Department of History, Lancaster University

Victoria County History: Cumbria Project

Briefing Note No. 2

Locating Your Sources: Online Finding Aids

<u>PRIMARY SOURCES</u>

Unfortunately, there is no single integrated list of primary sources relating to Cumbria. However, there are a number of useful online catalogues and guides showing what is available and where. Although several of these online resources overlap in content (i.e. A2A, MDR and NRA), all of them should be searched.

A2A (Access to Archives)

Converts paper archive catalogues (England only) into a searchable online facility. A keyword search gives the reference, covering dates, repository and extent of the source: www.a2a.org.uk/

A2 A includes catalogues of:

- Voluntary associations
- Businesses
- Estate papers
- Quarter Sessions
- Local government

> Example: Crosby Garrett 226 hits; Skelsmergh 321 hits; Papcastle 351 hits

NB: While it is possible to restrict A2A searches to material held by Cumbria Archive Service, their own online catalogue (CASCAT) offers a much fuller and more accurate guide to their collections.

Archives Hub

Description of archives held by Universities. Includes a number of Cumbrian Sources (339 hits for 'Westmorland' and 693 for 'Cumberland'): www.archiveshub.ac.uk

Examples include:

- At Senate House Library, University of London - Book containing transcript by John Gibson of the *Customs, Services and Royalties belonging to the Mannors, Lordships and Townshipps in the Richmond lands within the Barony of Kendal, 1574* (230pp) (1689).
- At John Ryland's Library, Manchester – Pain book for the manor of Thornthwaite, 1675-1790 (non consecutive).

British Library Catalogue

Searchable manuscript collection and Newspaper Library, including local and national newspapers: www.bl.uk/catalogues/listings.html. There is the option of searching the integrated catalogue, or the specialised manuscript catalogue: http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts/INDEX.asp

Cumbria Archive Service Catalogue (CASCAT)

Provides details of holdings at the four Archive Centres in Barrow, Carlisle, Kendal and Whitehaven More accurate than A2A, it uses a keyword and index search: http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/

> Example: Crosby Garrett 108 hits; Skelsmergh 170 hits; Papcastle 521 hits

Manorial Documents Register

Linked to the NRA, the MDR provides an online search for the location of all manorial documents relating to specific manors. You can do a basic search by manor name, while and advanced search allows you to specify the parish (civil parish), county, document type or year range:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr

The MDR includes:

- court rolls
- surveys
- maps
- terriers (topographical survey)
- documents relating to the boundaries, wastes, customs or courts

The MDR excludes deeds or other instruments required for evidencing the title to a manor. See also the Cumbrian Manorial Records Project website:

http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/manorialrecords/index.htm

> Example: Crosby Garrett 33 hits; Skelsmergh 9 hits (all records held privately); Papcastle 79 hits

National Archives Catalogue

Hosts the MDR, NRA; the Hospitals Record Database and Archon (list of every organisation with archives in the UK). Main catalogue uses a key word search. Includes:

- Social Surveys
- Inland Revenue Records
- Exchequer Records (including Ancient Deeds and Surveys)
- Chancery Records
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Records
- Department of Agriculture Records
- Department of Education Records
- Board of Trade Records
- Ministry of Transport Records
- Railway Company Records

> Example: Crosby Garrett 68 hits; Skelsmergh 36 hits; Papcastle 51 hits

National Register of Archives (NRA)

Lists the nature and location of manuscripts and historical records wherever they are held. Searchable for corporate, personal, family or place names. Does not retrieve all the records relating to a place, only the archives of families, businesses and organisations based there, or diaries of residents and visitors who have commented on it in detail. Provides a web link to the archive or library where the source is held: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra

> Example: Crosby Garrett 4 hits; Skelsmergh 2 hits; Papcastle 2 hits

ONLINE DIGITAL SOURCES

There are a lot of original and transcribed Cumbrian sources available on the internet. Some sites are open access, but others require registration. You will have to visit a reference library or the University to access the latter.

British History Online (open access)

Text search facility which enables you to search whole collection: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/search.aspx Includes numerous national sources, e.g. index to *Letters & Papers of Henry VIII*; *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, etc. and the following Cumbrian material:

- 'Records of Westmorland', i.e. *Records of Barony of Kendale* (3 vols) and *Later Records of North Westmorland.*
- *Register and Records of Holm Cultram*
- *Cumberland Lay Subsidy, 1332*
- Lysons' *Magna Britannia Vol. 4: Cumberland* (1816)
- *VCH Cumb. II* (articles on religious houses only).

