

A derelict brewery has been transformed into a state-of-the-art archive centre, bringing 850 years of Cornish history under one roof for the first time.

Kresen Kernow in Redruth is now the world's largest collection of manuscripts, books and documents telling the story of Cornwall and celebrating its unique identity. It's been made possible thanks to a £11.7million National Lottery grant and nearly a decade of work.

To celebrate the opening, we're sharing five treasures from the depths of the archives to give you a small taste of what there is to discover.

Intricate illustrations

Garden designer Humphry Repton produced his 'red books' to visualise plans for his clients' gardens and estates. The books contain watercolour paintings with 'before' and 'after' views, cleverly using paper flaps to show the proposed changes.

During his career, Repton produced more than 100 of these books, one of which you can now find at Kresen Kernow. This one was made for the Gregor family at Trewarthenick around 1792-93.



Detailed dictionaries

This extract is from rector William Borlase's book *Memorandums relating to the Cornish Tongue*. Compiled over several years around 1750, it's an invaluable source for studying the history of the language.

The book contains a Cornish language (Kernewek) dictionary. Borlase published several books on Cornwall and its natural history which are available for viewing in Kresen Kernow's library collection.



Magnificent manuscripts

The complex manuscript pictured above is from 1579 and grants Cornish lands and estates to George Carey. The slippery snakes, letters made of birds, and the strawberry border make it as much a piece of art as a legal document. On the seal, Queen Elizabeth I sits on her throne and overlooks the contract in all her glory.



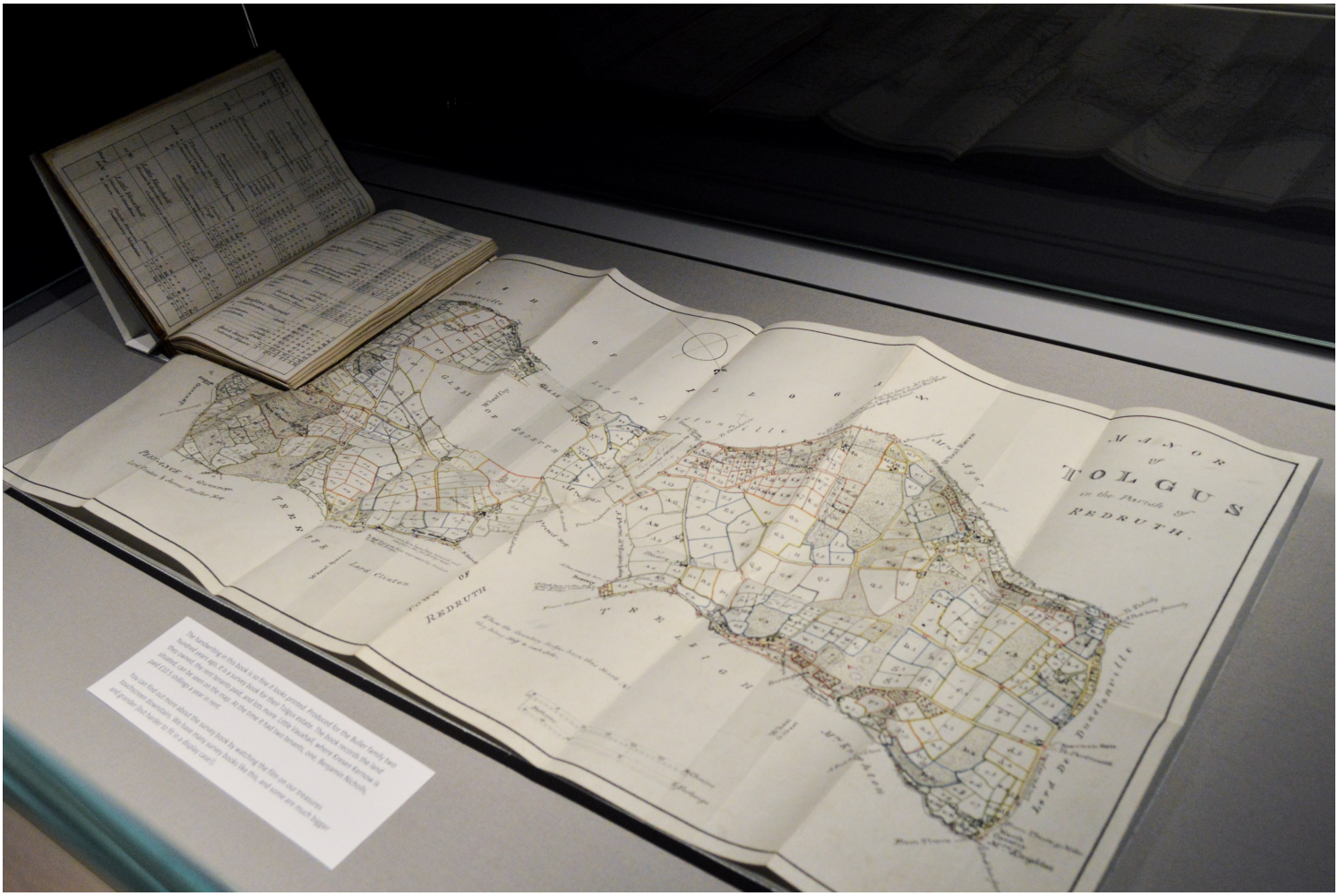
Charming calendars

This beautiful church calendar dates back to 1462 and is more than two metres long when fully unfolded. After half a millennium, it has become very fragile. Every month, the calendar commemorates a different saint, with decorations of seasonal agricultural tools and farm animals.



Marvellous maps

Can you believe all the writing in this book was done by hand? This detailed map was produced 200 years ago for the Buller family as a survey book for their Tolgus estate. The book records the land they owned, the rent tenants paid, and much more.



If you look closely you can make out where Kresen Kernow is located today - Little Vauxhall. At the time, it had two tenants, one of them, Benjamin Nicholls who paid £10 and 5 shillings in rent a year.

Why not visit?

The archive hosts its grand opening on Saturday 7 September, and on the following Wednesday hundreds of years of Cornwall’s history become fully available for researchers and the public.