



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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PHOTO CALL

**9.30 AM, TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2015
MAIN LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
GEORGE SQUARE EH8 9LJ**

Washington letter offers insight into birth of US democracy

Letters from George Washington and suffragette Christabel Pankhurst are among archive items on show in Edinburgh this month.

The showcase of manuscripts, some of which have never been seen before, is part of Explore Your Archive Week – a UK-wide initiative demonstrating the potential of archives can have in providing a fuller understanding of history. This year’s campaign focuses on the story of democracy, looking at key moments in history that have shaped nations.

The letter from the first President of the United States is dated 9 June 1778 – two years after the Declaration of Independence was signed – in it, the new President “regretfully” refuses to offer a Doctor Ferguson a passport into the country without referring it to Congress.

The correspondence from Christabel Pankhurst, daughter of women’s suffrage leader Emmeline Pankhurst, is an impassioned plea to fellow suffragette Mrs Morrow. Dating from 23 November 1913, she states a need for “united demonstration for suffrage” and the “utter futility of torture” in the campaign for rights for women.

Further items being shown include a record of the proceedings of England’s Short Parliament, which lasted three weeks in 1640 until Charles I dissolved it and re-established personal rule over democratic process.

Items from Lothian Health Service Archive, which examine democratic access to healthcare through the dawn of the National Health Service, will also go on show.

University of Edinburgh Archives Manager Rachel Hosker, said: “We are delighted to be able to share these remarkable documents with the public as part of Explore Your Archive Week and highlight the democratic access to these collections. The University of Edinburgh’s vast and varied collections, have so many fascinating stories to tell which not only tell us about the past but inform us about people, places, events and the here and now. We would encourage anyone involved in research to explore our unique archive collection.”

The documents have all been uncovered in both the University of Edinburgh and Lothian Health Service’s leading accredited archives.

A selection of manuscripts will be on show at the Centre for Research Collections, 6th floor, University of Edinburgh Main Library from 17-22 November.

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For further information about the University of Edinburgh's archives, please visit www.ed.ac.uk/crc

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