



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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PHOTO CALL

10.00 AM, WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2014

MAIN LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

GEORGE SQUARE EH8 9LJ

**** PLEASE MEET AT SIXTH FLOOR RECEPTION ****

Galileo first edition and Shakespeare source book go on show

Fifty rare books and manuscripts – including a first edition of Galileo’s last great work – will feature in a new exhibition at the University of Edinburgh’s Main Library.

The 1638 edition of *Discorsi* was printed in France because the celebrated astronomer was forbidden to publish in his native Italy.

The exhibition is being held to celebrate fifty years of support from the Friends of the University Edinburgh’s Library, which has enabled the library to acquire a vast number of rare or valuable books, manuscripts and documents.

Also on show is a 400 year-old edition of the *Chronicles of Scotland and England* by Raphael Holinshed – a text reported to have been read by Shakespeare as a source for many of his historical plays, including *Macbeth*.

Other attractions include a first edition of Edmund Spenser’s epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, beautiful reproductions of *Birds of the Pacific Slope* and a rare copy of *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, written in 1598 by Sir Philip Sidney, with hand-written annotations.

The treasured documents – many of which have never been displayed before – are part of an exhibition called *Fifty Years, Fifty Books*, which recognises the huge contribution the Friends have made to the University of Edinburgh’s collections since its inception more than fifty years ago.

The exhibition runs from 28 March-14 June 2014 at the University’s Main Library Exhibition Gallery. Opening times: Monday-Fri, 10am-5pm and Saturday, 10am-1pm. Admission is free.

Curator Joe Marshall said: “We are delighted to recognise the great contribution made by the Friends. Thanks to their consistent support, our Special Collections are now among the world’s foremost for research, teaching and scholarship. The items in our exhibition represent just a small selection of the wide range of material purchased with their help.”

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