

ART. IX – *Rogues, Raskells and Turkie Faced Jades: Malediction in the Cumbrian Manorial Courts*

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THE Cumberland Manorial Courts are a valuable source of information for many aspects of rural agricultural and small-town life in the county until their decline and eventual disappearance in the 19th century.¹ Each manor in Cumberland had its own local court which, under the lord of the manor or his steward, tried such civil and criminal cases as royal justice allowed, as well as enforcing legislation relating to the individual and collective responsibilities for the upkeep of the community. Ault stated that legislation at the manorial courts originated with the lord or his steward, but needed the consent of the villagers.² In Cumberland, perhaps because most lords were absentee, the villagers seem to have originated a good part of the legislation themselves, bringing it to the court for the consent of the jury and the approval of the lord or his representative. That the local people saw the courts more positively than the lords of the manor was reflected in a letter from the Earl of Egremont's secretary in 1819, in which he says "I conceive that as to Court Leets, which are the Kings Courts, the inhabitants of the district are much more interested than the Lord is or can be in supporting those courts".³

There were several different types or titles of manorial court: by-law courts, capital courts, courts baron, courts leet and customary courts. Each manor had at least one of those: sometimes several. The Lordship of Egremont, for instance, had three: a court baron, a customary court and a court leet. The first was the small debt court of the freeholders; the second the court of the customary tenants and the third a court for the appointment of officers and for the punishment of minor offences.⁴ However, there was no consistency in the use of names in Cumberland, and in some places the name of the court changed from time to time; apparently at the whim of the recording secretary. For that reason all courts are here termed "manorial courts".

The manorial courts usually met twice a year, in the spring and in the late autumn. Just how many courts there were in Cumberland cannot be determined. No list exists of all the courts and no map survives showing the distribution of all the manors. The frequent lack of coincidence between manor and parish boundaries means that the latter are no sure guide to manorial organisation. Moreover, the manorial organisation was more complex than the parish organisation. Some manors have large gaps in their court records, some have only a few scattered survivals. In all, manorial court papers were studied for all 126 Cumberland manors for which records are available.

The form and nature of the documents vary considerably: they may be books, rolls or loose sheets; on vellum or on paper. They may be originals, copies or summaries; in Latin, English or a mixture of both. They are invariably in handwriting, which in any one place may change from year to year or be consistent over a long period. Despite these wide variations there is an overall consistency of content which allows the making of generalisations. There are basically two forms of

entry: pains and amercements. Pains set up by-laws and other regulations governing the activities of the population; restricting or encouraging certain actions. Amercements recorded offences against these local laws. More serious crimes went directly to higher courts.

In a county that was still almost entirely agricultural, the courts spent a great deal of time on matters concerning the common fields and common wastes. However another – often the larger – part of the courts' interest was in nonagricultural legislation. Local officers had to be elected, roads and ditches kept in repair, markets inspected and regulated. Courts in the larger centres were more interested in urban affairs than in common land: presentments at courts such as Cockermouth and the Borough of Egremont were mostly for such offences as giving short weight, leaving rubbish in the street and taking in lodgers from other manors. Cases used here are those which related directly to agricultural practice; especially as it concerned the common lands. As enclosure spread the courts in each newly-enclosed area were left with little or no agricultural function, as farmers could do what they liked in their several fields and there were few common rights left to supervise. In fact, *all* functions of the manorial courts declined over time from 1700 onwards. The verdict sheets of many courts after 1750 increasingly frequently carried the brief comment “no presentments.”

The principal purpose of this investigation of the manorial court records was to extract data dealing with agricultural practices and the use of the common lands. However, while recording over 28,000 individual cases dealing with these topics, it rapidly became apparent that there was another area of the courts' interests that shed some light on social practices of Cumberland in the past. In many courts people were brought before the court – “presented” – for saying rude words about their neighbours. Not all courts recorded information of this sort, but some (notably those in the Honour of Millom and in the Barony of Gilsland) were pleasingly productive both in number of cases and details of the offences.

