



## PROBATE SERVICE

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Neil Bryan  
Contract Manager for the Probate  
Records Centre  
Iron Mountain

What the Probate Service needed was a single site that would fully protect its documents in the centuries to come, while allowing cost effective access. It also had targets to meet. Of solicitor, notary, or barrister applications, 95 per cent have to be processed within seven working days of receipt of all necessary information. For personal applications, 85 per cent have to be processed within one month of receipt of all necessary information.

### SOLUTION

Working with Iron Mountain a specialised facility was built in Birmingham to house all English and Welsh wills. Called the Probate Records Centre it houses wills in conditions specified in BS 5454 for the storage of historical documents. As the only commercially built facility in Europe to comply with this standard, the new centre ensures that documents are kept at the right temperature and humidity to assure their preservation.

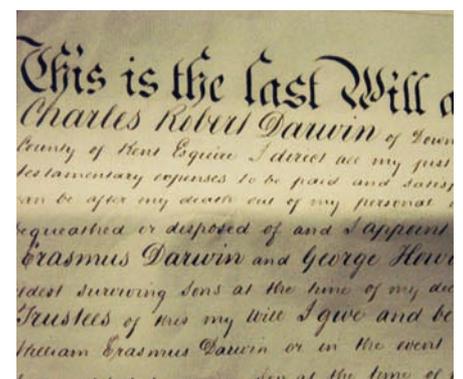
Iron Mountain employs 29 dedicated staff at the centre, dealing with around 3,200 will retrievals every week in response to requests made via any Probate Registry in England and Wales. An enhanced scanned copy of the requested document is sent to the Probate Service. It is forwarded to the customer for a current charge of just £5.

### VALUE

“The safe storage of Probate Records is a crucial part of the administration of Probate. There is a statutory requirement to store records in perpetuity. The centre, run by Iron Mountain, has created a secure and climate controlled environment for the documents, where they can be accessed quickly and easily by the public on demand,” states a spokesperson for the Probate Service.

Famous people’s wills are requested over and over again, as people seem to be fascinated with what celebrities left for their loved ones. In particular, the wills left by Princess Diana and John Lennon are the most popular. However, most common wills are only requested once, as an individual traces their own family tree.

Neil Bryan, the Iron Mountain Contract Manager for the Probate Records Centre, concludes: “Genealogy has become a national pastime and, as a result, has created unexpected demand for the Probate Service’s retrieval offerings. We’re seeing a 20 per cent increase year-on-year for retrieval requests.”



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