

HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS

The archival collections in the care of Aberdeenshire Heritage contain a wide range of organic materials such as paper, animal skins and wax. They undergo a continual and natural ageing process. Handling directly affects the life expectancy of the collections and accelerates this ageing process. In the interests of preservation we may sometimes ask you to use a copy (e.g. a digital image or microfilm) of the documents that you request, rather than the originals.

You are also asked to inform staff of any damage you notice when consulting archival records and to ask staff for assistance when handling physically awkward items. A variety of different items are available to help with accessing the collections, including book rest, book 'snakes', and weights. Please ask staff if you require any of these.

Please handle all archival materials as carefully as possible so that they are preserved for future generations.

- Do not eat (including gum), drink, or smoke in our buildings.
- Your hands should be clean when handling original documents.
- You should take care to avoid touching the text of documents; acid-free book marks are provided for your use.
- The amount of original material that you may receive at any one time is limited for security and preservation reasons. If these limitations cause you inconvenience, speak to the staff.
- You should take care to keep archival material securely and safely on the desks.
- Bound material can present problems and you are asked to make use of the book rests, supports and book 'snakes' available. These help to avoid causing strain to bindings.
- It may be possible to make tracings of plans, subject to their condition. Please ask staff about this. Where this is permitted, they will advise on procedures to follow.
- You will need to wear cotton gloves when consulting photographic material or rare and fragile documents.

We ask you to be careful when making notes. In particular, note the following:

- use only a computer or a pencil; a sharpener is provided for your use
- take care not to mark the documents in any way
- take care not to lean on the documents when making notes
- only use an eraser for your notes; never use correction fluid
- please use the acid-free bookmarks provided to mark your place

Thank you for your help and co-operation in preserving the archives.