

Visiting Special Collections during the Coronavirus emergency

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Making an appointment

It is essential to make an appointment. Please contact special-collections@bristol.ac.uk at least a week in advance to make arrangements.

Appointments are available for morning or afternoon or whole day sessions. Only one day may be booked in a week. Opening times are Tuesday-Thursday, 10.00 to 12.30 and 13.30 to 16.00.

Appointment dates are provisional until confirmed by Special Collections once material has been retrieved from storage.

Cancel an appointment if you develop symptoms of coronavirus or if you have been told to isolate yourself after exposure to the virus.

Special Collections may be able to provide material to you by electronic means if you cannot travel.

Please specify the material you wish to consult in as much detail as possible, including archival reference numbers and book locations. Please ask for further advice if you need it.

The Reading Room is on the first floor of the Arts and Social Sciences Library. Please notify Special Collections in advance if you would like to use the lift from the ground floor.

Book an introduction to the Library

If you are not a member of the University of Bristol or if you are unsure of the location of the Reading Room, ask to be met at the entrance to the Library. You will then be given a personal socially-distanced induction tour.

What to bring to an appointment

Bring photographic proof of identity, such as a driving licence, passport or current university identity card.

A face covering must be worn at all times when on university premises.

You must supply your own pencils and paper for note taking. Laptop computers are allowed.

Arrangements on the day

Arrival

Remember to wear a face covering at all times.

Always maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres from other people. Floor markings and other signage have been installed to remind you of this.

If you require an induction tour, call a member of staff when you arrive at the Library entrance. Use the number you have been given when arranging your appointment.

Your tour will indicate routes round the Library and the location of toilet and hand washing facilities.

Wash your hands before entering Special Collections. The use of hand sanitiser before consultation is not permitted. The chemical residues cause lasting damage to books and manuscripts.

The Reading Room

Place your bags in the locker labelled with the day of your visit. The lockers are on the right-hand side of the Reading Room.

The book supports and weights supplied have been quarantined before your visit.

If you intend to consult loose papers, there will be a sheet of paper on your desk to place the papers on.

The materials you ordered are on a trolley or table by your desk. When you have finished with anything, please replace it carefully on the trolley or table.

Materials for consultation are quarantined before and after use.

Please do not touch any material not provided for your use.

Handling special collections materials

Make sure that you have washed your hands and have not applied moisturiser or sanitiser.

Support bound volumes and pamphlets on the book cushions or foam blocks supplied to you at all times when you are reading them.

Book cushions are used for bound volumes that do not have a fragile convex spine and foam blocks for those that do. Foam blocks are also used for items with limp binding structures (e.g. pamphlets).

Never apply force to make a binding open further.

Do not open bound volumes to an angle of more than 120 degrees.

Angle volumes upwards towards you only slightly, if at all.

Hold pages in position using the weights provided. Drape them gently over the edges of pages and remove them very carefully before turning to the next opening.

Keep loose papers in the order in which you find them.

Ask for gloves to handle photographs if they have not been provided.

Never rest anything on materials being consulted and keep pencils notepads and computers at a safe distance.

Ink pens cannot be used in the Reading Room.

Library materials must never be marked or altered in any way.

If you wish to take photographs, you must seek permission. It is a good idea to ask about copying when arranging your appointment.

Volumes must not be pushed flat for photography. Photograph one page at a time if you cannot focus on two at once.

Eating and drinking in the Reading Room are forbidden.