

ROUTES TOWARD EARLY MODERN LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS

Prolegomenon towards the first draft of an elementary elucidarium
Jeremy Maule, 1996; rev. Andrew Zurcher, 2002

1. By major author

(a) Peter Beal, ed., *Index of English Literary Manuscripts, Volume 1: 1475-1625* (2 Parts: Andrewes-Donne, Douglas-Wyatt) and *Volume 2: 1625-1700* (2 Parts: Behn-King, Lovelace-Taylor) (London: Mansell, 1980-1993).

This is the major tool for pre-1700 mss of all 'works' of major literary figures. Cautions: the information is excellent, but be sure to use it with the preliminary essay before each author. This alerts you to other classes (books owned, letters, public records concerning, etc.) of primary material. A postscript in each volume adds late finds; try to remember to consult it at the same time as each main entry you visit. Beal often reviews editions and textual scholarship to date in the course of his preliminary remarks.

(b) *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Co.), and the *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook* (Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Co, 1980-).

DLB volumes in the main Reading Room of the UL carry many minor authors, with varying degree of efficiency as to manuscripts—Nicholas Udall and Thomas Smith, for example.

(c) Manuscripts discovered or identified since the publication of Beal *IELM* are generally announced, described, and analyzed in periodical publications. An internet search by author name of journal TOCs (via Google, perhaps, or at individual journal sites) may yield information on late-breaking finds. Obvious places to start include *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700 (EMS)*, *The Library, Notes and Queries*, *TLS*, *ELH*, *ELR*, *YWES*, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, etc.

2. By incipit and word-content

This type of index, well-developed for medieval manuscripts, and as such occasionally useful for identifying early modern transcripts of earlier material (especially religious prose), has one main type in the finding-aids for early modern material: the first line of verse index. This type of index will help

- to find other manuscript copies of something you know and want to know more about and
- to identify unknowns you encounter in manuscripts.

The second purpose can also be achieved by other partially successful tricks:

- hunting *OED* (use online at <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl> for the rarest words in the passage, performing a full search of citations)

- using LION and the Chadwyck-Healey databases (online at <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>) to see if the manuscript you have corresponds to something printed.

First line of verse indexes in print include:

(a) Margaret Crum, ed., *First-Line Index of English Poetry, 1500-1800, in manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Entries cross-connect Bodleian manuscripts and often British Library ones as well; and link to early printed versions of poems too, for the rarer cases. It will also help to identify many things that are not in the Bodleian. The various proper name-, translator-, and subject-indexes at the back are a useful resource. On the other hand, it only covers English language verse.

(b) *First line index of manuscript poetry in the Huntington Library* (Marlborough: Adam Matthew, 1992). [15 microfiches]

This does not cover all the major family deposits of the early modern period, but can still be useful. Refer to the Index for further information on limitations. See also the *Guide to the first line indexes of manuscript poetry in the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Huntington Library* (Marlborough: Adam Matthew, 1998).

(c) Most major research libraries hold such an index *locally*, Cambridge University Library being an unfortunate exception. In the British Library Manuscripts Reading Room, old late Victorian guardbooks access verse in manuscripts accessioned before 1895; a much better computer print-out (working draft for a forthcoming print version), ed. Hilton Kelliher, indexes Latin and English verse in manuscripts accessioned after 1895. Focused letters of enquiry to the Rosenbach Library, Philadelphia and the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington will usually meet with a scholarly and courteous answer. Also try such letters at the Beinecke (Yale), though there is a local card-index there, too.

(d) William A. Ringler, ed., *Bibliography and index of English verse in manuscript, 1501-1558*, prepared and completed by Michael Rudick and Susan J. Ringler (London: Mansell, 1992). This chronologically ordered index is a relatively recent innovation. See also its companion volume, William A. Ringler, Jr., ed., *Bibliography and index of English verse: printed 1476-1558* (London: Mansell, 1988). Remember to use print verse-indexes for first lines: they are just as useful in identifying.

(e) The word on the street is that Steven May (Kentucky) is working on a similar chronological index for Elizabethan manuscript poetry; in lieu of the book, try the man.

3. By general index to individual libraries

Many major collections of manuscripts have published from time to time Catalogues and Indexes of their manuscript collections. Be aware that these can vary hugely in quality and accuracy, and also are intended for different sorts of purpose. Most, except the Bodleian, have simple card-catalogue entries reproduced in page columns. Some of these libraries have put these catalogues and indexes online, but it may still be easier or preferable in some cases to prefer the printed to the electronic sources. Both, where available, are listed below.

