

## The John Murray Archive

John Murray is one of the world's most famous publishing houses. London based, it maintained its independence for seven generations from 1768 to 2002, after which the business was sold and the archives relocated in 2006 to the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in Edinburgh. Although valued at an unprecedented £45 million the collection was acquired for £31.2 million with to the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Government and numerous friends and supporters who have contributed to the ongoing fundraising campaign. Proceeds from the sale have established a charitable trust whose purpose includes caring for the John Murray Archive.

At one time or another the Murrays published almost every genre and format of literature: books, newspapers, navy lists, guides, journals and magazines, with works of archaeology, architecture, art, biography, cookery, exploration, fiction, history, medicine, philosophy, poetry, politics, science and travel. Murray publications can be seen to represent nothing less than the cultural expression of over two hundred years of human history.

Of the thousands of Murray authors many were amongst the greatest of their age and are still much read, admired and studied today. For example poets and novelists including Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Jane Austen, politicians like William Gladstone and Sir Robert Peel, scientists such as Charles Darwin and Sir Charles Lyell, along with travellers and explorers like Isabella Bird and David Livingstone.

Their personal and publishing stories are told in over a quarter of a million items in the John Murray Archive which detail with the creation, production, sales and reception of their works. These records were created by publishers and famous authors, but also by less successful authors and those in the many associated literary and book trades; editors, reviewers, critics, artists, engravers, bookbinders, printers, booksellers and customers.

The acquisition of the John Murray Archive complimented the NLS' internationally recognised book collections and literary and publishing archives. The archive has had a significant and transformative impact on the NLS. This is largely due to the extensive ongoing program of care and promotion for the collection. Traditional academic and scholarly researchers from home and abroad have been making extensive use of the collection thanks to the facilities available in NLS, in addition to ongoing cataloguing and curatorial work and collaboratively funded projects and conferences.

The John Murray Archive has also been used by an increasingly diverse public audience in a wide range of innovative and engaging ways. In addition to a free exhibition at NLS' George IV Bridge, there are events, talks, online activities and an education and outreach program. This has included a successful three year writer in residency and other partnership projects focusing on Charles Darwin and evolution with the Wellcome Trust and the Scottish Youth Theatre.

The acquisition of the John Murray Archive by NLS has reinforced that a publisher's business papers are essential and integral to understanding of authors and their publications. The entertaining and informative stories in these publishing business archives have a broad, deep and enduring appeal and relevance.



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