Covid Charter: Re-Opening of the Churchill Archives Centre

We are pleased to inform you that we will be able to allow visitors back to use our reading rooms from Tuesday 27 April 2021.

Visitors will be required to follow the Centre’s normal regulations and agree to the procedures outlined in this Covid Charter and any necessary changes in day-to-day procedures required. Any researcher not agreeing to the procedures outlined in this Covid Charter will be denied access to the Archives Centre and staff will look for other ways to meet their research needs.

The five guiding principles of the Charter are:
- The safety of our onsite visitors and staff is absolutely paramount and our mutual safety is at the heart of our re-opening plans.
- We will keep your personal details for 21 days in line with PHE’s ‘test and trace’ systems. There will be an option to scan the Coronavirus NHS QR code.
- Following Government advice, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory (although we are highly sensitive and supportive to those researchers who are exempt from this expectation), social distancing will be essential and staff will ask you to respect the necessary procedures in place.
- While the pandemic is prevalent, the Centre will have enhanced cleaning procedures of public areas in place. In turn, we expect researchers to maintain a good regime of hand and other hygiene.
- As always, the safety and security of our collections remains a key priority. We will advise on necessary changes to our usual procedures.

Operational requirements of the Charter:
- The service we offer will initially have to be on a small and reduced scale. We would hope to up-scale what we can offer over time but it may be necessary to reduce service levels at short notice if the public health emergency worsens, nationally or locally.
- We will have fewer reading places available initially and prior reservation is essential. Bookings will be on a first-come-first-served basis. [See FAQ
- Readers who arrive without a reserved place will not be admitted.
- Our reading room hours will be reduced to help us prepare for your visit and put documents away safely after your departure.
- All documents should be ordered in advance, at least initially. Limited productions on demand may also be introduced in due course.
- Some services (e.g. access to microfilm resources) will not be available.

We may be behind Perspex screens and face coverings but I hope to welcome you back to the Archives Centre over the coming months. Despite the necessary precautions outlined, I hope we can offer a friendly and tailored service and we welcome your feedback.

Our ‘FAQ’ (below) should provide more detailed information about our opening arrangements but please do let me know of any individual circumstances which might need to be considered.

Allen Packwood, Director
FAQ:

Booking Reading Room Slots & Ordering Documents

QU: how many days will you be open each week?
We are currently offering a reduced reading room service for four days each week, Tuesday-Friday, for pre-booked visitors.

QU: how do I book a reading room place?
Bookings can be made through our normal e-mail account (archives@chu.cam.ac.uk) or by phone on 01223 336087 (Tuesday-Friday only).

Bookings will broadly be based on a first-come-served-basis with safeguards built in by Archives Centre staff. Please do let us know if you have any difficulties. We will confirm all slots booked and do our best to meet the pattern that best suits your research visit.

QU: how many reading room slots can I book?
We would like to share our slots as widely as possible and will regularly review the best procedures for booking and confirming slots.

QU: how far ahead can I book?
There are no restrictions on how far ahead you may book, however, we can make no guarantees that the Centre can remain open and would ask that you are cautious in booking travel or accommodation in light of a potentially rapidly changing health situation.

QU: how many documents can I pre-order?
You can currently order 10 files in advance for each day. What exactly constitutes a ‘file’ varies by collection; this may be a volume, a traditional paper file or a collection of photographs. This is subject to review; some files are multi-part and particularly extensive, and we may not be able to provide 10 such files for a single visit. We also allow up to five further items to be ordered before 12.00 on the day of your visit. Please let our reading room staff know what you would like to order on the day.

We ask that pre-ordered documents are requested by the end of the Thursday of the week before your visit.

Personal Safety

QU: what if I fall ill before or after my visit?
We would ask you not to travel to us if you have or have experienced any of the usual symptoms of Covid (see https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/). We would request that you contact us at the earliest opportunity if you subsequently experience symptoms so we can contact other researchers and staff on duty during your visit. The information retained will be kept secure then destroyed after 21 days.

QU: How is my data provided to Test & Trace?
The personal data needed for NHS Test and Trace is gathered by the Archives Centre as part of your Reader’s Registration and booking, so we do not collect this separately for each visit. We may check to confirm that the telephone contact details we hold for you are current at time of booking. There will also be an option to scan the Coronavirus NHS QR code.
For 21 days after your visit, we will provide this data to Test and Trace if requested to do so. After the 21 day time period your Reader’s Registration and booking data will be retained as per our data protection statements, and no longer used for Test and Trace.

**QU: will your reading room air conditioning be switched on?**
There is an obvious, if slight, risk of air conditioning systems spreading Covid. Our reading room air conditioning systems will be programmed not to run while researchers are on site. This may affect reading room temperatures, especially in cold spells. Please bring warm clothing if it is necessary. (We can no longer loan Churchill College ‘hoodies’.)