Documents Online (TNA)

Documents at the National Archives available online. Some are free to view and download while others incur a small charge: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline

Includes:

- Ancient Petitions (free download)

- Wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (2085 wills from Cumberland and 866 from Westmorland)[1]

- Poor Law Union and Workhouse Records (free download)

Historical Directories

Digital library of local and trade directories, 1750-1919, searchable by period, place or keyword:

www.historicaldirectories.org/

Includes the following:

- Bulmer, *History & Directory of West Cumberland, 1883*

- Bulmer, *History, Topography & Directory of Cumberland, 1901*

- *Kelly's Directory of Cumberland, 1894*

- *Kelly's Directory of Cumberland, 1897*

- *Kelly's Directory of Cumberland, 1906*

- *Kelly's Directory of Cumberland, 1910*

- Mannix & Whellan, *History, Gazetteer & Directory of Cumberland, 1847*

- Pigot and Co., *Directory of Cheshire Cumberland Derbyshire Durham Lancashire Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northumberland, 1828-9*

- *Post Office Directory of Cumberland, 1858*

- *Post Office Directory of Cumberland & Westmorland, 1873*

- Bulmer, *History, Topography & Directory of Westmorland, 1885*

- *Kelly's Directory of Westmorland, 1894*

- *Kelly's Directory of Westmorland, 1897*

- *Kelly's Directory of Westmorland, 1906*

- *Kelly's Directory of Westmorland, 1910*

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[1] Wills proved at Chester, Richmond and Carlisle can be consulted at Local Record Offices.

- *Kelly's Directory of Westmorland, 1914*
- Pigot and Co, *Directory of Nottinghamshire Rutland Shropshire Staffordshire Warwickshire Westmorland Worcestershire Yorkshire Wales, 1828-9*
- White, *History, Directory & Gazetteer of Cumberland & Westmorland, 1829*

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (HCPP)

Includes over 200,000 House of Commons sessional papers from 1715 to the present. Key word search: http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography **Online** (Subscription Required)

A collection of over 50,000 biographies searchable by person or keyword, including place ("Full Text" search). Available to members of Cumbria Library Service: www.cumbria.gov.uk/libraries/access.asp

> Example: Crosby Garrett 1 hit; Skelsmergh 2 hits; Papcastle 4 hits;
> Kirkby Thore 3 hits; Brough-under-Stainmore 2 hits

PUBLISHED WORKS

There are a number of online catalogues of published material, many of them freely available.

Bibliography of British and Irish History (subscription required)

A comprehensive online bibliography, formerly known as the Royal Historical Society Bibliography. Includes some local journals with CWAAS Transactions indexed back to 1934. Available to subscribers through Brepolis: http://www.brepolis.net/

British Library (open access)

Has a copy of every book published in Britain. The integrated catalogue contains records for over 13 million books, serials, printed music, maps and newspapers: www.bl.uk/catalogues/listings.html

> Example: Crosby Garrett 7 hits; Skelsmergh 2 hits; Papcastle 1 hit;

COPAC (open access)

Merges the online catalogues of 24 major UK universities, including the British Library. Basic search using author/editor, title word or keyword. Entries are often duplicated: http://copac.ac.uk

Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society

Provides an index of articles in *CWAAS Transactions* and links to useful websites:

http://cumbriapast.com

Cumbria Library Service Integrated Catalogue

Full list of reference and loan books held by Cumbria Library Service, searchable by key word:

http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/libraries/

NB: Members of Cumbria Library Service can access various online resources, including the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

A Note on Relevance

It is likely that searching online catalogues and databases will yield a lot of irrelevant results - or "noise" – when doing keyword searches. The name of some townships (i.e. Houghton) can be found in several counties, while others (i.e. Askham, Kendal) are also surnames.[2] In order to determine the relevance of a source, please consult the VCH Guidelines and subsequent Briefing Notes relevant to the section you are preparing.

SR 1/06/11

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[2] Searches for Crosby Garrett, Skelsmergh and Papcastle resulted in far more relevant hits than was the case with Houghton, for example, hence their inclusion as examples throughout this document.