

Consultation of Special Collections

Rules for Readers



MERTON
COLLEGE
OXFORD
LIBRARY &
ARCHIVES

- ❖ Ensure hands are clean and dry.
- ❖ Readers may be asked to leave wet umbrellas, coats and large bags in the library foyer or other areas as directed by staff.
- ❖ Food and drink, other than bottled water, may not be brought into the library. Water bottles should be kept on the windowsill adjacent to the reader's desk, not on the desk itself.
- ❖ Keep mobile phones and other electronic devices on silent (or use headphones with them), and leave the library to make or receive telephone calls.
- ❖ Library staff will remove all bound material from enclosures (boxes and book shoes).
- ❖ Please read bound items on the foam book supports provided, using weights ('snakes') to hold down the leaves if necessary. Please consult a member of staff if you need additional book supports or weights. When consulting loose papers, documents with attached seals, or volumes with folding plates, please follow staff guidance on handling.
- ❖ Take great care to retain the order of any library material numbered in sequence.
- ❖ Pens may not be used when working with special collections material; if you are taking notes, please use a pencil or a personal computer/tablet.
- ❖ Take notes on paper (or a personal computer/tablet) laid on the reading desk, not on top of a book or manuscript (whether open or closed).
- ❖ Direct contact with illuminations or any written area in a manuscript is not permitted. A slip of acid-free paper may be used to follow a written text if required, but nothing else (except for weights) may be placed on an open book or manuscript.
- ❖ If you need to leave your desk, return all special collections material to library staff. When you have finished reading return all material, with any enclosures, to a staff member. Library material must not be left unattended.
- ❖ Avoid placing special collections material in direct sunlight.
- ❖ Making rubbings of binding decoration or tracings of watermarks may damage library material and is not permitted.
- ❖ Reproducing a book or manuscript by tracing, painting or any method other than hand copying or photography (copyright permitting; without flash and for personal study only) is forbidden. Consult library staff for advice on reproduction services available.
- ❖ Two or more readers may not use the same item at the same time without permission from a member of staff.
- ❖ Items on exhibition may not be fetched for readers. Where available, microfilm copies may be consulted.
- ❖ If the fire alarm sounds, readers should leave library material at their desks and evacuate the building as quickly as possible under the direction of staff. The fire assembly point is Chestnut Lawn, behind the library.