(a) British Library

(i) British Library manuscripts are relatively easy to cope with. They are catalogued either in a number of foundational collections, each separately catalogued (Royal, Cotton, Harley, Lansdowne, Stowe, Sloane, for example), or in a series of Additional manuscripts, whose latest typescript catalogue is kept up to date on the shelves, and whose printed volumes are issued at irregular intervals of three to seven years, roughly speaking.

(ii) *Index of manuscripts in the British Library*, 10 vols (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1984). An amalgamated index that brings together the various previous catalogues (though not all). Note date of this summary catalogue; you will need to supplement it with recent catalogues of additions and typescripts.

(iii) These indexes and catalogues have been partly superseded by MOLCAT, the British Library Manuscripts On-Line Catalogue, at <http://molcat.bl.uk>. While the interface provided by the online catalogue is comparatively rudimentary, the datasets are powerfully organized, and you can turn up matches and leads in moments. The major new resource here is the ability to search the manuscript descriptions. **Important caution: MOLCAT is still in development, and some important collections are not, or are only partially, covered. It is crucial that you keep these omissions in mind during any search.** The major omissions at present are:

- o Ashley manuscripts descriptions
- o Burney manuscripts descriptions
- o Cotton manuscripts descriptions
- o Harley manuscripts descriptions & indexes
- o 1783-1835 accessions index
- o King's manuscripts index
- o Lansdowne manuscripts index
- o Royal manuscripts index
- o Index Locorum of Charters and Rolls
- o Other non-published handlists and card indexes available only in the Manuscripts Reading Room (incl. handlist ed. Hilton Kelliher)

For very brief descriptions of the manuscript collections at the British Library, see <http://www.bl.uk/collections/manuscriptscoll.html>. For more detailed information, see Margaret Nickson, *The British Library: guide to the*

catalogues and indexes of the Department of Manuscripts (London: British Library, 1998).

(b) Bodleian Library (Oxford)

(i) [Various, eds,] *The Quarto series of catalogues, vols I – V, IX – XI* (vols VI – VII cover Oriental manuscripts). The original manuscript catalogues, giving full descriptions of the more anciently-held of the Bodleian manuscripts. For individual references and tips on use, see <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/quarto.htm> .

(ii) Falconer Madan et al., eds, *A summary catalogue of western manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 7 vols in 8 (München : Kraus Reprint, 1980; facsimile reprint of Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895-1953). The Summary Catalogue does not include full descriptions for those manuscripts described in the Quarto series. For tips on how to use the Summary Catalogue, see <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/sum-cat.htm> .

(iii) Mary Clapinson and T. D. Rogers, eds, *Summary catalogue of post-medieval Western manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford : acquisitions 1916-1975*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Commonly known as 'The New Summary Catalogue'.

(iv) New manuscript accessions are being catalogued online using EAD; for details and manuscript descriptions, see <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/online.htm> .

Bodleian manuscripts are best accessed in the first instance by the Index to the Summary Catalogues of Western Mss. One major run of summary volumes—organized by accession-date, not by class—takes the story to the first Index; the second is at the end of the next run of Summary Catalogue volumes, ed. Clapinson and Rogers. The reference in Summary Catalogue itself will then take you out to a class-mark, for a named manuscript collection (Ashmole, Laud, Tanner, Gough, Topological (by county), Rawlinson, Music, Theological, etc.). Some of these collections are very well catalogued: some have no other catalogue than the summary. Deposits not belonging to the library but held there for safety or the convenience of scholars are usually separately catalogued. Ask at issue desks if in doubt.

(c) Houghton Library (Harvard)

(i) *Catalogue of manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University*, 8 vols (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986).

(ii) *Inventories of Manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University* (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1987). Microfiche. Provides accession records with indexes and finding aids, and so is a more complete resource than the *Catalogue*.

(iii) Laura Light, ed., *Catalogue of medieval and renaissance manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Vol.1, MSS Lat 3-179* (Binghamton, N.Y. : Medieval & Renaissance texts & studies, 1995).

(iv) Barbara Mahrenholz Wolff, ed., *Music Manuscripts at Harvard: A Catalogue of Music Manuscripts from the 14th to the 20th Centuries in the Houghton Library and the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Library, 1992).

