



Carmarthenshire Archives

Good Handling Guidelines

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In order that our archives remain accessible it is vital that they are not mishandled by either our readers or members of staff. Mishandling of documents is a major cause of damage. The effects of which can be immediate (e.g. crumpling, scuffing and tearing, etc.) however, it may also become evident suddenly, even though many years may have passed. You can help to ensure that our documents are not mishandled by following these few simple rules:

General guidelines:

- Please ensure that your hands are clean and dry
- Remove items from shelves one at a time
- Use both hands to carry large volumes or boxes and use a trolley when necessary
- If items must be stacked, do so evenly and neatly
- Please do not place items on the floor
- Ensure that items placed on tables or trolleys do not hang over the edge
- Always use helpful tools i.e. book cushions, supports and weights, etc.
- Remove all ties and packaging before consulting items
- When producing small items remember to place them in Melinex sleeves and do not remove unless absolutely necessary. Photographs are not to be removed from sleeves
- Please inform a member of staff if any items are in need of repair
- Use common sense - if you require assistance: ask

Flat documents:

- Please ensure that your hands are clean and dry
- Where possible use acid free strips to follow lines of text
- Do not lean on the documents
- Ensure that items do not overhang the search room table
- Use a support (i.e. sturdy paper) to turn the leaves of fragile documents
- Please do not remove the Melinex sleeves unless necessary
- Pick up fragile items by gently holding two diagonal corners

Books and volumes:

- Please ensure that your hands are clean and dry
- Always use appropriate book rests and supports
- Do not lick your fingertips to turn pages
- Try not to touch the surface of pages
- If you have handled red rot, please wash your hands afterwards
- If book covers are loose, please arrange them as if they were intact before opening

- Please keep all loose or detached items in the same place within the book or volume
- Do not photocopy or scan if the item does not easily open to 180 degrees

Maps or plans:

- Please ensure that your hands are clean and dry
- Give yourself plenty of space and ensure that the document does not hang over the edge of the search room table
- Always use weights as you unfold or unroll items
- Do not force any document to be flat if it is not willing
- Store flat if possible
- When tracing items please ensure that a plastic sheet is placed between the document and the paper
- If the map must be rolled, roll it around a sturdy core

Photographs and postcards:

- Please ensure that your hands are clean and dry
- Wear cotton gloves when handling unprotected photographs, glass plates, negatives or photograph albums
- When producing small items remember to place them in Melinex sleeves and do not remove unless absolutely necessary
- If it is necessary to remove item from their sleeves always use gloves
- Be especially careful not to fold or bend the images
- Avoid touching the surface - always handle photographs by the edges only

Thank you