

# ST BRIDE LIBRARY

## COLLECTIONS HANDLING GUIDELINES

Help us to care for our unique collections by following these recommended handling methods.

Please follow these general practices when handling any items from the collections:

- Ensure that you have clean, dry hands and avoid using hand creams, lip balms or hand sanitiser during your visit.
- Keep handling to a minimum, using weights to hold down pages and avoid directly touching ink or other media.
- Ensure items are fully supported on the table surface or a book support, with no edges hanging over the edge of the surface. Do not pick items up to read them.
- Do not lean on items or place other objects on top of them.
- Remove anything that might accidentally damage items, such as rings or watches.
- Follow the advice of library staff and use any preservation aids supplied to you.

We do not allow food and drink in the reading room. You can use pencil or an electronic device for taking notes, but not pen. Please place coats and bags in the area provided.

### Gloves

For most items, it is best to handle with clean, dry hands. This is because gloves reduce manual dexterity and increase the risk of accidental tears. However, there are some materials that are especially vulnerable to the natural oils in skin and therefore do require gloves.

Please do wear the gloves provided when handling:

- Photographs, negatives, glass plate negatives and slides
- Parchment
- Metal objects
- Painted or gilded surfaces

If gloves become dirty, please change into a new pair to avoid transferring dirt onto the collections.



## **Documents and single-sheet items**

- Keep documents in the order in which you receive them.
- If an item is rolled or folded, take extra care when opening it and use weights to hold the item flat. Do not place weights directly over fold lines or damaged areas.
- Do not remove items from transparent sleeves without consulting a member of staff.
- If documents are attached by a treasury tag or other fastening, take extra care when turning pages. The fastened area of the page can be especially vulnerable to tears.

## **Bound volumes**

- Use cushions or wedges to support bound volumes, to reduce strain on the spine.
- Do not force tightly bound volumes to open wider than they comfortably can. Do not open any volumes to more than about a 120° angle.
- Use weights to hold down pages.
- Take care when turning pages. Turn pages individually or in sections; do not flick through.

## **Plans, artworks and maps**

- Ensure there is plenty of clear space on the table surface.
- If the item is rolled or folded, take extra care when opening it and ask staff for help if the item is oversized.
- Use weights around the edges of the item to hold it flat if needed. Do not place weights over the printed/drawn surface.

## **Photographs, negatives and slides**

- Wear nitrile gloves, unless the item is protected by a transparent sleeve.
- Hold photographic prints, slides or negatives by the edges; do not touch the image surface.
- Do not remove from transparent sleeves.

## **Type, punches, blocks and other objects**

- Wear nitrile gloves for handling metal objects.
- Minimise handling as much as possible, leaving objects on the table surface, or a cushion if necessary, whilst you look at them. A magnifying glass can be used to get a closer look.
- Be mindful of any sharp edges, damaged or weakened areas.

