SOME INTERNET RESOURCES FOR MEDIEVAL GENEALOGY

***by Chris Phillips*[1]**

Continuing our regular feature[2] on internet resources, Chris Phillips provides website addresses that aid access to medieval subsidy rolls, year books, and data on monumental brasses, with a little discussion on the content and usability of the sites.

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The E 179 Database

Among the wealth of unpublished medieval material at the Public Record Office are tens of thousands of English tax records in the E 179 series, produced between the 12th and the 17th centuries (traditionally known as the "subsidy rolls"). In fact, not only are most of them unpublished, but until recently the documents had not even been listed by date and place. Such a listing is now in progress, as a collaboration between the P.R.O. and Cambridge University. So far, over 25,000 documents have been listed, and coverage is complete for lay taxation in five English counties. The resulting **E 179 Database** is already available at ***http://www.pro.gov.uk/catalogues/e179.htm.*** The search facility, at ***http://www.records.pro.gov.uk/e179/search_new.asp,*** is quite powerful (although not very user-friendly) and allows searching by place, date and other criteria. For each document, the database contains a description, including a list of the places covered and bibliographical details in cases where the text has been published. However, the names of the individuals taxed are not included.

Year Books

The unofficial medieval law reports known as the Year Books are another relatively neglected genealogical source. Although they present some difficulties - such as the frequent use of initials for both personal and place names, as well as problems of language and interpretation - many of them have been published at one time or another, so that they are more accessible than the bulk of medieval legal records. They are now even more accessible, thanks to **An Index and Paraphrase of Printed Year Book Reports, 1268 - 1535**, compiled by Professor David J. Seipp of the University of Boston (***http://www.bu.edu/law/seipp/index.html***). This is another work in progress - currently, more than 3,000 reports from 1399 onwards have been paraphrased, and those from 1378 onwards have been completely indexed. The search page, at ***http://www.bu.edu/phpbin/lawyearbooks/search.php***, offers a "Quick Search" option, as well as a "Custom Search" with probably more fields than I have ever seen before (well over 30!).

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2 See *Foundations* **1** (1): 44-45 (January 2003).

More information on use of the internet for medieval genealogy can be found at http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/

Monumental brasses

Many medieval funeral monuments are aesthetically appealing as well as offering valuable information to the genealogist. In the past, I've been surprised how little information about monumental brasses, and how few illustrations, have been available on the Internet. One notable exception was the geographically arranged catalogue of brass rubbings held by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, at ***http://ashweb.ashmol.ox.ac.uk/ash/departments/antiquities/brass/***, for which a "creative anachronism" enthusiast has provided a surname index at ***http://www.sca.org/heraldry/laurel/names/brasses/***.

More recently the **Monumental Brass Society** has provided an extensive site at ***http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/.*** It includes general reference material on brasses and incised slabs, lists of contents of recent publications and sample articles, a huge bibliography and more than 160 images of individual monuments, arranged in thematic galleries. The associated website of the **County Series**, at ***http://home.clara.net/williamlack/***, includes a place-name index to the Society's publications between 1887 and 2002, and surname indexes for the 12 county volumes published so far.