**PRESS RELEASE **

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Major West Country Archive on Display

Highlights from one of the South West’s finest family and estate archives are to be exhibited at a special one day event taking place in Silverton, near Cullompton, on Saturday 9 September.

The archive, which relates to the Wyndham family, is the largest held at the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton and is regarded as a foundation stone of West Country history.

The exhibition will be a unique opportunity to see historical documents and maps from the Wyndham archive, along with photographs and artefacts from the Silverton Local History Society collection.

The Wyndhams settled in Somerset in 1520 and became major landowners in Somerset and Devon. Using documents ranging from the 12th to the 20th century the exhibition will reflect the story of the Wyndhams, the places they owned, and the people who lived and worked under them. Among the precious records on display will be documents relating to the construction of Silverton Park, the family’s Devon mansion, and records of the extraordinary art collection of George Wyndham, 4th Earl of Egremont, which included paintings by Titian and Caravaggio. There will also be an opportunity to see documents dated 1609 concerning the founding of Wadham College at Oxford University.

Scott Pettitt is the archivist at the South West Heritage Trust who has been cataloguing the Wyndham collection. He said “The exhibition comes at the end of a 15-month project by the Trust to make this important archive much more accessible.

“The exhibition is a chance to discover more about Silverton and the local area, as well as the Wyndham family’s lands across the South West.”

Funded by the National Cataloguing Grants Programme, the project has undertaken major cataloguing work on the collection which will be made fully available online. The Cataloguing Grants Programme is administered by The National Archives and supported by organisations including the Pilgrim Trust, the Foyle Foundation, the Wolfson Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust.

The exhibition runs from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm at Silverton Village Hall on Saturday 9 September and is free to enter.

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For further information please contact Beth Jerrett, PR & Communications Lead Officer, beth.jerrett@swheritage.org.uk or 01823 347418.

**Image/s:** *Photographs are granted for one time use in conjunction with this press release only, and photographers must be credited.*

**Photo Captions:**

1. A 1633 map showing the town of Cullompton, which will feature at the exhibition.
2. A selection of estate documents from the Wyndham archive

**Notes to editors**

1. **The South West Heritage Trust**

The South West Heritage Trust is an independent charity committed to protecting and celebrating Somerset and Devon’s rich heritage. As well as the widely-praised Museum of Somerset and the redeveloped Somerset Rural Life Museum, in Glastonbury, the Trust manages state-of-the-art facilities in Taunton and Exeter to care for the extraordinary archive collections of the two counties. The Trust also provides essential advice about the historic environment and manages historic sites. Individuals and businesses are invited to support the charity through its Supporters’ scheme. Visit [swheritage.org.uk](http://www.swheritage.org.uk)