

Adopt a manuscript at the National Library

✘ The National Library of Scotland has put 100 of its unique John Murray Archive manuscripts up for adoption – many of which are handwritten by Scotland’s greatest writers and thinkers.

The John Murray Archive is a treasure trove of 150,000 papers recording the business of the influential John Murray publishing firm which was associated with many famous names including Charles Darwin, Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, David Livingstone and many more.

Now members of the public will have the unique opportunity to adopt some of the archive’s amazing treasures, with most manuscripts valued at between £500, £1,000 and £5,000, and a select few available for £10,000.

The exciting new adoption programme forms part of the library’s drive to raise the remaining 10 per cent of its funding target needed to secure the future of the prestigious archive – so far it has generated over £30million, with £3million still to raise.

Martyn Wade, National Librarian and CEO of the National Library of Scotland, said:- “This new initiative offers a fantastic opportunity to adopt your very own piece of fascinating Scottish history. There are manuscripts from no less than 22 prolific figures from the literary world, each with its own fascinating story to tell.

“The items which are up for adoption would certainly make a unique Christmas present. Whether you decide to treat yourself or adopt one for a loved one, you can rest safe in the knowledge that your money will play a vital part in ensuring the preservation of the remarkable John Murray

publishing archive for future generations.”

There is an eclectic choice of material available including an amazing letter written by none other than Charles Darwin in 1859 as he sought to publish the world famous ‘On the Origin of Species’. In his letter to John Murray, which can be adopted for £2,000, he outlines his work and proposes chapter headings.

Other manuscripts include:

- A letter from 1815 from Jane Austen, urging printers to speed up their work with the mention that ‘Emma’ would be dedicated to the Prince Regent (£2,000)
- Sir Walter Scott’s eulogy for Lord Byron, dated 1824 (£5,000)
- Dr David Livingstone’s manuscript for ‘Narrative of an expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries’, dated 1865 (£10,000).
- Notebook from Sir John Franklin’s first Arctic expedition dated 1821 (£10,000).

If you adopt a manuscript you will receive a certificate, an online acknowledgement, and an acknowledgement on the item/container at the National Library of Scotland (a bookplate, for example). You will also automatically become a member of the National Library’s ‘Four O’clock Friends’, a group made up exclusively of those who have adopted John Murray Archive manuscripts. It is named after John Murray’s own literary group which met regularly in his drawing room and was called ‘Murray’s Four O’clock Friends’ by Sir Walter Scott.

If you adopt one of the higher-value iconic manuscripts at £10,000 will also receive a behind-the-scenes tour of the national collection with a curator, and the opportunity to view your adopted item. In addition you will receive invitations to a series of special events at the library, including exhibitions and previews.

If you would like to find out more about adopting a manuscript, visit:
<http://www.nls.uk/support-us/adopt-a-manuscript> where you can find a list of all available items, broken down by price or author. Alternatively call 0131 623 3804 or email development@nls.uk