Correct handling of special collections materials will aid in their preservation.

**Plan Ahead**

1. The majority of photographic material is kept in cold storage. It takes 24 hours for the material to acclimatise to reading room conditions. Please bear this in mind when organising your visit and contact the Reading Room in good time.

2. There will be a light box provided for you to view the plates/slides with transmitted light.

3. A sheet of Plastazote, a kind of dense foam, will have been placed in your working area by staff. This provides a soft area over which you should consult the negative. This will reduce the risk of damage should the plate be accidentally dropped.

4. Photographic material is particularly susceptible to damage through handling. Please wear nitrile gloves at all time when handling photographic material.

5. If you are removing a plate or glass lantern slide from a box containing others, first remove any filler so that you are able to move the slides freely and gain a proper grip on the plate without introducing pressure to surrounding items.

6. Make sure you have a firm grip on both the plate/slide and any enclosure when removing it from the box.
7. Once the plate/slide has been removed and placed on the support in your work area, replace the filler so that plates/slides are less likely to slip or fall.

Consulting Material

8. Wherever possible view photographic materials through their protective storage enclosures. If you need to remove an item from its enclosure please ask staff.

9. When you first remove a plate/slide from the box, check carefully for damage. For example, a glass lantern slide may have lost its cover plate. If this is the case, make sure that you view the slide with the emulsion side facing upwards.

10. To reduce risks of abrasion of the image view glass plate negatives (or lantern slides missing their cover plates) with the emulsion side facing upwards. If in doubt, ask staff to advise. If you must view the item from the other side take care not to slide the emulsion side across the surface it is sitting on.

11. If the photograph is housed in a hinged case, make sure that it is adequately supported. Use a small book cushion if possible, and do not over-stretch the hinges.

12. Do not attempt to clean an item. If there is any surface dirt present advise staff who will arrange to have it cleaned for you.

13. Photographic material is very sensitive to light. There is a lightbox provided for viewing images with transmitted light. Minimise the time that the plates are exposed to this light, and turn the light source off whenever you are not consulting the image.

14. If you find anything that causes you concern, or you inadvertently damage an item, please inform staff so that the problem can be rectified or the item scheduled for repair.