(v) The Manuscripts Department at the Houghton keeps *locally* a Supplement to the main card catalogue (index of collections catalogued between 1986-1992); the 'Old Widener' cards with information on manuscripts accessioned before 1942; and the 'pinks' or manuscript accession slips, representing mainly material that is on deposit at Harvard. For further information on the manuscripts collections, see *The Houghton Library: Manuscripts and Drawings. A Handlist of the Finding Aids with a List of Published Guides* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 1985).

(d) Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, D.C.)

(i) The best way to access the manuscript collections at the Folger is fast becoming the online way, which is achievable with only a little ingenuity via their main catalogue, HAMNET (<http://www.folger.edu/library/hamnet.asp>). For the time being, you will need, for some of the manuscript collections, an SGML-capable browser; the Folger suggests a site where you can download Panorama for free. The EAD-compliant entries provided in these catalogues are well worth the trouble, though. The only abiding glitch is that the Folger doesn't provide you with buttons to navigate back and forth through these manuscript lists; you must therefore resort to keyboard or mouse tricks (for Macs, try open-apple-arrow; PC users will be able to use the equivalent).

(ii) This could also come in handy, if you're planning a visit: *Guide to the first line indexes of manuscript poetry in the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Huntington Library* (Marlborough : Adam Matthew, 1998).

(iii) *British literary manuscripts from the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. The English Renaissance: literature from the Tudor period to the Restoration, c.1500-c.1700*, 30 microfilm reels (Brighton : Harvester Microform, 1986).

(e) Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.)

(f) Newberry Library (Chicago)

The 50-leaf guide to the Newberry's early modern manuscript collection by Sarah Cusk, *Checklist of English Manuscripts at the Newberry Library*, has not been published, but is available online at

<http://www.newberry.org/nl/collections/engmss.html> . It is only very rudimentarily searchable, via your browser's 'find' command; and the entries are extremely brisk; but it is better than nothing. Marginally. Via the Manuscript Department's 'main bibliography' page (<http://www.newberry.org/nl/collections/mainbib.html>), you may also access checklists of the post-1500 Italian and French manuscripts at the library.

(g) New York Public Library

(h) Wellcome Institute

(i) S. A. J. Moorat, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library. Volume I MSS written before 1650 AD* (London: Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine, 1962).

(ii) S. A. J. Moorat, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library. Volume II MSS written after 1650 AD* (London: Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine, 1973).

(iii) Richard Palmer, ed., *Catalogue of Western manuscripts in the Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine : western manuscripts 5120-6244* (London : Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine, 2000).

Other major collections more difficult of access:

(a) Cambridge University Library

Cambridge University Library manuscripts divide straightaway into Archives (university records, with some diocesan and town connections) and Manuscripts. The latter are principally catalogued in:

(i) *A catalogue of the manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 3 vols (München: Kraus ; Hildesheim: Olms, 1980). Reprint of 1867 edition, and hence does not cover accessions after that date.

(ii) A. E. B. Owen, ed., *Summary guide to accessions of western manuscripts (other than medieval) since 1867* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1966).

(iii) Locally, see collection of notes on Additional Manuscripts in cardboard boxes, and

(iv) A much-improved typescript of recent manuscript additions available for consultation from the staff.

Note also special topic within- or cross-collection catalogues:

(v) J. H. Baker and Jayne S. Ringrose, eds, *A catalogue of English legal manuscripts in Cambridge University Library* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1996). Contains, en passant, a number of literary materials, including an unpublished sonnet sequence, and some fine recusant verse and prose collections.

(vi) Iain Fenlon, ed., *Cambridge music manuscripts, 900-1700* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1982).

See also:

(vii) *British literary manuscripts from Cambridge University Library. Series 2, The English renaissance, c.1500-c.1700* (Brighton : Harvester Microform, 1988). 35 microfilm reels.

(b) The Huntington Library, San Marino, California

(i) *Guide to American Historical Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1979).

(ii) *Guide to British Historical Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982).

(iii) *Guide to Literary Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1979).

(iv) C. W. Dutschke et al., *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1989).

(v) Some collection-level records for manuscripts (700 collections out of a total of 1300) are available on the web via the online catalogue. Search at <http://catalog.huntington.org/>.

(c) The William Andrews Clark Library, Los Angeles

(d) The Harry Ransom Center, U of Texas at Austin

(e) Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Yale University

(i) Barbara A. Shailor, ed., *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library*

(Binghampton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1984-1992).

