

Caring for our collection

A guide for users of Surrey History Centre



Surrey History Centre



Surrey History Centre preserves the written heritage of the county of Surrey. Our collections include manuscripts written on paper and parchment, early maps, printed books, illustrations and photographs. They are all a precious resource and most of them are irreplaceable. It is our duty to ensure their security and preservation and we ask you to assist us by following the guidelines in this leaflet.

Production times

Original documents and printed books are produced from the strong rooms continuously throughout the day between 9.30am and 4.30pm Tuesday to Friday and between 9.30am and 3.30pm Saturday. Material held in the strong rooms that is required on Thursday evenings needs to be ordered before 4.30pm. Up to ten items may be ordered at one time and we aim to produce documents within thirty minutes of ordering. Normally, one item is issued at a time. Most items are delivered to our main desk at the

front of the search room but others, especially fragile or special collections, will be issued to you by the duty officer supervising the document tables at the end of the room.

Restricted items

The majority of our documents may be consulted without prior notice. However, a significant minority have access restrictions applied to them. Researchers are advised to search our catalogues and check the full document description before assuming they may see any original document. If any restrictions are found to apply, please ask a member of staff for advice.

Some items that we hold are unavailable for consultation because they are too fragile to touch. These are classed as **UFP** or **Unfit for Production**. Others need to be handled with extra care to ensure their preservation. These are classed as **AP** because they require **Assisted Production**. We

will advise you when this is the case.

Surrey Heritage must

- Safeguard our collections for present and future users.
- Ensure that our staff and volunteers are able to work in a safe environment.
- Maintain an environment in which our users can study our collections effectively.
- Carry out our legal duties. Please see our leaflet, **Surrey Heritage Code of Conduct** for further details.



Surrey History Centre, reception

Search room security

1. Closed circuit television cameras are used to monitor our search room. These images are monitored and recorded.
2. Staff will invigilate the search room and advise on the safe handling of our collections.
3. Staff may ask to check your belongings and notes before and after you have used our collections.
4. Collections that include loose or un-catalogued papers will normally be issued by the Duty Officer at the far end of the search room. These collections will be counted out in small batches of up to five items at a time. At busy periods this may cause a few moments' delay, so please be patient with us.
5. Many of our library cabinets are locked for security reasons and to preserve the order of



Safe handling guidelines

their contents. Please ask us if you wish to see anything in these cabinets.

6. Before handling our collections, please ensure that your hands are clean and dry.
7. Do not eat or drink anything in the search room. Even cough sweets and chewing gum leave traces of sugar and grease on your fingers that will harm our collections.
8. Original documents must be consulted on the large table at the right of the search room.



9. The smaller table is normally reserved for printed materials and maps.
10. Larger maps may be consulted on the wooden map table opposite the Help Desk.
11. Pencils only must be used for taking notes and completing request forms. No pens are permitted in the search room.
12. Records that can be consulted on microfilm will not normally be produced from the strong rooms.
13. Do not mark, annotate or deface the documents in any way.
14. Do not lean on documents or rest notepads on them while making notes.
15. Place documents flat on the table and ensure they are not hanging over the edge.



16. Use the book supports for volumes in order to preserve the binding. Turn pages carefully and slowly.
17. Use weights when consulting documents that are tightly rolled or heavily creased.
18. Do not rearrange loose papers, even when they appear to be out of order.
19. Handle wax seals with great care as they are often brittle and easily damaged.
20. Use clear plastic sheets when making tracings of our collections or when consulting large, unwieldy documents.
21. Handle unprotected photographs with gloves.
22. Do not try to flatten out items that are heavily creased
23. Do not fold volumes back on themselves to try to keep the pages open. Use a book support and the 'lead necklaces' available from the duty desk.
24. Do not remove paper clips, staples, clips or string tags from documents.

25. Do not run your fingers down a document. Please use our bookmarks to mark your place or follow the text.

26. Ask staff for assistance if you are unsure about the safest way to handle a document.

27. Please bring fragile or damaged documents to the attention of staff.

28. Do not place any of our collections on the floor, chairs or window sills. They must always be consulted on the search room tables.

29. Ask staff for assistance when photographing items from our collections. We have a camera

stand that can help to reduce stress on some documents.

30. Not all of our collections can be safely photocopied. Bound or tagged items, large and unwieldy documents and even modern books may suffer damage by copying. Our staff will be able to advise you about copying options.



We've been to a lot of trouble to save these records! Please help us to look after them.

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Opening Times

Monday	closed
Tuesday	9.30am to 5pm
Wednesday	9.30am to 5pm
Thursday	9.30am to 7.30pm
Friday	9.30am to 5pm
Saturday	9.30am to 4pm

Closed Sunday and Bank Holiday weekends
including Saturday