



## Conservation of a Map of the coast from Exeter to Land's End, 1539–40 'Whitesond bay where parkyn Loned'

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This map is an outstanding example of the map making sparked by the fear of a French invasion of England from 1538 to 1540.

Financed by money from the dissolved monasteries, the coastal survey was the largest single British governmental mapping initiative before the 19th century. The whole of the South West is shown and is based on plans sent from the provinces, with towns like Plymouth being portrayed realistically for the first time. The French bays are emphasised, cliffs contracted and beacons feature prominently. The fences enclose parks where troops could be accommodated and fed and horses watered. Forts are shown and recommendations for new fortified sites are added.



*Above: Installation of the map of the coast from Exeter to Land's End, 1539-40*

The map's faded condition suggests the map was displayed and consulted over an extended period.



*Above: The map prior to treatment in the conservation studio showing the scroll format*

This map, on display in the Henry the VIII exhibition, shows the Dorset coast, from Poole to Portland and Lyme Regis. The paper used for the map is good quality and is in a scroll format. The map image is created with watercolour. In the past, to give greater strength to the scroll, the entire map was lined with linen.

The greatest problem for large scrolls, such as this, is that the original format can

be very damaging to the object itself. Viewing the map requires unrolling and then re-rolling the scroll. This action puts great strain on the paper and, in this case, has resulted in tears to the map.

The map has already gone through treatment in the past. Some of the materials used in this treatment were unsuitable, and have damaged the map in some areas. Such treatments would not be used today. Furthermore, as the map has been lined onto linen most of the repairs carried out in the past have been done on the surface of the image, hiding details. Some areas of repair have become damaged through handling of the scroll.



*Above: Detail of the paper scroll showing splits and previous repairs, prior to the recent conservation treatment*



*Above: Conservation in progress, using specialist conservation equipment to relax areas of torn paper that have lifted from the surface of the scroll*

Prior to the exhibition, and after discussion amongst conservators, it was decided that the torn areas, where the paper was lifting from the surface, should be relaxed and consolidated. It was also decided that some of the previous repairs, especially those that were hiding details on the map, should be removed. However, in some cases it was decided to leave the earlier repairs as to remove these will cause further damage to the map.

It is preferable to store and display such items flat. However, this map is over 2m in length, which makes such storage or display difficult. Yet the maintaining the original format is important. The map will, as a result of its scroll format, require ongoing conservation treatments.