(ii) Laurence C. Witten II and Richard Pachella, eds, *Alchemy and the Occult, A Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts from the Collection of Paul and Mary Mellon*, 3 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

(iii) Online version of the Osborne Collection index, at <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/manuscript/osblist.htm> . This is not a user-friendly resource, but it's very thorough. Most (all?) of the records in this and in (iv) are derived from (i) and (ii), which include more thorough entries and illustrations.

(iv) Online version of the index to pre-1600 manuscripts, at <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/manuscript/prelist.htm> .

GENERAL CAUTION for all of these collection-level finding aids: Most of these general indexes are made at a given date, and you need to make yourself aware of it. After that date, you will need other routes (web if you're lucky, NIDS, annual Bulletins and Gazettes of the Library in question, sales-catalogues and auction-records, 'movement records' in *EMS*, and above all Additional Manuscripts catalogues issued from time to time in incremental sequence).

4. Local catalogues of part-holding in libraries manuscript collections:

The Cambridge University Library Manuscripts Room shelves them by country, and then by place within country. Try to acquire a sense of the major institutions apart from record offices for counties and boroughs: universities (remember the ancient universities of Scotland and Ireland), inns of court, cathedral libraries, private religious foundations (RC, Quaker and Dissenting holdings are particularly rich).

Some highlights include:

(a) Inner Temple

J. Conway Davies, ed., *Catalogue of manuscripts in the library of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple*, 3 vols (London : Oxford University Press for the Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple, 1972).

(b) Dr Williams' Library

(c) Hunterian Collection, Glasgow University

(i) John Young and P. Henderson Aitken, eds, *A catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1908).

(ii) Search the manuscripts collection online at <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/search/> (enter 'MS Hunter' in the 'Call number' field to browse the entire collection). For further information, see <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/collection/hunterian.html> .

(d) Trinity College Dublin

(i) T.K. Abbott, ed., *Catalogue of the manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin, 1900).

(ii) Marvin L. Colker, ed., *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts* (Menston: Scholar Press, 1991).

(e) Lambeth Palace Library

(i) J. S. Brewer and W. Bullen, eds, *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts preserved in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth*, 6 vols (London: HMSO, 1867-73).

(ii) Report to the right honourable the master of the rolls upon the Carte and Carew Papers in the Bodleian and Lambeth libraries, 1864.

(iii) E. G. W. Bill, ed., *Index to the papers of Anthony Bacon (1558-1601) in Lambeth Palace Library (MSS. 647-662)* (London: 1974).

(iv) C. Jamison, ed., *A calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers in Lambeth Palace Library and the College of Arms. Volume I: Shrewsbury MSS. in Lambeth Palace Library (MSS. 694-710)*, rev. by E. G. W. Bill (London: H.M.C., JP6, 1966).

(v) E. G. W. Bill, ed., *Catalogue of the Gibson Papers in Lambeth Palace Library, MSS. 929-942* (typescript, 1985). (available only at LPL)

(vi) E. G. W. Bill, ed., *Todd Catalogue Revision: catalogue of MSS. 113-283* (typescript, 1981). (available only at LPL)

(f) Victoria and Albert Museum

(i) *Catalogue of English Non-Illuminated Manuscripts. Supplements: Accessions and Recatalogued Items*

(ii) *The Dyce Collection: A catalogue of the printed books and manuscripts*, 2 vols (London, 1875). Note that the printed version of this catalogue does not include the up-to-date call numbers required by the V&A staff; for these, you

will need to see the microfilm copy of the V&A's own catalogue, which includes manuscript annotations with the correct, 'modern' references.

(g) National Maritime Museum

R. J. B. Knight, ed., *Guide to the Manuscripts in the National Maritime Museum*, 2 vols (London: Mansell, 1980).

(h) Society of Antiquaries, London

Pamela J. Willetts, ed., *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Society of Antiquaries of London* (London: D. S. Brewer for the Society of Antiquaries, 2000)

(i) College of Arms

Louise Campbell, ed., *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the College of Arms* (London: College of Arms, 1988).

(j) National Library of Scotland

(i) *Summary Catalogue of the Advocates' Manuscripts* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1971). This covers manuscripts acquired by the Library of the Faculty of Advocates before 1925 and subsequently handed over to or deposited in the National Library of Scotland.

