible to take any photographs of the Written Archives Centre site.

Microfilm Copies

Self-service copying is available for material held on microfilm. There is an option to use the scan to email function on the machines, free of charge. Alternatively, you may print hard copies, which will attract a charge. You should make a note of the number of copies you print, and pay for these at Reception at the end of your visit. Please note that we accept payment by card only.

Licensing & Re-Use

If you wish to publish extracts from any material held at the Written Archives Centre you must obtain the prior permission of the BBC and any relevant third parties. You will need to complete a BBC Written Archives Centre Permission to Use Form and submit the relevant sections of your manuscript, with the extracts of BBC material clearly highlighted, to the WAC.

Please remember to include your file references in your footnotes and/or bibliography so that WAC staff can easily identify the material you wish to quote.

Please speak to an Archivist for more details on the permissions process and how to reference our material correctly.

More details about licensing and re-use can be found on our website:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/written-archives-centre--licensing-and-copyright/z6s4nrd>

Facilities

Waiting Room

Our Waiting Room is available for storing personal belongings and taking breaks.

Lockers

There are free lockers available in the waiting room for storing bags and personal belongings, and a stand for hanging coats and jackets. Please leave your locker key in its locker at the end of the day.

Food & Drink

Visitors are welcome to bring their own food and drink, which can be consumed in the researcher Waiting Room. There is also a water cooler in the Waiting Room, which you are welcome to use.

If you need to purchase refreshments, there is a Tesco Express/Esso garage on Buckingham Drive. Alternatively, there is a row of shops and a café within five minutes' walk of the Archives. To reach these, turn right upon leaving the archive grounds, walk to the end of the street, cross the road, and you should see a row of shops in front of you, beyond the car park.

Toilets

The toilets are located at the end of the corridor, past the microfilm room.

Computer facilities

There are power points available in both the Reading Room and Microfilm Room for plugging in laptop computers. Please ensure that any cables are used safely and do not cause a trip hazard.

Internet access is available via the BBC's guest Wi-Fi network. Instructions on how to connect your device to the Wi-Fi network are available in the Reading Room. Please note that the Reading Room is a quiet area and all devices should be kept in silent mode so as not to disturb other users.

Smoking

Please be aware that smoking, including the use of E-cigarettes, is not permitted in or around BBC buildings. Researchers wishing to smoke should leave the BBC Written Archives Centre site before doing so.

Safety & Security

CCTV is in operation at the BBC Written Archives Centre. Visitors must stay within the public areas at the Written Archives Centre, unless otherwise directed by staff.

Please also note that photography and filming is not permitted on the site unless prior written permission has been obtained.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency the alarm is a loud siren. If you hear this or a member of staff asks you to evacuate the building, please leave straight away by the shortest route. The fire exits should have been pointed out to you on your arrival – if for any reason they have not been, please ask to be shown them. The nearest exit to the front of the building is through the front door itself.

Assemble on the car park at the front of the building and make yourself known to the Fire Warden who will be identifiable by a fluorescent vest and carrying a clipboard.

Do not return to the building for any reason until given permission to do so by staff.

If you have any access needs please let us know about them when arranging your appointment so we can ensure the right support is available.

We hope you enjoy your visit.