

Bath Record Office Rules

Welcome to the Record Office. We do hope you will benefit from your research here, and enjoy your use of the records. Please follow our rules and help us to ensure the documents are here for future generations of researchers.

Always handle documents carefully and touch them as little as possible.

Archives are unique, and vulnerable to damage. If possible, touch only the blank parts of a document, not the written parts. The surface of any page may be harmed by touch and ink may lift off the page.

Any accident to a document should be reported at once. If there is any difficulty handling cumbersome or fragile documents please ask the staff for help.

Use pencils only.

Accidents with pens and coloured pencils happen easily, but are very difficult – sometimes impossible - to remove. We are always happy to lend you a pencil.

Never lean or write on a document.

The pressure of your pencil could harm the document: place your paper directly on the table. Any mark, however slight, damages the document.

Please turn pages carefully from the corner.

Paper is vulnerable to tearing, and any weaknesses may be exacerbated by careless handling.

Use only clean hands and do not lick your fingers when turning a page.

Dirt transfers easily to documents and sticky fingers are acidic and damage documents.

Take particular care when handling photographs, and if possible, touch only the edge.

Photographs are especially vulnerable to damage because the emulsion layer on the surface of the paper is very delicate. Fingerprints will damage the image.

Book support pillows should be used when consulting volumes, and spines should not be forced.

The pillows support the spines of the volumes and help prevent damage. Wherever possible, the pillows should be formed into an appropriate shape for the opened volume.

Eating and drinking in the searchroom is forbidden.

Any crumbs or traces of food attract pests and insects, which can cause serious harm to documents.

Continued overleaf

Please take care to keep documents in the order and condition in which they are issued.

The order of documents in a bundle may not be clear to you, but please do not change it without referring to the staff. If documents are pinned together leave them like that; if one document is wrapped inside another put it back when you have read it. If you do not, it will make it harder for others to understand the documents – the order could be as significant as the contents.

No document may be removed from the searchroom.

A lost archive document can never be replaced.

No smoking.

Smoking is not allowed in the Guildhall. Fire poses an obvious hazard to documents.

Please be as quiet as possible.

To allow others study in peace. In particular avoid lengthy or loud conversation. Mobile phones should be turned off at all times in the Record Office.

You are entirely responsible for any photocopies you make in the Record Office.

If a member of staff makes a copy on your behalf, you must fill in a photocopying declaration form. If in doubt about the suitability of an item for photocopying, please ask a member of staff.

If you wish to publish all or any part of a document please contact the Principal Archivist.

A reproduction fee may be payable, and you may need to consider copyright issues.

Any legal process involving the production of a document or copy of a document, should be referred to the Principal Archivist.

Maps and documents on private deposit may not be consulted for legal purposes without the permission of the depositor.

Those who use their PCs in the Record Office do so at their own risk.

Please do not leave bags unattended.

Unattended bags are a security risk.

All visitors must sign in.

By signing-in you are agreeing to observe these rules.

If in doubt, please ask the staff.

Once information in any of our unique documents is lost, it can never be replaced.