

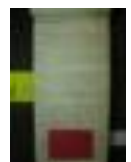
How to find a particular page/membrane

If you are looking for a particular page or membrane, the AALT has a variety of ways to make the task easier. **Remember that TNA has not had input into the organization or conceptualization of the AALT; TNA is not responsible for the AALT and does not supervise or control it. The AALT is a University of Houston project, NOT a TNA project and problems not solved on this page should be directed to the AALT administrator (rpalmer@uh.edu), not, if you are at TNA, to TNA staff.**

The major problem with finding a particular page is that often the fronts and the dorses/versos of a membrane/page are in separate folders. This inconvenience results both from budgetary concerns and from concern for the safety of the document. For large documents in particular, joining the pictures for fronts and dorses would have made the project impossible. The AALT works on a miniscule budget compared to most digitizing projects, and all the work on website organization and navigational aids is done by one person only. Without the aid of an army of graduate students, collaborators and consultants, there is only so much a single person can do. That said, by shifting a small part of the burden to the user, the AALT has become the primary facilitator of archival research for the historians of England between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries and is becoming important also for the eighteenth century. As much as possible, the burden shifted to the user is being whittled down as we continue to add new content.

First generation (still necessary) navigational aids

From close to the beginning of the project in 2007, the camera person



inserted blue and red markers into the picture itself to indicate page/membrane numbers in multiples of 10 and 50 respectively.

These blue and red markers are visible from the thumbnail screens, although if you are new to the process you may need to enlarge the thumbnail screen to see them at first (you enlarge the screen display by using the control-plus command [that is: control +]). See examples in the right margin.



It will help to realize that each thumbnail screen displays a maximum of 200 thumbnails: 20 rows of 10 thumbnails. An arrow at the bottom of each thumbnail page leads to the next screen. If you locate the red markers (say for 50 and 100), the blue markers will appear fairly regularly spaced between them (for 60, 70, 80, and 90).

Second generation navigational aids

The red and blue markers were the first generation of navigational guides; they have now been supplemented by thumbnails that actually contain the membrane number. So now the thumbnail screens have **BOTH** the red and blue markers and thumbnails that contain some but never all of the numbers for the markers. For some series, instead of thumbnails for page numbers, we use thumbnails for section dividers (to designate attorney warrant rolls, rex rolls sections, recorda or recognizance sections etc.) The second generation aids speed you to the approximate place of your page or membrane; the blue markers will get you closer. If thus you are looking for the dorse of membrane 333, look for the thumbnails for 300 and 350.



From the 300 marker look down for the third blue marker that would be for 330, and then your membrane 333 would be about a third of the way to the next marker. At times the bottom of the membrane will turned over to show the membrane number. Remember, however, that the camera operators are human and at times forget to insert the markers. And we use markers for other purposes, generally easy to figure out. Occasionally you will see our hands in the

pictures: it helps to remind you that the picture comes from a person trying hard to make your research possible.

If all else fails . . .

In almost all situations, the combinations of blue/red markers and number thumbnails will put you very close to your desired location. In the few situations in which that is not true, you need to have a little patience (remember that you did not have to go to London and take public transport out to Kew, order the documents and set up the heavy document for use and get filthy in the process). The key for this last method is that you can almost always tell when a picture is the top of the membrane. Find the nearest picture for which you know the number, and then simply count the membrane tops forward (or backward) from that position.

Detective work

There are some odd situations.

--In many documents archivists over the centuries have felt free to insert different membrane/page numbers. Thus, particularly for documents in the thirteenth century, some membranes have as many as five contradictory numbering sets; at times the contradictory numbers appear some on the front, some on the dorse. Prior numbering schemes are almost never cancelled, so they genuinely compete.

--There are a bewildering number of different systems for pagination. Today we number each side of a page. One can also allocate only a single number for each page. Or one can allocate a single number for a single case that might stretch for 30 membranes. Or one can give a separate number each piece of parchment that has been sewn together to make a single sheet (so that a seemingly single membrane can be allocated six or more numbers.) Be ready to be flexible to see what the document is doing. The camera operator chooses one of the numbering systems for reasons other than being "correct," so be ready to make assessments of your own.

--At times the pages became shuffled after being numbered but before being bound. The page numbering can thus be interrupted, non-sequential, etc. We tried to do our best with what the document presents.