An Introduction to the Contents of THE ANNALS OF CARTMEL by James Stockdale, published 1872

There is no doubt that the book on Cartmel's Local History published by James Stockdale in 1872 is a gold mine of information for anyone interested in the History of the Cartmel Peninsula. It is generally known as Stockdale's Annals of Cartmel, though its full title is *Annales Caermoelensis, or Annals of Cartmel*. Copies of the original 1872 edition may be hard to find. However, it has been reprinted at least twice. Copies of various editions may be found for sale on various websites, in addition to a digital copy which, with over 600 pages, is not recommended for either easy reading or easy reference! The copy that I bought on a website last year is from the copy in Harvard University Library, which was reprinted as a facsimile soft-back edition, reference ISBN 9 781143 494055.

Whilst it may seem unkind to criticise such a valuable research resource, which does have an index, its major omission is a Contents page.

It was clearly compiled over several years. The Dedication, (to Henry Fletcher Rigge, Esq. of Wood Broughton, High Sheriff of the County), is dated Carke 1870, but the title page, with the name of the printers, is dated 1872. It seems likely that type-setting began in 1870, to which at the end, there are post-scripts on several subjects, (referring to earlier page numbers), as well as a Section for "Addenda and Errata". Although there is a consolidated Index of people, places and subjects, the conspicuous omission is a Contents page for the whole book. Consequently, for anyone thinking of reading it from cover to cover, they will find it hard going, without an understanding of its structure.

The general plan of the book may be regarded in two parts. The first part is a chronological sequence of historical events, drawing particularly on quotations from "The Old Church Book of Cartmel", (Churchwarden's accounts etc.), and then from "The Old Flookburgh Chapel Book" with similar content, both up to about the year 1800. However, this initial chronology is peppered with digressions on interesting local families, places or events, after which the second part of the book comprises a series of essays on a wide variety of subjects, events places and families.

One gets the impression that Stockdale never planned for the overall structure for his book, but compiled it from a series of notes, perhaps collected over many previous years, perhaps feeding them to his printer for typesetting before he had finished its compilation?

Consequently, I have prepared the following schedules of Contents in two parts, to provide an understanding of what one can find in this invaluable research resource. The first part is a Summary of the Contents, which can be printed as a single page. The second part, which can be printed on five pages, is a detailed list of every heading and sub-heading which Stockdale puts in his book, plus some memos of subjects for which he gives no heading. In particular, this list of his subheadings includes all his many subheadings in his chronological narrative of the extracts from "The Old Church Book(s)" of Cartmel and Flookburgh Chapel.

For further information about James Stockdale and this book, see an article by Roy Hudleston published in Vol 74 (1974) of the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society [CWAAS], which can be freely download from their website. Amongst other things, this article explains that a few parts of the book were actually written by Stockdale's friend and kinsman, Henry Fletcher Rigg, and it also quotes numerous notes that H F Rigg made in his own copy of the book. There are also three articles about James Stockdale and his family on the CPLHS website under Research: Cark-in-Cartmel.

Peter Roden 20 June 2019

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