**QU: will your staff wear face coverings?**
We will follow Government and College advice and anticipate that our staff will be wearing face coverings. It is anticipated that staff will also be positioned behind screens. All necessary advice will be offered at a safe and agreed distance and/or by digital means.

**QU: should I wear face coverings and gloves?**
We ask all researchers visiting the Archives Centre to wear a face covering while on-site, except when eating and drinking in our designated areas. (We are highly sensitive and supportive to those researchers who are exempt from this expectation. See the University’s Coronavirus Information pages for a helpful list of medical exemptions. Do contact us if you have any concerns or queries.)

We would prefer readers not to wear gloves while consulting documents, except for the handling of photographic materials (for conservation reasons).

**QU: can I use hand sanitiser?**
We would encourage regular hand-washing and good hygiene instead. There are some concerns on the damage alcohol based hand sanitiser could do to documents and would ask all researchers to wash their hands before consulting documents.

**QU: will you quarantine documents after they have been used?**
Not directly. However, all items will be delivered to you on a personalised trolley, so that we can minimise direct interaction between staff and researchers. Items you have consulted won’t be available to staff or other researchers that week.

**The Reader Experience**

**QU: is the main College site open for archives readers?**
The main site is mostly reserved for members of Churchill College. On arrival, please make your way directly to the Archives Centre. There is no need to report to the Porters’ Lodge. The College Bar (or Buttery) is open for teas, coffees and light snacks.

**QU: will you be issuing new reader tickets**
Yes. We are changing our procedures to minimise direct contact but will ask that new researchers read our reading room rules and watch our handling ‘slide show’ at a safely positioned work-station in our main reading room.

**QU: Will you be able to help with my onsite research?**
Yes. We would like to limit direct contact between staff and researchers but will have staff available to monitor and respond to enquiries you might have during the day. These services will initially be by e-mail (archives@chu.cam.ac.uk).

**QU: will your Library books still be available?**
Yes. These can be supplied with advance notice on the trolley with the documents you request. We would ask you not to browse the shelves. Please leave books on your trolley when you have finished with them. Books should be available for loan through the College Library’s ‘Click and collect’ scheme. Please ask for further details.

**QU: will hard copy catalogue binders be available?**
No. Staff can supply information, as required. For details of our collections, see https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/guide-holdings/

**QU: how will you offer conservation or handling advice?**
We will keep this advice to a minimum and ensure that all advice given is done in an appropriate socially distanced way. The setting up of book rests etc will be done by staff with freshly washed hands. All book rests, weights etc will be cleaned after use.

**QU: will I be able to take my own digital photos?**
Yes. Previous paperwork recording copies made by researchers has been withdrawn. However, copyright regulations are still in force and should be adhered to. Safe handling of original documents should also be maintained during the copying process.

**QU: can you supply paper and pencils?**
Yes. On arrival, we will give you a small ‘welcome pack’, including supplies of yellow paper and a number of pencils. We can also provide a code to connect to the College wifi.

**Onsite Facilities**

**QU: can I use your computers in the reading rooms?**
Our computers will not be available but you will be able to use your personal electronic devices to connect to our wifi.

**QU: will you have lockers available for use?**
Yes. We ask that you use only electronic devices while consulting documents and all other possession remain in the lockers. We will clean the lockers before use each day.

**QU: will you have bathrooms available?**
Yes. We have two public bathrooms available. Both will be cleaned regularly.

**QU: will you have catering facilities onsite?**
The College Bar (Buttery) is now open. We also make a number of socially distanced tables and chairs available in our Jock Colville Hall for researchers to consume their own food and drinks. Tables will be cleaned regularly.

**QU: can I park on campus?**
Yes. The College’s ‘top car park’ at the far end of the site I available [see plan]. Visitors with a ‘blue badge’, or similar needs, may also be able to park in designated spaces. Please confirm requirements in advance.

**QU: will you be able to offer overnight accommodation onsite?**
This is very unlikely in the short to medium term, although we may be able to offer advice on local facilities available.

**Remote Services**

**QU: what remote services are currently available?**
We have a team onsite and are able to provide up to one hour of research and up to one hour of copying (digital photographs) for free for each researcher each month. (Thereafter our normal charges will apply, see Copying) We are constantly reviewing the remote service we can offer, so contact us archives@chu.cam.ac.uk to discuss your requirements and how we might help. We also have a range of helpful resources available online, see: https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/online-resources/

QU: how do I keep in touch?
Our website (https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/news/) and social media accounts on Twitter and Instagram (@ChuArchives) are constantly updated with our news. Please do join our conversations online.

QU: I don't have computer or internet access at home. Does this limit your service?
We are always happy to explore how we offer our public service and would happily make contact and offer advice through telephone calls if this was preferred.

Last updated 23/5/2021