

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE BARROW ARCHIVE CENTRE
AND LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY**
Compiled by Jean McSorley, August 2023. Copyright: Barrow Archive Centre

This paper was developed to help people access information on Barrow and Furness; much of which is held in the Barrow Archive Centre & Local Studies Library, both of which are in the Barrow Library on Ramsden Square. The material held by the Archives and Local Studies is divided, with some material available at different times.

ONLINE RESOURCES

CASCAT is the online Cumbria Archives Catalogue. This provides key details on many of the records held in the Barrow Archive Centre (BAC), material in held other Cumbrian archive centres, and online research guides e.g. how to research your family history. As with most catalogues, CASCAT does not always give search results if too many words are used in the search, try to limit them to a street, event or a person's name. Special tips on searching CASCAT are on the catalogue website. Remember to list Barrow as the relevant archive centre. The information about any given piece of material held in the archives on CASCAT is limited. The entries on CASCAT can, however, be helpful in giving dates, confirming addresses etc.

https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/Online_catalogues/default.asp

The website for the Barrow Archive Centre and Local Studies Library (see details for their opening hours) is:

[Barrow Archive Centre and Local Studies Library | Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council \(cumbriaarchives.org.uk\)](http://Barrow Archive Centre and Local Studies Library | Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council (cumbriaarchives.org.uk))

BARROW ARCHIVE CENTRE – open 9.30am-1pm and 2pm-5pm Weds-Friday. Booking is essential to view material. Tel: 01229 407377

Almost all the material accessed in the archives has to be requested by a user who holds an Archives Card. These are free. The form for a card must be completed online. The BAC will take the photograph required for the card. You will need to show two forms of identity e.g. a driving licence or a council tax bill for your address and bank card.

Website: www.archivescard.com

Not all the archive databases are, however, online; nor is every document in the archives on a database. This means that while much relevant material can be referenced on CASCAT, some can only be accessed via databases or folders held in the archives. The following material can be viewed at the archives. Some of it can be identified, through file numbers, using CASCAT.

- **Photographs** The BAC holds a large collection of images. This includes access to the Sankey database of all their images, many of the postcards and album books, books of collections of their photographs, and books of old photographs of Barrow by other publishers. There are also collections of photographs by individuals, which can be found via CASCAT. There is an extensive collection of street-level and aerial photographs of the town and surrounding area. These can be viewed on request (use CASCAT to search).
- **Military & World Wars** Most of the books are in the Local Studies section (see following information), but the archives also holds some of them – as well as maps, personal recollections and newspaper articles (including a map of where bombs fell

on the town in WW2) and other material relating to WWI and WWII, as well as the history of local regiments.

- Maps The BAC holds a full range of ordnance survey maps for Barrow, along with some maps published by local companies. A series of valuation maps (1911, 1931) link to records in valuation books which give the names of residents and ownership of many properties. You will need to make a request to see the maps; archives staff will help you in finding the map you want.
- Gazetteer: A comprehensive pre-1991 list of when most of the streets in Barrow were first listed on maps, or in year books and other documents. This can viewed only at the BAC.
- Pamphlet collection This is a large and diverse range of material - from town guides, theatre posters, church leaflets, souvenirs of ship launches and sporting events – some from the mid-1800s. The database for this is not yet on-line. Researchers need to ask in the archives on how to access material in collection.
- Borough Council Minutes The printed minute books can be accessed in the Local Studies section. Earlier minutes, and background reports, e.g. from the Borough Medical Officer, can be accessed through searching CASCAT, and requesting information using the file numbers. The hand-written minute books from the early years of the council are also available to view on request at BAC.
- Industry/Legal There is a large amount of information on Barrow's industries, including the railways, iron and steel works, the shipyard and local brickworks; along with memoirs of people who worked in them. A number of local solicitors have deposited collections of wills, mortgage agreements/deeds and other material with the BAC. These are particularly useful for researching the history of a house, or significant building.
- Historians & Academics This covers the collections of well known local historians, including, amongst others, James Melville, J L Hobbs, William Kendall, Alice Leach, Harper Gaythorpe, Bryn Trescatheric and J D Marshall. University/degree research papers on aspects of Barrow's history are available e.g. Alan Smith's paper on Crime in Late Victorian Barrow-in-Furness 1881-1901 (see CASCAT for reference number).
- Health, Education and Sport: Information on these topics is held in a variety of forms in the BAC, including hospital and school buildings and inspectors reports.
- Diaries: A variety of material is available at the BAC; including the diaries of the Duke of Devonshire, former agent to the Duke of Buccleuch and Barrow Mayor, Edward Wadham, and those of the farmer William Fisher. Check the on line catalogue via the Cumbria Library website to locate them:
<https://cumbria.gov.uk/libraries-archives/librariesandarchives.asp>
- Well-known individuals: The BAC holds material on local industrialists, politicians and land owners.
- Oral History Collection Those held in the archives can be accessed via searching CASCAT and making a request to listen to them at the archives.

LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY (LSL) – accessible 6 days a week: open Mon-Thurs 9.30am- 6pm; Friday 9.30am-5pm and Saturday 10am-4pm.

The following can be accessed at the LSL:

- Trade Directories, and Year Books The trade directories were published from around 1870-1911, before Year Books began to be produced around 1911. The books include information on local councils, churches, businesses, organisations, and information on some resident names and house numbers for most streets. They are useful as they provide information in between the censuses, which are every ten years.
- Borough Council Minutes These printed minute books are an important source for initiating research, or following official action, on key issues e.g. demolition of some streets.
- Census folders and microfilm Very early census material (e.g. 1861) can be searched using hard-copy folders and, where available, microfilms. Ancestry.co.uk, which holds census data to 1911, can be viewed free at the BAC. Find My Past, which holds the 1921 census information, can be accessed from computers in the library (library card essential for this service). Users will, however, have to pay to view census pages as 'Find My Past' is a pay-to-view service.
- Historians & Academics This includes books by some well known local historians, including, amongst others, James Melville, J L Hobbs, William Kendall, Alice Leach, Harper Gaythorpe, Bryn Trescatheric and J D Marshall.
- Barrow Herald, Barrow News North West Evening Mail, the Soulby Advertiser, and other local newspapers: Local newspapers, some going back to 1848, are available for viewing on microfilm. The articles in the newspapers are not indexed by event or timing; it will help if you have an approximate date before starting your research!
- Barrow Naturalist's Field Club (BNFC) and the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian and Archeaological Society: Research papers and presentations on a diverse range of topics: town and village history, industrial development, geology, religion, flora and fauna, agriculture and historic churches and homes. Many papers are also held in indexed volumes in the in the BAC.
- Books There are a number of local history books in the Local Studies section e.g. Alice Leach's 'Our Barrow', and the follow-on books for other parts of Barrow. There are books on social issues, sports, pubs, beer houses, theatres and cinemas, the steel works, railways and the shipyard. Some books are also held in the archive section.
- There are books on churches and religions, material relating to the armed forces and both World Wars, books on Royal Navy and merchant ships, and submarines. In addition, there are some local tour guides – for reference only. A number of guides/information books are available on loan in the Cumbrian section of the library.