

## Ask a Conservator Day

18<sup>th</sup> November 2020

With Collections Manger, Allison Campbell



### Photographs

- All photographs are highly susceptible to irreparable fading and damage from light exposure. It is highly recommended that if you want to display your historic photographs, make good quality copies and display those, keeping the originals safely out of the light.
- Store all photographs flat, away from light, damp and extremes of temperature.
- Use good quality, acid-free photograph albums.
- Never use any form of adhesive including glue, sticky tape or 'magic' photograph albums as the glue will damage the photographs.
- Avoid touching the emulsion or image side of the photograph. Wash and dry your hands before handling originals.
- If you do want to annotate your photographs with details such as the names, places, and date, do so with a 2B pencil on the back of the photograph, remembering not to press hard as this can cause cracks and damage to the emulsion.

### Paper-based objects / documents

- Keep any paper documents flat, unfolded, and away from acidic materials such as newspaper, brown cardboard, and low quality papers.
- If storing in display folders or plastic sleeves, always use: polypropylene, polyester, or polyethylene as other types of plastic can damage paper over time.
- Paper is a favourite food source for many insects, including silverfish. Keep an eye out for insect activity and consider sealing documents away in a plastic box.
- When handling, ensure your hands are freshly washed and dried.
- Avoid eating, drinking or using ink pens near documents.
- Lay documents flat on a clean table and avoid handling unless absolutely necessary - keeping the document in a clear plastic sleeve is a great way to protect it whilst maintaining access.

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### Textiles

- Each type of textile has specific care requirements, but the general rule of thumb in caring for textiles is to avoid placing too much stress on the textile fibers: only hang on coat hangers if the garment is in excellent and stable condition. Pad the arms of the hanger to avoid sharp pressure points, and use a size-appropriate garment bag to keep the dust off.
- Avoid sharp folds and creases if storing textiles flat. Use bunched polyester netting to pad out the interior of the textile to smooth out creases and folds. If storing textiles in wooden dresser drawers line with a length of cotton sheeting or polyester – exposed wood can stain textiles over time, as can cardboard and paper.
- Natural fibers are a favourite food source for many insects, including silverfish, case-making moths, and carpet beetles – regular inspections, cleaning and barriers such as garment bags can assist with protecting your textiles from insect attacks.
- Avoid using harsh soaps and detergents when washing textiles.
- Always wash by hand with and dry flat in the shade. Do not wring, scrub, or hang when wet. Never wash fragile or damaged textiles, or those with beading, metal or shell fastenings.
- Body shapes have changed over time, so avoid trying on antique textiles.
- Moisturisers, perfume and makeup can stain and damage textiles; always have freshly washed and dried hands when handling.