



## *News Release*

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### **King's taste for bling catches the eye in 400 year-old archive find**

Glimpses of a royal couple's passion for jewellery have come to light in a unique archive document that details some of their most prized possessions.

The 400 year-old manuscript describes a number of lavish jewels owned and worn by King James VI of Scotland and I of England and his wife Anne of Denmark. The document, from the University of Edinburgh's collection, is dated from 1604, a year after the Union of the Crowns and the King's first year as ruler of both kingdoms.

The letter outlines a series of proposed repairs and embellishments to be carried out by the King's jewellers, Sir John Spilman and William Henrick.

The total cost for the work comes to £1374, 14 shillings and 1 pence, which is approximately £140,000 in today's money.

Students on a number of courses at the University will examine the document as part of their studies, enhancing their understanding of the period and the importance of such archives.

This insight into the King and Queen's love of jewels was discovered by archive staff completing a project to document the University's Laing Collection. The vast collection bequeathed by antiquary and bookseller David Laing has been described as the most important manuscript donation in the library's history.

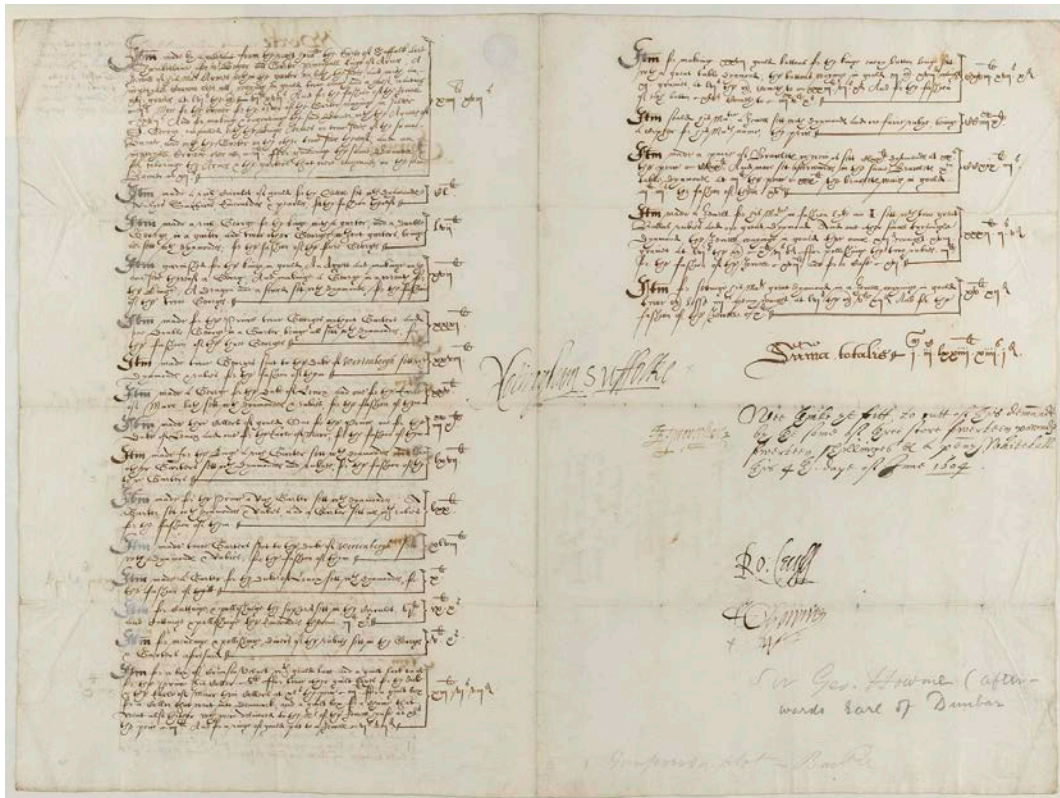
Archive Manager Rachel Hosker, said: "In 1604 the King and Queen were in the public gaze as never before and, knowing how much they liked jewels, it is clear they were keen to impress. This rare document offers insight into this aspect of their lives at a pivotal time in British history."

The manuscript details work completed on a number of brooches made up of gold feathers, which are depicted in a number of portraits of King James IV and I from the time.

Other pieces include a chain with diamonds and rubies, a jewel fashioned like "the bough of a tree" and armour for the King on which emeralds, garnets and sapphires were set.

Techniques used by the jewellers – such as soldering, mending, trimming and setting – are also highlighted in the document.

The manuscript – along with thousands of other items in the University of Edinburgh's collection – can be accessed by students and staff as well as wider public who wish to carry out their own research. . For more information, visit [www.ed.ac.uk/crc](http://www.ed.ac.uk/crc).



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