

Review: THE WOLLEY MANUSCRIPTS

Miriam Wood 1977 Index to the catalogue of British Museum  
Additional Manuscripts Numbers 6676 to 6686. 3 Vols. Derbyshire  
County Council. £3.00.

Not the catchiest title of the year, but these three typescript volumes must be amongst the most important publications available to anyone interested in Derbyshire lead mining, and indeed in Derbyshire generally. 6676 to 6686 are of course the eleven volumes, out of fifty three deposited by Adam Wolley at the British Museum, which relate almost entirely to the Derbyshire lead mining industry. The County Library provided local researchers with an immense service a few years ago when they purchased two microfilm copies of the volumes (one at Derby, the other at Matlock), and have now enhanced this by commissioning and publishing Mrs. Wood's catalogue.

The first volume, of 122 foolscap (whyever foolscap?) pages, lists the actual documents, with a brief description of the contents, but which is often full enough for the researcher not to need to consult the original. The documents themselves are mainly 17th and 18th century, and the catalogue entries make fascinating reading. The second and third volumes are devoted to places, persons, subjects, and are a necessary adjunct to the first.

As anyone who used the Wolley collection before the index was compiled will attest, Mrs. Wood's task was enormous: both from the difficulty of interpreting much of the material, and from the strain of using the micro-film reader. The quality of the result, however, more than justifies the effort. Pleasing to see too that the County Library has resisted the temptation to use more expensive printing methods which could so easily have tripled the cost - those who buy books to store on shelves may be a little disappointed in the typography, those who buy them to use will be delighted. And now what about the other forty two volumes?

The catalogue is available from the County Library, County Offices, Matlock.

Lynn Willies