The two most common classes of slander or insult consisted of variations on those two basic human concerns: money and sex. Abuse was commonly directed at the probity or at the chastity of the victim. In court after court people were fined for accusing others – presumably without sufficient evidence – of dishonest dealing. There was “arrant thief” (Alston; September 1599 and Lanercost; October 1606), “dam thief” (Ainstable; 1633) and even “bedlamore theefe” (Isel; September 1643). The woman who said that “all that Rolland Birds eye saw his heart has use for” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1682) was presumably accusing Roland Bird of unlawful acquisitiveness.

Others were fined for making accusations of cheating rather than theft. Some were quite basic, such as “Coseninge Rogue” (Isel; October 1647) and “Cheatinge Coousening Raskell” (High Ireby; April 1672). “Rogue” and “Rascal” (in various spellings) were the two most common epithets applied to males and are found alone, together, and in combination with other insults all over the county: “rogue and raskell” (Botchergate; October 1651), “Perjured Rascal” (Brampton; May 1724), “wide mouth raskell” (Ainstable; 1633), “foere sworne roage” (Botchergate; October 1686), “drunken Rogue and Raskall” (Botchergate; May 1653) and “a Cheating Fellow and a Rogue to” (Cockermouth; October 1683). At the Lordship of Egremont court (October 1688) one man presented another “for a slander in saying

he was a cheateing Rogue and had been a cheater from his Cradle.” Elsewhere another man went further, and was duly fined “for saying that John Railton was a Rogue, and that he would prove him one, and spiting in his face” (Gilsland above Gelt; October 1724). One accusation in the same area was much more general: “saying the whole town of Edmundcastle was all Rogues and theives” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1708). It would have been nice to know why he thought this.

Sometimes rogues and rascals were missing, but the message was the same. One man got in trouble at Millom (April 1621) “for saying that John Russell was a Bankrupt fellow and went Cheateing upp and downe the Country” and another was brought to justice by a neighbour “for calling him a false sworne fellow and saying he would have his ears and banish the Town of him” (Borough of Egremont; October 1687). Ears seem to have been a popular focus for punishment, as when one individual got into trouble “for saying before the Jury that James Grahams son deserved to have his Ears cut out of his Head⁶ (Gilsland above Gelt; May 1712). A more specific accusation was “for saying James Mulcastere was a mainsworn knave and that he sware his 18 pence away”⁷ (Gilsland above Gelt; October 1710). Others were brought before the courts for predicting more drastic ends, such as “for saying he would prove Thomas Corry a Rogue and a theife and if he had been Hanged seven years since he had but his dew” (Wetheral; April 1674) and “for Sayinge that the Goodes which William Nicholson of Briscoe had was ill Gotten And that he had done deades which he deserved to have been Executed for” (Botchergate; April 1686). Also calling on the law, if less drastically, was the individual who claimed “he could have written Christofir Halls Mittimus twenti yeares a goe”⁸ (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1695).

Other accusations were for particular crimes that could not be proven and were found slanderous: “he stole my money out of my purse” (Alston; September 1599); “for saying that he had a stolen axe about his house and that he was a theife and a native theife and that his wife was the worse of the two” (Gilsland above Gelt; October 1691); “for saying that Richard Richardson had gott Easby Land by Roguery and house Breaking, and by Cuting of Sheeps throats” (Brampton; April 1727), “for saying Isaac Hall stole Elizabeth Kants pye” (Gilsland above Gelt; 1703) and “that William Mulcaster stole a silver cup, and that he was sett in Goal for it”⁹ (Gilsland beyond Irthing; October 1726). A certain George Towns complained of two slanders at Brampton court (October 1724): one that he had “pulled the shoes of Francis Armstrong’s horse goeing on the common, and that the sd Armstrong had his horse to shoe twice in a month” and the other that he “took more corn out of the Field than was his own.” Another man was presented for a more general slander; “saying the Devill goe with all the Headsenook all but one house for they have my ewe among them” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 16X2). One wonders what was special about that particular house.

