



### The Collection

The museum collection originated with the collection of Ben Burgess, founder and Director of Ben Burgess Agricultural, who having collected Nelson memorabilia with his wife Jenifer, realised that it would ultimately need a permanent home. In 1992 Ben formed a Charitable Trust with the aim of 'establishing and maintaining the collection as a permanent entity for educational purposes within the County of Norfolk'. After much hard work and fundraising the Nelson Museum was established and opened to the public in 2002. Sadly, Ben died on 4th November 2000, before the museum opened, but we hope he would have been proud of it.

Since the museum opened, we have continued to receive donations and actively acquire objects for the collections when funds allow. The collection now comprises over 2,000 items and contains original material including letters by Nelson, papers written by and relating to Captain Sir William Hoste (Nelson's protege) and George Matcham (Nelson's brother-in-law) and the final handwritten draft of Mahan's biography of Nelson (Captain A. T. Mahan, *The Life of Nelson: the embodiment of the Sea Power of Great Britain* 1897).



An oil painting "The Death of Nelson", one of eight similar titles by Samuel Drummond, is the centrepiece of the extensive painting and print collection. The museum has three small oil paintings showing the Parsonage at Burnham Thorpe, Barsham Church, where Nelson's mother Catherine Suckling worshipped, and Burnham Thorpe Church, where Nelson's father Edmund was rector. Ben Burgess believed that this trio had been commissioned by Edmund and had hung in the rectory. Other two-dimensional items include original miniature portraits of Nelson, portrait prints, broadsheets, maps, charts, plans, engravings and illustrations.

The real strength of the collection, however, lies in the wealth of secondary commemorative material which comprises both contemporary and modern objects including many rare early pieces. Included in this broad range of ephemera are medals, medallions and coins, ceramics including plates, dishes, mugs, jugs and teapots, busts, statuettes and figurines, badges, cards, glass pictures, models, jigsaws, plaques, postcards and several items of furniture



The collection is supported by an unparalleled library of books, journals, pamphlets, notes and information relating to the life and times of Nelson and his contemporaries, contemporary naval history and Nelsoniana. Sections in the library include Nelson, the navy, Nelson's ships, naval officers, life on board ship, biography, naval journals, Nelson's battles, the Hamiltons, Fanny Nelson, Nelson's letters and journals and complete back catalogues of both the Nelson Society Dispatch and the 1805 Club Journal. If you would like to use the library for your research, please contact the museum to book an appointment.