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265-year-old love letters opened for first time – 9th November 2023

Level 0

Researchers just studied 104 letters that were unopened for 265 years. The letters were written to French sailors. Their warship was taken by Britain in 1758. The sailors could not open and read their mail because the letters were taken to London. They gathered dust for two and a half centuries. Many of the letters were love letters.

Researchers studied the letters. They gave a rare look at history. The writers were lovers, parents, sisters and wives. They all had different writing abilities. The letters showed how we live in things like pandemics and wars. The messages were like those people write today. They were about caring for people, and passion.

Level 1

For 265 years, 104 letters written to French sailors sat on a shelf in the U.K. They were never opened. They have just been read for the first time. The letters were on a French warship captured by Britain in 1758. The French sailors did not have time to open and read their mail. The letters were put in storage in an archive and forgotten about. They gathered dust for two and a half centuries. A researcher said many of the letters were love letters.

A group of researchers studied the letters. They said the writing gave a rare look back into history. The writers were rich and poor. They were fiancés, parents, siblings and wives. They all had different levels of literacy. A researcher said the letters showed how we manage things like pandemics and wars. He said the letters were similar to what people write about today. They were about staying in touch, caring for people, and keeping passion alive.

Level 2

For 265 years, 104 letters written to French sailors sat on a shelf in a government building in the U.K. They were never opened. They have been read for the first time in two and a half centuries. The letters were on a French warship captured by the British Navy in 1758. The letters were taken to London, so the sailors on the ship did not have time to open and read their mail. The letters were put in storage and forgotten about. They gathered dust in an archive. A researcher from Cambridge University said many of the letters were love letters.

A group of researchers read and studied the letters. The lead researcher said the messages gave a rare and unique look back into history. The writers were rich and poor. They were fiancés, parents, siblings and wives. The writing showed how different literacy was among people in France. A researcher said the letters were important. He said they showed how we all cope with challenges like pandemics and wars. He said the letters were very similar to what people write about today. They were about staying in touch, caring for people, and keeping passion alive.

Level 3

For 265 years, 104 letters written to French sailors by their loved ones sat on a shelf in a government building in the U.K. They were never opened, until recently. They were read for the first time in two and a half centuries. The letters were on the French warship Galatée. The ship was captured by the British Navy in 1758 during the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763. The sailors on the Galatée were captured before they had time to open and read their mail. The letters were taken to London, where they were put in storage and forgotten about, gathering dust. An academic from Cambridge University said the letters were in an archive in London. He said many of them were love letters.

A group of academics read and studied the letters. Lead researcher Renaud Morieux said the messages provided a rare and unique look into history. The writers were from poor people and rich people; from fiancés, parents, siblings and wives. The writing showed the differences in levels of literacy among the classes of French society. Professor Morieux said the letters were important documents. He said: "They reveal how we all cope with major life challenges...like pandemics or wars. We have to work out how to stay in touch, how to care for people, and how to keep passion alive. Today, we have Zoom. In the 18th century, people only had letters, but what they wrote about feels very familiar."