The meaning of some insults has become a little obscure over time. The court felt a fine was justified “for calling William Carrick Shifty Merestone” (Brampton; May 1739). A merestone was a boundary stone used between lots in the common fields, so presumably the implication was that William Carrick was in the habit of moving the stones between him and his neighbours to his own advantage. The individual at Hutton John (October 1642) told “thou art a hedge pyker” was being accused of pilfering material from others’ hedges. It is clear why a fine was levied for calling

another “Rogue and Theafe and Rascall that he was as Bad a Blagarde as God light upon and upon all Blacke Coates Cobler that he was And further that he had forsworne himselfe concerning Hodgsons money” (Plumpton; April 1668). It is difficult to be sure, though, what was so bad about being a “Blacke Coates Cobler”.¹⁰

One point of interest that arises out of this is that all those who were held to have been slandered in this way were men. Roguery, cozenage and cheating over money seem to have been seen as purely male preserves. Women, presumably, had little control over cash, partook of few financial dealings and were, anyway, popularly supposed to be financially incompetent. Accusations of false dealing would therefore not be taken seriously.

Females could, however, be considered as petty thieves, and the courts would defend their names if the accusation could not be sustained. Hence the fine levied on one individual “for saying that Jane Nelson was a Sour Loaf Thief and Rogue, and that she could not lie in her bed for milkeing other folks cows, and that she would not have had so much Butter to sell but other people Cowes” (Brampton; April 1727). One man said “he never did as Mary Jonson did, stole line and put it into another bodys lap” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1708), while a woman combined an allegation of theft with one of drunkenness and was fined “for saying that Mrs Weer could keep nothing from Mary Armstrong unless she had it under a Lok, and that her brother Mr Weer found her Iying in the Garden as if she had been dead and that she had voimitted a Flaggon of brew” (Brampton; May 1726). Another woman got into trouble “for saying that the wife of Thomas Peirson was a pick pocket, and that the house of the sd Thomas Peirson shd be blone up with Gunpowder” (Borough of Egremont; October 1678). It may be noted that while nearly all the accusations of roguery, dishonesty and theft made against men are by other men, similar accusations against women are made as often as not by women.

For women, the most common slander was of their chastity, and Whore was as common an insult as Rogue was for men (and with as many variations in spelling): “comon hoore” (Alston; September 1599), “Common Hower” (Ainstable; 1633), “hower and jade” (Isel; October 1670) and “common ridden whore and as common as the kirke garth stoole” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1670). One woman “did publickly speak and utter diverse slandrous words against Mabell the wife of Thomas Dobinson of Scotby and said that she was James Williamsons whore, and further she said she would prove it” (Aikbank; October 1691). Presumably she didn’t. In what appears to have been a domestic dispute one William Armstrong was fined “for calling Allice Armstrong a common whore and bad her goe home and sneek in a nother house for she was common as his sow mare that was going in the Bogg” (Nicholforest; October 1708).

An exchange of insults was recorded at Botchergate (May 1660) when the court presented “Mabell the wife of Edward Pattinson of Botchardgate for calling Agnes the wife of William Johnson whore and Common whore and her Children was Fayrie theives” and also “Agnes the wife of William Johnson for calling Mabell the wife of Edward Pattinson Yarne stealer and that she had stollen a whole Porter of yarne”. Presumably Mabel’s marital virtue was too secure to be attacked. A case of a husband gallantly if over-forcefully coming to his wife’s defence occurred at the Gilsland above Gelt court (May 1709) where fines are recorded on “Hanna Milborn

for calling Mary Dixon the wife of George Dixon A Whore and that she went to London to bear a Basterd” and on “George Dixon for puting Hanna Milborn over with his hand”.