(ii) *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland Acquired Since 1925*, 8 vols (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland and HMSO, 1938-82).

(iii) See also the Library's *Guide to Manuscript Collections*, online at <http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/online/cnmi/index.html> .

(k) National Library of Wales

(i) *Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1940-).

(ii) *A List of Caernarvonshire Manuscripts and Records in the National Library of Wales*. Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1936.

(iii) *A List of Pembrokeshire Manuscripts and Records in the National Library of Wales*. Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1939.

(iv) John Humphreys Davies, ed., *Catalogue of manuscripts. Volume 1, Additional manuscripts in the collections of John Williams* (Aberystwyth : National Library of Wales, 1921).

(v) *Guide to the Department of Manuscripts and Records, National Library of Wales* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1994).

(l) Cambridge Colleges

Colleges' holdings also divide into archives (some on deposit in the UL) and Manuscripts. The latter were catalogued in the last *Union Catalogue of English Manuscripts* (ed. Thomas Bernard, 1697) and this sometimes alerts you to holdings that have since gone missing. It is also a good idea to get to know **how** the college holdings were formed: read the James prefaces (below) and consult A. N. L. Munby's small guide to Cambridge College Libraries, *The Catalogues of MSS and printed books* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

Most college mss were recatalogued by M R James, c. 1890-1920. Consult the run of (*Descriptive*) *Catalogues of the Manuscripts in the Library of (X, y, z) College*:

(i) M. R. James, *Catalogue of western manuscripts in the library of Christ's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905).

(ii) M. R. James, *Catalogue of western manuscripts in the library of Clare College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905).

(iii) M. R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912).

(iv) M. R. James, *Catalogue of western manuscripts in the library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904).

(v) M. R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914).

(vi) M. R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the library of Jesus College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895).

(vii) M. R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts other than oriental in the library of King's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895).

(viii) M. R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the college library of Magdalene College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909).

- (ix) M. R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the library of Pembroke College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905).
- (x) M. R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the library of Peterhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899).
- (xi) M. R. James, *Catalogue of western manuscripts in the library of Queens' College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905).
- (xii) M. R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the library of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895).
- (xiii) M. R. James, *Catalogue of western manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, 4 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904).

Emmanuel, Pembroke, Sidney, St John's, Trinity, Gonville and Caius, and perhaps King's probably have the most to offer the early modernist. Christ's, Jesus, St. Catharine's, Magdalene, Trinity Hall and Queens' have smaller early modern holdings. But all should be consulted if a particular search is in view. Caution: some colleges (St John's and King's, for example) have continued to acquire quite large numbers of early modern manuscripts after James' catalogue. Sometimes early modern manuscripts can be found among the literary papers of 20th-century donors (the John Hayward mss in King's, for example, contain important Waller and Rochester manuscripts). These sometimes have second catalogues of their own. More modern colleges, too, sometimes acquire bequests and gifts of older materials. A. N. L. Munby's summary guide to Cambridge libraries (though old and in need of updating) is still the best route in.

(xiv) See also: M. R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895). A new project is tackling the fine music collections of the Fitzwilliam at present.

(xv) Westminster College's holdings (all religious manuscripts) are separately indexed in an excellent List and Index Society catalogue in the Supplementary Series.

5. Public Record Office

Now unified at its Kew repository. The move from Chancery Lane has been valuable in promoting a great deal of better cataloguing and explaining of different classes of records. The collection is immense (read: immense), and valuable to literary scholars both for the biographical record its many muniments offer that touch (often legally) on the lives of authors, but also for the occasional 'treasures' of literary mss that turn up in certain classes of deposit (recently: Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*, in the papers of Charles II's Secretary of State Sir Joseph Williamson; Jonson's entertainment for Cecil at the New Exchange, 1609; poems and life-records of Rochester and his writing niece Anne Wharton). Seizures from prisoners are a particularly rich kind of site.

By far the best guide is the one on the spot: PRO Guide (ie to classes)—formerly *Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office*, under which it's often indexed.

Each class of record is introduced by a summary of how it was formed, how it has been kept over the years, what secondary literature exists on it, and what the main finding-aids to it, published and unpublished, are. Versions of this Guide have appeared in 2 volumes, three, and in a 1988 microfiche. See:

- M. S. Guiseppi, *Guide to the contents of the Public Record Office*, 3 vols (London: H.M.S.O., 1963-68).
- *Guide to the contents of the Public Record Office*, Microfiche edn (London: HMSO Books, 1988).

