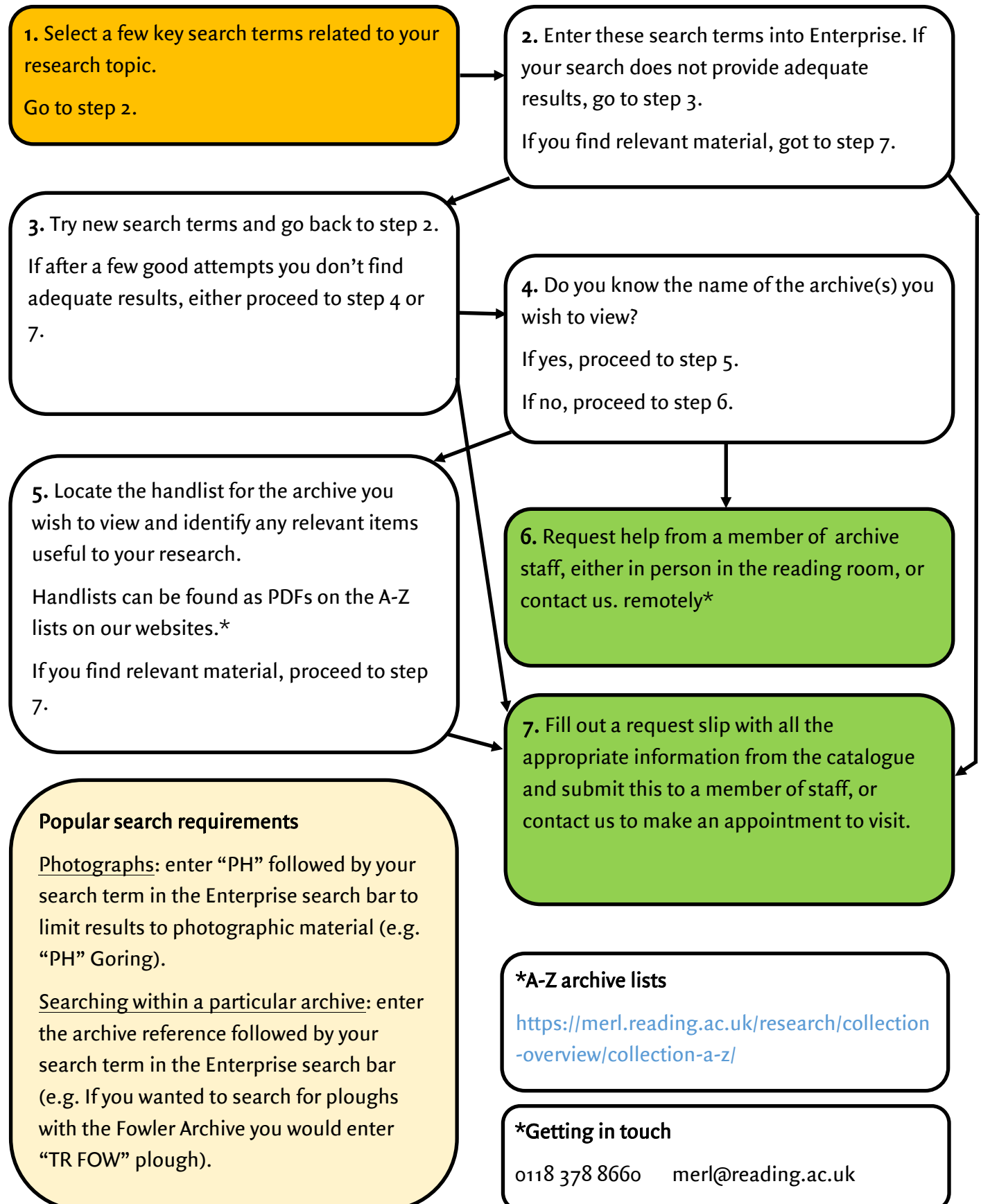# Finding material in the archives

Choose your research topic (this could be a topic, place, person or organisation) and then follow the steps below.

Access the online search catalogue, Enterprise: https://rdg.ent.sirsidynix.net.uk/client/en_GB/special/

1. Select a few key search terms related to your research topic.

Go to step 2.

2. Enter these search terms into Enterprise. If your search does not provide adequate results, go to step 3.

If you find relevant material, got to step 7.

3. Try new search terms and go back to step 2.

If after a few good attempts you don't find adequate results, either proceed to step 4 or 7.

4. Do you know the name of the archive(s) you wish to view?

If yes, proceed to step 5.

If no, proceed to step 6.

5. Locate the handlist for the archive you wish to view and identify any relevant items useful to your research.

Handlists can be found as PDFs on the A-Z lists on our websites.*

If you find relevant material, proceed to step 7.

6. Request help from a member of archive staff, either in person in the reading room, or contact us. remotely*

7. Fill out a request slip with all the appropriate information from the catalogue and submit this to a member of staff, or contact us to make an appointment to visit.

Popular search requirements

Photographs: enter "PH" followed by your search term in the Enterprise search bar to limit results to photographic material (e.g. "PH" Goring).

Searching within a particular archive: enter the archive reference followed by your search term in the Enterprise search bar (e.g. If you wanted to search for ploughs with the Fowler Archive you would enter "TR FOW" plough).

*A-Z archive lists

https://merl.reading.ac.uk/research/collection-overview/collection-a-z/

*Getting in touch

0118 378 8660   merl@reading.ac.uk

What is the catalogue telling me?

When you use Enterprise to search the collections, it looks through all our catalogued records to produce a list of results that feature the search terms you use.

You can see a typical record below, which features a variety of information. This is not only useful in determining whether it is relevant to your research, it also contains information that will help staff to identify and locate the item.

TITLE

This describes the form of the item (e.g. booklet, file, photograph etc) and offers a brief description of it.

PUBLICATION DATE

The date of publication or creation of the item. Sometimes we can only offer an approximate date or none at all.

Title: BOOKLET for new Fordson agricultural tractor.
Publication date: 1935(Sep)
Archive level: file
Part of: INDIVIDUAL ADVERTISING AND SERVICING PUBLICATIONS - VARIOUS FIRMS series TR REE/P2/B
Summary: Ford Motor Co., Ltd., Dagenham, Essex. Pp 12.
Further information may be available:
http://www.reading.ac.uk/adlib/merl_archives/110188465

Select an Action ▼

	Reference number ⊕	Loan type ⊕	Location ⊕
ERL	TR REE/P2/B1093	NON-LOAN	Contact MERL to view this archive

ARCHIVE LEVEL

This tells you at what level the record refers to. If you see fonds, series or sub-series here it means that the record refers to many items. Some of our archives are large and so sometimes we cannot retrieve fonds, series or sub-series requests. To explore the individual items that make up the archive, click on the link under 'Further information may be available'. If you see 'file' or 'item' it means that the record refers to a single document or folder.

REFERENCE NUMBER (sometimes CALL NUMBER)

This is the unique reference given to the item and is crucial to staff in identifying and locating the item.

SUMMARY

This contains any other useful pieces of information about the item, such as the creator and the extent of the item (e.g. number of pages).