As with accusation of male roguery and cheating, other slanders were more specific. A man and his wife “scandalised” a neighbour at Cockermouth (May 1641) by saying “that she was burnt and that he feared it would come to be the French pox”. A case of possible envy was recorded at Nicholforest (October 1708) where one woman said of another that she “was good for nothing but drawing the Felowes abt her in the night time” while a man at Millom (April 1670) got into trouble for accusing a woman “with leying with a ladd as she went from Corney Mill”. More seriously, a woman was presented “for abuseing and scandaleizing Anne Moonsey saying she had born a bastard and murdered enough and if she would declare what she knew she could gett a halter to her neck that very day” (Aikbank; June 1734) and another “for slandering Mrs Allice Armstrong and sayd that Robt Elliot lay down in her bed with her and the lassey sold the clothes from him” (Nicholforest; October 1708).

Other presentments for “slandrous words” included the accusation that a woman “was halfe gone with Childe at Candlemas last to her Brother in Law” (Aikbank; October 1691); four people “for saying that Thomas Wrenns sarvant man was in bed with the wife of the said Thos Wrenn being a defameation” and further that one of them said “that the wife of Thos Wrenn would need drowne herselfe in Cocker” (Braithwaite and Coledale; April 1681) and one man for claiming that “Isabell the wife of Richd Scott (being about two months married) did bear a man-childe and they buried it in the garth or orchard and if it was not either a man-childe or a woman-childe it was a Devill” (Aikbank; October 1691).

Men seemed much less concerned about their sexual reputation. The presentment of “John Jackson for scandalizing Margrett Brockebanke saying words to this purpose That he laid with her” (Millom; April 1700) is because it defamed the woman; similarly with the older-fashioned term used by “Martin Milburn for saying he swivet Christopher Dixon wife” (Gilsland above Gelt; May 1696). The case of “Dorothy Ritson for slandering of Mary Bell the wife of Andrew Bell and Jennet Laysonby her mother for saying her Husband comited adultry with them” (Aikbank; June 1690) is also taken as damaging to the women concerned, not to the speaker’s husband. On the other hand, the fine “for slanderinge John Dickinson and saying he would not marry Emmett Jackson with the sayd John Dickinsons Bastard in her Belly” (Millom; April 1673) is clearly seen as an attack on the putative father rather than the mother. Perhaps she was obviously pregnant and therefore without a reputation to defend.

Men were rarely insulted for their sexual wanderings; perhaps because few would have *felt* insulted – a parallel with the few women accused of financial chicanery. However, there were a few cases: “for calling Robert Bell Whore-masterly Rouge and that he Whored Richard Gibsons wife and Jennet Newby likewise” (Gilsland above Gelt; October 1704) and “for slandering John Henderson in saying that he lay with another mans wife and named the woman” (Aikbank; June 1688). Some such behaviour must have lain behind the injunction “That James Dixon shall be of good behaviour towards all people especially towards the daughters of Matthew Troughton” (Millom; October 1596). An accusation of incest, as it would have been

seen then, was contained in the statement “that Nicollis Heathiring was in bidd with his brother John Heathering wife” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1695) and as it is seen still when one man complained that another had “hasken him yf he was in bed with his mother” (Isel; October 1567). Finally there is bestiality, as in the “slander in sayinge William Lowther had dealings with an ewe” (Millom; April 1673).

Although most reported insults involved questioning the probity or virtue of the victim, Cumbrian scurrility was not limited to these two categories. Very often the exact nature of the malediction is not specified, as with the husband and wife fined at Cockermouth (May 1679) “for scandalous words against Jane Wilkinson”. A man presented a woman at Drigg (Lordship of Egremont; October 1683) “for skolding him and caling him out of names” while an offender appeared at the Ainstable court (September 1637) “for misbehadden words.”