By far the best place to search the various classes and departments at the PRO is on the spot: there, reference archivists (real people) are onhand at all times, via what is usually a very short queue, to answer your most complicated questions and to help you through the catalogues and other finding-aids.

Online access was introduced in 1999, and provides a great first-stop for hierarchical searching or browsing of the various catalogues. Start with the PROCAT at <http://catalogue.pro.gov.uk/>. Be advised that, as you might expect from a repository of such size and complexity, the online data provision is often skeletal, and sometimes frustratingly spare. Leads prised from PROCAT will be best followed up by searching the class catalogues at the PRO, or by referring to the various published calendars. The most important of these include the great multi-volume Victorian exertions:

- *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic (CSPD for short)*
- *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign (CSPF)*
- *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland (CSPSc)*
- *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland (CSPI)*
- *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian (CSPV)*
- *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish (CSPSp)*
- *Acts of the Privy Council (APC)*
- Records of the Courts of Admiralty, Chancery, Exchequer, Reequet, and Wards

New management at the PRO has initiated a useful set of specialist guides to certain classes of record: e.g. Richard Hoyle, *Tudor Taxation Records: A guide for users* (London: Public Record Office, 1994), and Henry Horwitz, *Chancery equity records and proceedings, 1600-1800: a guide to documents in the Public Record Office* (London: HMSO, 1995). Maps and manorial records are other categories covered: most are inevitably more modern.

6. Local record offices:

The printed guides divide between general library reference works (not listed here), Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts guides, and the more informal but useful cheap publications put out by genealogists to help each other.

The two best are:

(a) Ian Mortimer, ed., *Record repositories in Great Britain: a geographical directory*, 11th edn (London: Public Record Office, 1999). This includes many private London repositories, and is the more comprehensive.

(b) Jeremy Gibson and Pamela Preskett for the Federation of Family History Societies, *Record Offices: How to find them*, 8th edn (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1998). Useful maps and up to date telephone numbers. You will probably not find this book in the University Library, but it can be purchased at relatively small cost, if record offices turn out to be your thing.

Internet resources for tracking down record offices and their collections have blossomed fungally in the last five years. Most record offices now have their own websites with the same details, and more, supplied in the above guides. These websites, along with other classification information, have been indexed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Archon project, and the best way to browse/search them is definitely via the HMC Archon directory and portal; go to <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/archon/archon.htm> .

6a. Getting a quick grip on the many local histories of English towns and counties:

...is an indispensable first step in approaching county record office holdings. Two printed routes in are:

(a) C. R. J. Currie and C. P. Lewis, *English County Histories: A Guide* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997). Invaluable county-by-county historiography, with detailed refs to the early chorographies, record series, Transactions of Local History societies, particular monographs, and many collections in manuscript (often church or family-centered).

(b) *VCH* stands for *Victoria County History of* (X, y, z-shire). Multi-volume county histories that appear irregularly from the beginning of this century. In Cambridge they are held in the University Library's Reading Room. Few are complete. They are organised by hundreds, and not always easy to access.

6b. Locating documents in county repositories, and other local (mostly public) deposits:

The new 'Access To Archives' initiative of the Public Record Office has, with a lot of public money, done wonders. Many (but not all) county ROs have signed up, as have other smaller manuscript repositories (including some Oxbridge colleges; for a list of participants, see <http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk/about/contributors/index.asp>). The interface is smart and responsive, and, which is most wonderful, the search results come with accurate, often extensive, descriptions using EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and up to the high level of ISAD-G (International Standard for Archival Description – General); this may sound like tradespeak, but it translates to quality. Certainly enough information is supplied to justify a telephone call to the archive in question, and experience indicates that, more often than not, dedicated archivists

(exhausted by genealogists) are more than happy to aid serious and courteous academic researchers.

Access the 'A2A' catalogue at: <http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk/> (note: you must start each session at the main A2A homepage; you cannot bookmark the search page directly).

Caution: This is not the New Jerusalem, and these online records should be treated gingerly. While the catalogue gives the illusion of incredible comprehensiveness and detail, not all records have yet been computerized at all repositories (hardly), and some of the cataloguing has been done on a shoestring, however ISAD-G compliant it may be. You may find productive and astonishing leads, but you may also find that the catalogue is useful for little more than locating materials at the collection level (particular family or manorial papers, for example). Online searching of A2A must always be supplemented by other printed aids (RCHM reports, for example), and by travelling to the repository to use on-site records; for the time being, there's nothing like the real thing.

