



Secrets of The National Archives: The stories behind the letters and documents of our past

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The National Archives is one of the most remarkable collections of documents in the world, holding over 120 miles of papers. In 2010 the staff at the Archives were asked to select their favourite document. The results of this poll form the basis of this book, skilfully curated by bestselling author Richard Taylor. Each of the documents has a timeless quality, acting as a true testament to a moment in history. The Magna Carta is a document sealed in a damp field in Surrey, yet is deferred to centuries later by Governments and Courts around the world; a parchment letter written by a terrified young girl pleading for her life paves the way for the girl to become Elizabeth I; the first example of musical notation is discovered on the back of another document; the actual telegram sent from a sinking *Titanic* remains heart-rending today; a ship's log written by Captain Cook, at anchor in Botany Bay, records his first encounter with Australian Aborigines. Far from being dusty documents from the past, these papers twinkle with life and resonate powerfully today. Fully illustrated, this book allows us to glimpse history as it really happened.

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