Not surprisingly, given the times, there were several accusations of witchcraft: “thowe art a waterwitch”¹¹ (Hutton John; October 1612); “widow Witch and Devill” and “old rotten witch” (both Gilsland above Gelt; October 1695). At the Aikbank court (June 1690) there appeared “John Holme of Coatehill for slandering of Isabell Holme of Low Coatehill and saying that the said Isabell Holme did bewitch him and had almost witched him to death.” These accusations were obviously but not invariably directed at women: one person was brought before the Brampton court (March 1723) “for calling Thomas Barnfather of Brampton a witches bird”, whatever that may be.¹² Perhaps because of the seriousness of the accusation, there were few suggestions of homicide, though there was one presentment at Isel (May 1641) “for slandering of Ellen Simpson in calling her man Murderer” and more specifically at Lanercost (October 1606) “thow murdered thy husband.”

A series of interlinked cases at Millom (October 1681) leaves one wondering what was going on in the local educational scene at that time. First there was a fine on “Roger Dickinson for comeing into Churchyarde and abusing Henry Stillin Schoolmr both with hands and tongue and for blooding him.” Then came “Elizabeth Wenington wife of John Wenington for calling the sd Schoolemaster stark theefe and slanderinge him with hanginge drowneing and poysening of her children and many bade words besydes” who was followed by “Hugh Atkinson for slandering the sd Schoolemaster and sayeing that he Dryed his Arse with Bread and gave his Schoolers itt to eate.” By this time one begins to feel sympathy for “Henry Stillings Schoolemaster for Drowing a Knife and throweing of stones at Roger Dickenson and sayeing he would stabb him.” It is surprising he was not tempted into going for Hugh Atkinson as well.

Other cruder than usual vulgarities included a presentation “for biding George Coll kisse his arse” (Gilsland above Gelt; September 1675), “for slandering Mary Bell and said that she beshitt her own bed and he would prove it and could not – immediately said upon her marriage” (Nicholforest; October 1708) and “Richard Routledge for undecently railing Rowland Bird before the Jury and saying that he was more like a beast than a man and saying that he would make him beshyte his britches and called him hatt kirn” (Gilsland above Gelt; April 1693). The final imprecation in this last defies interpretation, as do “Muttoner” (Brayton; December 1610) and “dubbe”¹³ (Hutton John; October 1642). The meaning of the malediction at Wetheral (April 1674) “for calling her a mawky slout in saing she speated meate and the mawkes droped forth of it” is more easily translated: mawks

are maggots. There is no difficulty in understanding what was going on when a Nicholforest man was fined (April 1720) “for calling Blanch Graham a wide moutht clattering hussy and said she was not fitt to be kept in a cemetry.”

Some of the above profanity led to violence, whether throwing stones or giving a push. Petty violence was, indeed, endemic throughout Cumberland in this period, judging from the evidence of the manorial courts. Presentations such as “George Messenger for blood and batery upon the body of Mungo Rothery” (Cockermouth; May 1679) abounded, often in multiples at each court. Such entries rarely gave any details, not even as much as in the sparse account “for blooding John Rowcastle with a staff till the Blood run over his shoulders” (Gilsland above Gelt; October 1701). A rare example of a longer narrative saw the fining of “William Carrudders of Glasson for holding the poynt of a dagger to the breast of Robert Faulder of the same and saying that if that would not doe he would fetch a sword out of his bedstraw and yt would doe” (Burgh; April 1678).

However, none of these consists of a malediction, though doubtless several were exchanged in the course of the attack. More in line with the general theme are threats of violence, rather than the violence itself. One man complained at the Aikbank court (October) that another had threatened “to lett the puddings out of his body” while at Millom (October 1662) one woman said to another “hang her hang her Ile cut her nose off.” The female of the species was certainly as deadly as the male in this area, as witness the woman at Aikbank (October 1690) presented to the court “for giving the wife of Humphrey Jurden base and undecent words and taking up a stone with the protestation that she would pash out her Braines therewith.”