7. Larger national schemes for historical manuscripts:

The emphasis in these is not predominantly literary, but many literary manuscripts, or historical manuscripts with strong literary connections, are buried in these informations. Among the printed sources, the most important is surely the series of *Reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, which began in 1874. These reports of manuscript holdings in private hands provide detailed summaries, paraphrases, and sometimes even direct quotations from an extraordinary range of documents. Some of the reports are especially rich—e.g. De L'Isle and Dudley for the Robert Sidney correspondence, or the Hatfield manuscripts for Secretary Cecil. The HMC maintains an online list of volumes at <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/pubs/rep&cal.htm>. Many manuscripts will have moved since these reports were drafted, but some collections have stayed intact, and in any case you may need to know where something *once was* to have a shot in tartarus of pinning it down *now*. The larger country houses (e.g. Hatfield, Longleat: both with many manuscripts of early modern literary interest) often have their own archivist and charge a daily rate for consultation. If in doubt about how to approach these repositories, it is a good idea to consult a senior Cambridge scholar, or ask the Record Office of the relevant county for advice first. Proper and courteous approach to these sometimes prickly manuscript fiefdoms cannot be stressed emphatically enough.

8. Other informations:

(a) Reference works

(i) The *Victorian Dictionary of National Biography* and *New Dictionary of National Biography* (expected 2004 in print and electronic format)

(ii) Concordances, by author and/or by work

(iii) Genealogical reference works in manuscript

(iv) J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922-54).

(v) Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714, their parentage, birthplace, and year of birth, with a record of their degrees, being the matriculation register of the University, with supplement (1715-1886)*, 8 vols (Oxford: Parkes and Company, 1888).

(vi) Anthony á Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses : an exact history of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford : to which are added the Fasti, or Annals of the said University*, revised and enlarged by Philip Bliss, 5 vols (London: Rivington, 1813-20).

(vii) *Dictionary of Literary Biography*; it can be tricky to find the relevant volume, but the articles sometimes contain unspotted or long-overtrampled gems.

(viii) Modern Language Association (MLA) database (searchable by author name)

(ix) MHRA database, a.k.a. Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (ABELL), available via Literature Online from Chadwyck-Healy, at <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/> . Searchable by author name.

(x) *The Year's Work in English Studies* (YWES), a roundup, also indexed by author name.

And never forget that it is **always necessary** to consult printed reference works alongside any manuscript finding-aids (in particular Wing and (E)STC). When pursuing smaller fare, it's often a good idea to consult the indexes of proper names in heraldic manuscripts, and the county histories and their record and periodical series.

(b) some smaller informations, specifically manuscript:

(i) J. K. Moore, *Primary Materials Relating to Copy and Print in English Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1992)

(ii) Robin C. Alston, *Books with manuscript: a short title catalogue of books with manuscript notes in the British Library, including books with manuscript additions, proofsheets, illustrations, corrections. With indexes of owners and books with authorial annotations* (London: British Library, 1994).

(c) Auction records

(i) Sales catalogues from Sotheby's, Christie's, etc., are on the shelves in a major research library near you.

(ii) *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700* also carries an annual list of 'Movements' in the sale-houses and in treaty acquisitions.

(d) The Perdita Project for early modern women's manuscripts, with especial focus on miscellanies: based at Nottingham Trent University, c/o Drs Elizabeth Clarke, Vicki Burke, Martyn Bennett. For further information, visit the project website at <http://human.ntu.ac.uk/perdita/> .

(e) Microfilms and fiches

The Cambridge UL holds a not very well indexed collection of these, and they may often save you a visit to Washington, Oxford, Kew, etc. Notice especially the (Brighton) Harvester run of Renaissance Literary Manuscripts; the NIDS list screen-searchable in Manuscripts Room and with fiches in the Micro-Room; STC and Wing microfilms; and commercial publications by Adam Matthew and Harvester, which often mop up special categories (women's life-writing, Parliamentary materials); and also State Papers.

(f) the greatest English palaeographer?

P. L. Heyworth, ed., *The Letters of Humphrey Wanley: palaeographer, Anglo-Saxonist, Librarian, 1672-1726* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).