

Guidance on Handling Special Collections Material

To ensure we can preserve items in our collection for future use, we ask all users to handle all items carefully and to follow the guidelines below.

Before handling the collections:

- Wash your hands with soap and water, and remove any jewellery that might damage the materials.
- Avoid using hand sanitiser or hand cream.
- Leave your coat, bag, food, and drinks (including water) in one of our free lockers outside the search room.
- Avoid wearing nail polish or varnish, or wear gloves (our search room team will be able to provide you with these).
- Use pencils, paper, and laptops to make notes while in the search room. Pens, highlighters, and sharp objects must stay in your bag in a locker.
- We ask everyone to view our handling video upon arrival.

Receiving your items in the search room:

- Do not pick up or carry bound items. Search room staff will set up bound items (such as books) for you on bookrests. They will also collect bound items when you have finished with them.
- Carry all other material in the document trays provided.
- Lay non-bound items flat upon the table. Weights are available to use if necessary.
- Some items may need you to wear gloves, such as photographs. Search room staff will provide gloves these whenever they are necessary.

Handling items

- Ensure all items are kept away from the edge of the table.
- Keep loose documents in the order in which you found them.
- Do not mark items in any way or make erasures.
- The surface of items should not be touched except when unavoidable. Please do not lean on items, rest anything on them, pile one open book on another, or place open volumes face down.

- Ensure any paperclips and book tape you have removed when using material are replaced before handing documents back.
- Tell us about any damage which you discover in items you are using.

If you have any questions, or need help handling an item, our search room staff are available to help.

Thank you very much for helping us to look after our shared cultural heritage.