There are few other examples of threats of violence. One aggressor was somewhat repetitive in his defiance “saying if he had the said John Dodgeon’s servant on the backside of Brampton mote he would either kill him or otherwise he would kill him”¹⁴ (Gilsland above Gelt; May 1674). Apart from these, there is only an occasional insult, such as “Cut Throte” (Brayton; December 1610) and “for saying that for ought she knew John Correy would cutt hir throate” (Gilsland above Gelt; October 1709). From the few threats of violence and the plenitude of blood-and-battery cases, one deduces that the average Cumbrian would rather have been doing his (or her) aggro and not just talking about it.

The final category of malediction to be studied is one juries were inclined to take especially seriously – insults and threats against the officers of the manorial court or the jury itself.

Sometimes this took the form of general misbehaviour, as the two men separately charged at Alston (May 1636) “for behaveing himselfe disorderly and scouldinge in the Court” and the woman fined at Botchergate (April 1706) “for Swearing in open Court.” Malice was usually more specifically directed. The most ambitious in his behaviour was the man presented at the Hutton John court (April 1611) “for Scandelous Words Spoken to the Lord of the Mannor in the face of the Court (vizt) I see you have Spitt your Venome and Malice doe your worst or such like words to that purpose, besides his ill behaviour in Court.” One had a go at the Steward to the Court, saying “that he was worthie to have his eares nayled to the pillorye” (Hutton John; May 1641) (there go the ears again). One was fined “for abuseing the substeward in open court and bidding him Kiss his Arse with a greate deale of other unmannerly and oprobrious language” (Socage of Carlisle; May 1717); another for

bringing up the Cumbrian's favourite insults and "for caling John Hodgson baylyfe Roge and Raskeld" (Westward; October 1680) and yet another for saying that the Foreman to the Jury "was fitter to be a hangman then to be a Juror" (Hutton John; May 1641).

More common were maledictions directed at the jury. One offender at Hutton John (May 1641) directed his attention to one of the jurors "calling him wrye neck asyde And that he was not woorthie to be in anye Jurye".¹⁵ Most were more general in their attack: "for saying they were a Simple Jury" (Gilsland above Gelt; May 1696); "for slandering the Jury (saying) that there was not one honest man amongst them" (Hutton John; May 1641); "for calling us Jurors all Rogues . . . and when one of the Jurors reprimanded him he told him he was the greatest Rogue" (Brampton; May 1736) and "for calling the Jury all pupeys" (Nicholforest; October 1714). Particularly interesting is the case of the Edenhall offender (September 1664) who "did write verses and rimes against the Jury in scandellizing of them and saying they were nott wise." One regrets that none of the verses or rimes was quoted.

Altogether the Cumbrian was obviously as ready with the tongue as with the fists. While most were happy to call the males rogues and rascals and the women whores, a few had a more inventive turn of phrase. The Millom courts (those for the Honour of Millom included Bootle, Kirksanton and Ulpha) were particularly productive of imaginative invective, and the following list was culled from a fairly short period in the 17th century:

banckrupt	bease gentleman	lyer	sowe
basterd	hangman	murderer	lipper sowe
bease basterd	little durty hangman	picke pockett	sheepe stealer
bitch	bankrout harlot	rogish pedlar	theef
lipper ¹⁶ bitch	belled harlot	stinkinge puncke ¹⁷	arrand theefe
running hot bitch	falce harlot	base quene ¹⁸	notorious theefe
bugger	jade	leper quene	starke theefe
red-necked bull	begerley jade	rascald	villane
cheater	turkie faced jade	rogge	whore
cuccald	backebiting knave	begerley rogue	arrand whore
dogge	false knave	cheateinge rogue	comon whore
base unworthy fellow	mainesworne knave	forsworne rogue	hot-arst whore
cheateinge fellow	peevish knave	wrynecked rogue	son of a whore
foole	shouffleing knave	sheepface	witch
furnicator	false lad	foresworne slave	hollow-eyed witch

