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Livingstone Letter from the John Rylands Library (17 February 2009)

The John Rylands Library (now the [John Rylands University Library](#), [The University of Manchester](#)) was founded as a memorial to the industrialist John Rylands (1801-1888) by his third wife Henriqueta Rylands (1843-1908). The building is a much admired example of Victorian Gothic architecture and has recently re-opened following a £16 million



Historic Reading Room of the John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester.

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redevelopment. Its collections include probably the oldest known piece of the New Testament, the St John Fragment. Other treasures include a 1476 William Caxton edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, thought to be the first book printed in England.

The Library possesses [one letter from David Livingstone](#) in its Thomas Raffles Collection. The letter was written by Livingstone at Birkenhead and dated 6 March 1858. Livingstone was about to return to Africa as head of the 'Zambesi Expedition'. Thomas Raffles (1788-1863) was an eminent Congregationalist minister in Liverpool. He was also a collector of autographs. In the letter Livingstone relates that he has 'African fever' and excuses himself from meeting Raffles that evening.

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