It will be noted that variations on the basic rogue and whore are there, as well as some more imaginative descriptions. "Turkie faced jade" is an especially interesting one. The term "turkey" was originally applied to the guinea fowl, imported from and erroneously presumed to have originated in Turkey. However, the guinea fowl was never a very common domestic bird, being nervous and hard to raise. The turkey as it is now known was not introduced into England until the end of the 16th century, only shortly before the date of these epithets. Neither kind of turkey is mentioned even once in the 28,000 agriculturally-oriented manorial court cases studied, although there are many references (over 150) to other poultry. Where did that Millom maledictor learn what a turkey looked like?

Looking back over the whole collection, a most surprising fact is that so many of these insults made it to the courts. While several were quite imaginative and some

implied criminal activity, most would be regarded today as part of the normal give-and-take of everyday community life. Few would withstand the requirements under the modern law of slander that requires proof of actual harm. It would be interesting to know why some courts were so zealous in presenting and fining every little insult, while other recorded none at all. That is perhaps the strangest aspect of the record of Cumbrian maledictions.

Acknowledgments

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Notes and References

- ¹ For more background on the Cumberland Manorial Court see R. S. Dilley, "The Cumberland Court Leet and use of the common lands", *CW2*, lxvii, 125-151. Sources for most of these records may be found in R. S. Dilley, "Agricultural Change and Common Land in Cumberland 1700-1850", unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, McMaster University 1992. Others not listed there include Ainstable, Brampton, Gilsland above Gelt, Gilsland beyond Irthing and Lanercost (University of Durham, Special Collections, H. N.); Alston (P.R.O. Adm.) and – all Cumbria Record Office (Carlisle) [hereafter C.R.O.(C)] – Brayton, (D/Law); Hutton John (D/Hud) and High Ireby (D/Van).
- ² Ault, W. O., "Open-field husbandry and the village community", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series 55 (1965), 1-102.
- ³ C.R.O.(C): D/Lec/172.
- ⁴ Caine, C., "The manor court of Egremont", *CW2*, xv, 76-89.
- ⁵ "Bedlamore" presumably from Bedlam; the priory of St Mary of Bethlehem, converted to a lunatic asylum in the mid-16th century. A lunatic was often called a Bedlamite.
- ⁶ In Millom (March 1546): "The homage Jurors say and present that Elizabeth Harrison is a Micher and that she shall have her Ear nailed to a Post for such faults as we find with her." Whether that drastic punishment was actually carried out is not recorded. A micher was a pilferer or petty thief.
- ⁷ "Mainsworn" meant forsworn or perjured.
- ⁸ A mittimus is a warrant to send to prison a person charged with a crime.
- ⁹ Goal and Gaol, in this context, are of equal age and both derived from O.F. gaole or jaiole, see Diarmaid O'Muirithe, *The words we use*, 10.
- ¹⁰ "Black coat" was used at the time to denote a minister of religion, but that does not seem to help all that much. What was wrong with making shoes for priests?
- ¹¹ A waterwitch was a witch who lived in the water, not a dowser.
- ¹² "Bird" was sometimes used to denote a young man. Possibly the speaker could have meant a witch's toy-boy.
- ¹³ "Dubbie" can mean short or dumpy and also (especially in Scotland) muddy. It is difficult to see any of these terms as truly insulting. "Muttoner" may possibly be an oblique way of referring to a sheep-stealer. Not even an oblique definition of "hatt kirm" is offered.
- ¹⁴ Brampton Mote is a small, steep hill at the eastern edge of the town.
- ¹⁵ "Wry neck aside"? Presumably this implied an inability to see things straight.
- ¹⁶ "Lipper": an obsolete form of leper. Also defined in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* as a term of contempt, frequently applied to dogs.
- ¹⁷ A punk was a prostitute.
- ¹⁸ A quean was a woman of worthless character.

